

“/ENTEE MIN FAINE/? [WHERE ARE YOU FROM?]”:
THE RHETORIC OF NATIONALITY OF MUSLIM WOMEN
IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHEAST

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Bushra Mohammad Malaibari
May 2016

Copyright © 2016 by Bushra Mohammad Malaibari
All rights reserved.

Dedication

For my family.

Acknowledgements

A major thanks goes to my committee, who remained consistent and supportive of this project from beginning to end: Drs. Lisa King (chair), Mike Keene, Martin Griffin, and Jon Shefner. I want also would thank the English Department, and especially the Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics division for their support.

A special “thank you” goes to all the women who supported this work. They shared their stories, lives, and families with me with open arms. This would never have come to fruition without your kindness.

To the professors in the Linguistics & the Qualitative Research Methods Certificate programs, especially Drs. Bethany Dumas and Trena Paulus for expanding my scholarship.

To my peers, colleagues, students, and new friends for making this experience as fun as it was challenging: Hollie Nawrocki, Breck Sharbel, English 295 rockstars, and countless others.

And most of all, to my family. I love you.

Abstract

Nationality is a powerful modern concept. It allows people legal and political rights, but nationality is also rooted in our language. Nationality is essential to designate populations together as an entity. But in America, where individualism is essential, nationality can be expressed in various ways. Historically, there is little research done on the construction of nationality from a rhetorical lens. This project aims to investigate that very issue. Moreover, the sampled population was Muslim women in the American Southeast to rarify and observe a marginalized group. The primary research question of this project is, “How do Muslim women articulate their sense of nationality?” To this effect, five case studies are presented to begin formulating a sense of the rhetoric of nationality. Using Wayne Booth’s theoretical framework of the rhetoric of assent and M. Lane Bruner’s initial description of the rhetoric of nationality, this project highlights subjective representations of nationality. A multi-modal data set was collected from each participant: a questionnaire, photographs, and an hour-long interview. A rhetorical analysis crystallized various themes across each participant to synthesize a view on the rhetoric of nationality. Many of the participants used a Boothian rhetorical style to argue their sense of nationality. Booth describes that modern rhetorical practices situate ethos (author credibility) and pathos (emotional connection) as essential appeals in arguments. Logos (logic) is a secondary characteristic. In the case of expressing nationality, ethos was a matter of creating identifying terms, such as “German” or “Southern”; pathos was a matter of the rhetor feeling an emotional conviction; logos was the narrative explained to an outsider, such as the researcher. Most participants privileged the former two appeals to define their sense of nationality. In some cases, however, nationality was buried within other identities that were more significant to the participant. Nationality is powerful because of its subjective measure in people’s lives. More research is needed to detail the rhetorical structure of nationality to consider its representative characteristic across the large populations who use its identification as essential.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Background of the Problem	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions	4
Importance of the Study.....	5
Scope of the Study	6
Chapter Overviews.....	7
Chapter 2. Literature Review	9
Theoretical Views on Nationality	11
Anthony Smith: What Is a National Identity?.....	12
Ernest Gellner: When Do National Identities Form?.....	15
Benedict Anderson: Who Forms National Identities?	19
Karl Deutsch: How Do We Identify National Identity?	23
Julia Kristeva: How Are Others Identified to the Nation?.....	25
Towards a Theory of National Rhetoric	29
M. Lane Bruner: How Does Rhetoric Engage with Nationality	29
Wayne Booth: How Do Exchanges Amongst People Happen?.....	31
Scott Richard Lyons: Marks of Rhetorical Assent	36

A New Space: Context, Language, Artifacts	40
Lisa King: Material Connection with Rhetoric.....	41
International Museum of Muslim Women.....	43
A Call for New Research on the Rhetoric of Nationality	45
Chapter 3. Methodology and Methods.....	47
Previous Studies Regarding National Identity, Muslims, and Women:	48
A Need for Representation.....	58
Methods.....	58
Studying Nationality with Discourse Analysis	62
Protocol	63
Participants.....	67
Chapter 4. Sarah.....	72
Identity	73
Family	76
America.....	85
Islam.....	89
Conclusion	92
Chapter 5. Fatimah Ahmad	94
Nationality.....	99
Food	100

People.....	106
Places	112
Government.....	117
Conclusion	118
Chapter 6. Malak.....	121
Clothing & Gender.....	126
East vs. West.....	134
Nationality.....	141
Conclusion	142
Chapter 7. Simin	145
People.....	146
Family	147
Relationships.....	151
Research	157
America.....	161
Food	163
Nourooz.....	165
Conclusion	166
Chapter 8. Roxy	169
Textiles.....	172

All in One.....	177
Indoor Nature	184
Love	185
God.....	187
Nationality.....	189
Conclusion	190
Chapter 9. Conclusion.....	192
Theoretical Summary: How to Construct a Sense of Nationality?	192
Rhetorical Findings.....	193
Theories of Nationality	195
Findings.....	197
Terms of Identification	197
People.....	198
Religion.....	199
Gender.....	201
Images	201
Implications for Future Research and Practitioners.....	202
Future Studies	203
Recommendations for Practitioners.....	204
Closing Thoughts	204

Works Cited	206
Appendices.....	213
Appendix A. Questionnaire	214
Appendix B. Photography Prompt.....	216
Appendix C. Consent Form	217
Appendix D. Interview Protocol	218
Vita.....	219

List of Figures

Figure 1: Coat of Arms	78
Figure 2: Dressing Up German	80
Figure 3: The Cook's Kitchen	81
Figure 4: Thanksgiving	85
Figure 5: Flagpole. USA and Tennessee State.....	86
Figure 6: Mosque, facing front	90
Figure 7: Mosque Artwork.....	91
Figure 8: Fatimah's Burrito	101
Figure 9: MSA Tailgating. (Picture uses sepia filter to protect identities)	106
Figure 10: Precious Girl Praying	110
Figure 11: Bikes.....	111
Figure 12: Rural Farm.....	113
Figure 13: America, the Beautiful	114
Figure 14: Freedom of Religion.....	118
Figure 15: /hijab/ Collection	128
Figure 16: /ghutrah/.....	133
Figure 17: Souvenir.....	138
Figure 18: /dar al hajar/	139
Figure 19: Coin	140
Figure 20: Iranian Tapestry.....	149
Figure 21: Iranian Rials	150
Figure 22: Family Photos.....	153

Figure 23: From Dad.....	160
Figure 24: Vase	161
Figure 25: Identification	163
Figure 26: /zereskh/.....	164
Figure 27: Nourooz	166
Figure 28: Rug	176
Figure 29: Kabob	178
Figure 30: Mount Damavand.....	180
Figure 31: Painting, Old Man	182
Figure 32: Focused and Cropped, Painting, Old Man	183
Figure 33: Basil.....	185
Figure 34: Pothos Plant.....	186
Figure 35: Lingling, the Cat.....	187
Figure 36: Islamic Art.....	188

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background of the Problem

I have a love/hate relationship with my national identity: I love that I grew up in American and was raised by Saudis, but I hate how often I have to defend it. Yes, I'm American. Yes, I'm Saudi. These have never been a contentious pair of identifiers to me. It was just how I grew up: speak English, speak Arabic; eat spaghetti, eat basboosa; wear jeans, wear hijab; pray five times a day, watch cartoons five times a day. I never thought of my lifestyle as something that was non-standard. Of course, once I left my house and started engaging with the larger American public, I got the hint that my identity was problematic.

As a practicing Muslim, I can share the stories about people telling me to go back "to my own country" or asking me to "use my towel to dry [their] hands" all because I choose to wear a /hijab/. The customary headscarf is simply supposed to be a mark of modesty, but also empowerment. After all, if you can't see my head, maybe you'll focus on what I'm saying. As a woman, I find that exciting. Unfortunately, that is not how it often plays out. Many times I am subsumed in a wave of accusations that I'm submissive or enslaved. And that bothers me. Because it is just a /hijab/. I put it on, and I take it off. As it turns out, I also get to carry someone else's assumptions of its meaning.

As I moved forward with my graduate work, I felt a need to pursue studies of identification. Over time, I have noticed Muslim women also participate in rhetorical exchanges of citizenship like my own. We did not talk about our /hijab/, unless we wanted to go shopping for them. Instead, there was a nuanced exchange between how people spoke of their connections to places. Even though I consider myself a typical Midwesterner, I can remember a few times when I have received extra hugs from women because my family was from Mecca, the epicenter

of the Islamic faith. And I have heard conversations with my extended families about marriages that were endorsed or refused because of citizenship. This all made me start to think, not about what it means to be a Muslim woman in the West, but how should our sense of nationality as Muslim women be explained? I know plenty of other family, friends, and acquaintances who have very recent immigration stories to the U.S., and some with older heritages in the U.S., but all of them hold a unique relationship with identifying with countries. Unfortunately, their commentary is often unheard. I designed this study to begin understanding and analyzing the impact of national identity on Muslim women in America.

Statement of the Problem

Identifying with America is a hard thing to do when you are not part of the majority. There are binaries used to define the United States population across race (Caucasian verse African-American), religion (Christian verse non-Christian), and gender (man verse woman). But if someone does not identify with either side, there is an awful marginalization that happens. A subaltern forms. As a self-identified American-born-Arab, Muslim, woman, I know what it means to be silenced. I have never identified as Caucasian, African-American, Christian, or non-Christian. John Tehranian, in *Whitewashed: America's Invisible Middle Eastern Minority*, discusses how Middle Easterners are legally classified as Caucasian, but “when they transgress, they are racialized as Middle Eastern” (6). While African-American is considered the diametric pair to being Caucasian, Middle Eastern is not even allowed to be compared to these two identities. Tehranian explains how the impact of Civil Rights improved many different marginalized groups in the U.S.:

By and large, women, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and sexual minorities enjoy greater protection of their civil rights today than at virtually

any other point in American history. By sharp contrast, Middle Eastern Americans do not. In anything, they now suffer from more systemic racism than ever before, a fact that makes them unique among American's ethnic and racial groups. (119)

He also details a study from 2007 on Arab Americans between 18 and 29 were 300% more likely to have been discriminated against than older populations (over 65 years old). There is a racial hierarchy in America that can sometimes put Arab Americans on the social ladder. What I find even more troubling, however, is how Arab can be a synonym for Muslim. Quite suddenly, an ethnic distinction becomes a religious one.

People may argue that as a Muslim, I should identify with the non-Christian population, but I refuse to be defined through “not this” associations. I am a Muslim; I want to be identified through positive terms. Moreover, the Muslim identifier in America is more problematic than being an Arab because no amount of obedience allows a Muslim to be a quasi-Christian in America. As an Arab, passing is allowed; Muslims do not have that option. Muslims are not considered part of the U.S.'s landscape of identities.

Because of Muslims contentious relationship with the larger group dynamic, I was interested in learning how other Muslim women describe their sense of nationality. I drew on my personal experience in and out of designated Muslim communities within the U.S. to assume that being “American” is important to this group of people. But particularly because of the post 9/11 backlash against Muslims, there are often varying opinions about what it means to be American, and how one should express it.¹ I found this contention to be a viable space for qualitative inquiry.

¹ While many people in the Western Hemisphere identify as “American,” I will be using this term as a national identifier for people connected to the United States. Another study should consider the ramifications of multiple countries identifying under this term, which may lead to some fascinating results. In the meanwhile, I want to limit this term only to the United States for this project.

Purpose of the Study

This project proposes to fill a gap in the rhetorical practice of nationality among Muslim women in America. There is a gap in published research that ignores the role of Muslim women through their actual language practices. While there have been survey studies that included women, most studies on Muslim populations focus either on men or minors to detail their experiences. I argue that there is a need to hear Muslim women because our experiences cannot be expressed by other parties. If the assumption is present that Muslim women are subjugated, then it is imperative to offer them the chance to express their thoughts and ideas. Women are integral members of society who are involved in constructing social, cultural, and political environments. By not understanding their perspective and opinions, we are intentionally overlooking the source of development and advancement in society.

Research Questions

The primary research question of this project is, “How do Muslim women articulate their sense of nationality?” Nationality represents an intertwined system of culture and politics by observing how individuals construct it: would people discuss the “Pledge of Allegiance” and mention baseball, or would a subtler presentation be shared about family traditions and customs? Because I wanted to narrow the field of inquiry to make it both manageable and concentrated, I asked two focus questions: (1) What is the relationship between nationality and gender and nationality and religion?; and (2) How do Muslim women visualize their national identity? The former question complicates issues of representation through gender and religion. I was not forming a comparative inquiry, but rather a representational one. Understanding how women posited their sense of religion and gender, as social functions, would enhance the conversation about nationality. Moreover, I wanted to know what people thought of when they imagined their

nationality; what objects tied their identities to be connected with a larger group of people?

Understanding how people view their nationality could lead to removing the occasions of racism and xenophobia that damages Muslim communities in America.

Importance of the Study

This research investigates an uncharted research space of Muslim women within the American landscape. The post-9/11 landscape of America established a persona of Muslims without their consent. For example, Amaney Jamal discusses the loss of civil liberties by both Muslims and Arab Americans through the PATRIOT Acts I and II. Jamal quotes Louise Cainkar, a scholar on Muslims and Arab Americans in the U.S., who notes that, “Ashcroft has already removed more Arabs and Muslims (who were neither terrorists nor criminals) from the United States in the past year than the total number of foreign nationals deported in the infamous Palmer raids of 1919 [that removed radical leftists from the U.S.]” (115). Shortly after the terrorist events, there was a severe legal backlash that allowed Muslims to be targeted and ostracized. The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) found the steady increase of hate crimes against Muslims jumped 300% between 2001 and 2003, and then another 50% increase from 2004 to 2005 (115). Jamal argues that these cases stem from a growing use of the “us/them” binary to segregate the greater American population (116). If anyone identifying as “Muslim” cannot be American, then these individuals would also lose their American civil liberties.

What we learn from these incidents is that language is extremely powerful in shaping our society. Not only did Muslims get treated poorly, but they also lost legal rights in the country. It was seemingly because of their religious identity. Often overlooked in these studies is any type of commentary about the individual. Because of this I started to wonder how many Latino, Caucasian, or African American Muslims got swept along in this tidal wave of hate. Using the

“Muslim” identifier is not sufficient enough to claim anything more than a religious affiliation. (Even then, one should be wary since there is an entire spectrum of Muslim identities.) This project looks to change that habit by asking the questions connecting Muslims with their nations and provide a rhetorical analysis that illuminates the connections between people and their nationality.

Scope of the Study

Using a case study methodology, five participants, who self-identified as Muslim, were asked to detail their sense of nationality. While this study is small in nature, it starts to understand the varieties of nationalities expressed and is structured to accomplish a contextualized commentary connecting words with objects and spaces. After clearing a human subjects review at the University of Tennessee, Muslim women responded to three different qualitative data collection sampling:

1. Questionnaire: a questionnaire collecting basic information from the participant, including their age, religious affiliation, birth place, and five ways they described themselves (See Appendix A).
2. Photograph Collection: participants took 5-16 pictures that acted as visual representations of their national identity (See Appendix B. Photography Prompt).
3. Interview: one hour interviews were conducted with each participant to learn what the pictures represented to them. During this stage, additional questions about their lives and experiences were shared to offer organic case studies toward understanding variability in an expression of national identity.

Chapter Overviews

The overall goal of this dissertation is to begin to understand the impact of rhetorical practice in framing a national identity amongst Muslim women. The literature review (Chapter 2) provides an overview of five major interdisciplinary theorists who have crafted arguments about nationality: Anthony Smith, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Karl Deutsch, and Julia Kristeva. They provide different critical approaches to question the development and presence of the nation. Each scholar's commentary was connected to a specific question on the formation of a nation based on their commentary to answer questions regarding the who, what, when, how, and where nations form and identify.

In relation to these non-rhetorical theorists, the works of Scott Richard Lyons, Lisa King, Wayne Booth, and M. Lane Bruner scaffold solutions to better develop a rhetoric of nationality. Lyons and King describe representations of Native rhetorics, especially using visuals. Bruner specifically details modern developments of rhetoric in relation to nationality. I argue that Wayne Booth's rhetoric of assent is a heuristic to explain Bruner's theory that the rhetoric of nationality is malleable.

Chapter 3, Methodology and Methods, details qualitative research practices to study the issue of identity. Representative studies were highlighted to detail what style of research was conducted and the findings. This review situates the current practices about identity research, while also providing insight into limitations and constraints of the study. From this review, I present my methods for this project's investigation using qualitative research methods in relation to rhetoric. Three styles of data were collected and analyzed using a discourse analysis lens to produce case studies presented in Chapters 4-8.

The findings (Chapters 4-8) share information gained from five participants: Sarah (4), Fatimah Ahmad (5), Malak (6), Simin (7), and Roxy (8). Their photographs, questionnaire responses, and detailed commentary from their interviews are shared. Each interview is vastly different from the others. From their commentary, different emphasis has been placed on gender, religion, family, and space that contribute to their subjective views of nationality.

The conclusion (Chapter 9) explains how Muslim women articulate their nationality based on Wayne Booth's rhetoric of assent. Booth's premise of privileging ethos and pathos before logos is translated into a rhetorical expression of nationality. Using examples from each case presented, the rhetoric of nationality frames personal identifiers as ethos; the participant's emotional response to her experiences as pathos; and a contextualized story to situate the arguments in time as logos. Rhetorical analysis allows for an osmotic filter to manage the transformational style of nationality. Ultimately, I argue that the rhetoric of nationality for the study participants is subjective and contextualized and can be observed through narratives and visualizations of their world.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

A literature review detailing the implication of “nationality” is difficult because researchers still continue to limit what thematic issues are managed under this term. The scholars most prominently connected with discussing national identity have identified global questions that make this concept dynamic and synthesized: who is a nationalist; where is nationality found; what are its origins; how is nationalism observed; etc. While these are just a sampling of the questions asked, there seems to be regular inquiry addressing the various facets that make up national identity. Moreover, the actual term used to discuss the concept comes in a plethora of varieties: nationality, nationalism, national identity, and so on. It seems that each academic discipline has created its own set of terms to define whatever framework supports the investigation, ranging from economics, to political science, to philosophy. There is little distinction between when theorists use “nationalism” verses “nationality,” or when discussions of how populations or individuals claim an allegiance to a space. Generally, scholars have identified a term and defined it, but do not distinguish it from other conceptual terms. But there are also distinctions about defining the space in itself: state, nation, nation-state, or communities. The combinations available to connect these concepts relating issues of national identity seems to be endless in trying to define the who, what, when, and where.

One initial space to begin understanding the complexity behind this demographic identifier comes from John Hutchinson’s and Anthony Smith’s edited collection, *Nationalism*. Apart from defining and naming the concepts centered in these discussions, they also describe the origins, varieties, and revival of nationalism. Their introduction discusses multiple global issues, including, but not limited to, religion, politics, society, culture, and war. Historical moments, like colonization, revolutions, and political reigns, are documented and correlated as

empirical evidence in the text. This short introduction brings to light major concerns with naming, identifying, and processing national identity. But this text, as the authors identify it, is limited in space. My aim to is look at major texts that have problematized the contextual space of nationality for further inquiry. Within this inquiry, it will be seen that little has been done to factor in the role of rhetoric as a process for developing a sense of national identity.

The goal for this chapter is to begin understanding how others have tried to define nationality, especially as it pertains to a rhetorical construction. The most common definitions frame a nation and its members' subsequent connections through macro functions of societies, like government and history. I press that a sense of nationality needs to be synthesized from an application of language and the role of rhetoric. The conversations attempting to classify and taxonomize nationality predate the modern state. From the following theorists' commentaries, I will highlight their advances in clarifying the theoretical impact of nationality. One way that information has been arranged is through a historical approach that analyzes people's affiliation practices from ancient spaces, like ports along the Silk Road or Ancient Greece. Based on the information available to us, I look at nationality in a contemporary context. I highlight major modern arguments focusing on identifying and arranging this term. My objective is to trace the mentioning of language practices to understand that impact. The focus of this dissertation is to begin developing a sense of the rhetoric of nationality. I focus my research specifically on Muslim women using qualitative methods in the U.S. begin framing and identifying their sense of nationality.

To help answer the central research question, "How do Muslim women articulate their sense of nationality?", I summarize the major theoretical approaches that frame nationality. I identified five theorists as prominent scholars discussing a facet of nationality that affects the

rhetorical style of nationality. Anthony Smith, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Karl Deutsch, and Julia Kristeva create theoretical questions (and answers) regarding the formulation of nationality from various disciplinary spaces as scholars.² This interdisciplinary review highlights features of nationality synthesized through arguments about culture, people, spaces, and time.

Finally, these theorists provide unique responses on the impact of language (and sometimes rhetoric) to define nationality. Theorists coming from other disciplinary ranges, like political science and anthropology, posit rhetorical acts as secondary to other social and cultural motives. In contrast, rhetoricians like Lane Bruner, Wayne Booth, Scott Lyons, and Lisa King introduce microanalyses of the role of rhetoric in regards to cultural issues, like nationality. While I hope to bring forward a complex illustration of all these scholars and their work, an infinite amount of space would only serve the work justice. It is my hope to highlight how a wide gap has emerged that ignores the rhetoric of nationality. This gap points to an exigence to investigate how people discuss their national identity, although I will detail later how Muslim women are specifically investigated.

Theoretical Views on Nationality

I organized these theorists information through five different thematic questions to create a holistic view of nationality: what is it? (Smith); when were they formed? (Gellner); who created it? (Anderson); how do we see them? (Deutsch); and how do Others, or marginalized people, identify with it? (Kristeva). These scholars and their works are matched to explain a

² There are resources that consider the impact of nationality and the sense of globalization following non-American standards. For example, Sara Castro-Klarén explains Walter Mignolo's *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* that maintains that Western nationality carries both a sense of "global" or "universal" identity, and a heterogeneity of identity, especially as part of the post-colonial condition (467-8). Castro-Klarén explains that the arguments from the text layers multiple frameworks, including "Western political philosophy, Latin American intellectual history, currently theoretical debates on modernity and capitalism, theology of liberation and the latest and most revised understanding on Inca, Maya and Aztec societies and knowledges" (469). Because my scholarship is framed first through Western rhetorical traditions, and then through nationality, I kept my research inquiry limited to texts that responded to the American style of nationality.

characteristic of nationality that drives its formation. The answers they provide have been specifically addressed because of their critical approach and consideration to create a sense of nationality.

Anthony Smith: What Is a National Identity?

Smith's *Theory of Nationalism* details the features that aggregate a sense of nationalism. His focus on defining 'nationalism' highlights the complications of its construction, but also isolates and targets openings for problematic usage of the term. This text balances two major areas of inquiry: the theories and varieties of nationalism. The former part highlights major social impacts, like religion, colonialism, and education, on the construction of national identities. However, Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, first published in 1983, presents a more compelling argument concerning the timeliness of national identity. I will forego detailing Smith's summary of earlier theoretical works on nationalism because Gellner's work, I believe, better responds and reacts to the timeliness of constructing the sense of national identity. Smith, however, creates a theory and definition for nationalism that has withstood newer developments and should be brought to the reader's attention.

Smith illustrates a limited conceptual sense of nationality in the Near East, historically, stating that "[t]he Assyrian kings refer to the objects of their warlike expeditions by such phrases as 'the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon,' 'the tribute of Jehu, son of Omri,' 'the house of Omri,' 'the towns...of the Upper Sea,' ..." (Hutchinson and Smith 161). This example is important because it highlights the narrative style used in a non-Western setting that distinguishes between social demographics, like class, position, and a sense of ownership over a location. Smith identifies a seemingly unquestioned notion that nationalism is solely tied to Western social and political structures because, "writers were conscious of the fact that the Near East was a

kaleidoscope of peoples of diverse cultures, in perpetual coalition or conflict” (161). For this time and space, claiming a single sense of nationalism towards a space was ineffective because there was regular exchange between sub-populations, such that even a non-biologically bound term like nationalism could not completely cleave a group either together or apart. We come to a point where we need to recognize that nationalism maintains a Western-world perspective as described through most scholarly work. The definition that Smith provides contextualizes issues based on the past, present, and future observed in Western society. Time and global rhetorical styles of nationalism will be discussed in the Gellner and Kristeva section, respectively, as they bring forward issues to complicate their role in establishing a sense of nationalism for Othered groups. Nevertheless, Smith attempts to afford us some answers about what nationalism is in his next section.

While Smith eventually establishes a definition for nationalism, he also complicates issues impacting its application so that only the most detailed definition will be helpful. Smith references various dictionaries and their entries for “nationalism,” but without referencing an exact definition for his own work. I would argue that the complexity of interactions impacting the historical exchanges Smith mentions makes a global definition impossible. However, narrowing a conceptual definition for the modern Western world readily becomes feasible. It really comes as no surprise that he turns to dictionaries to trace and identify nationality as a contextualized term.

Based on various dictionaries, including the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Webster’s*, and other collections in French and German, Smith identifies two conceptual spaces regularly associated with the sense of nationalism: (1): “sentiments, consciousness, attitudes, aspirations, loyalties”; and (2) “doctrines, ideologies, programmes [sic], activities or organizations,

movements” (168). The distinction between these two sets of terms is the individual versus the group thought. But Smith does not stipulate either of these definitions explicitly for “nationalism.” He argues that these definitions actually need to be cordoned off to separate spaces: national sentiment, the former, and nationalism, the latter. Nationalism, Smith maintains, is “variable in both intensity and diffusion. Individuals may give their primary loyalty to the nation grudgingly or enthusiastically; and the loyalty with its accompanying aspirations is typically uneven across a given population” (174).

Smith opens a space of inquiry to understand the representations of nationalism. He problematizes the role of ethnicity, language, politics, and culture affecting identification. These features only complicate a specific definition for what nationalism is. Instead of trying to generalize a sense of nationalism, I believe there is a gap to define nationalism within a population set that already shares commonalities. Looking at a specific population, like Muslim women in America, allows for enough stasis of cultural characteristics to begin assembling a definition. Muslim women in America have to face the backlash of cultural xenophobia because of their religious identification. As Smith explains, Muslim women’s shared sense of religion could fall under their individualized sense of nationalism because of America’s First Amendment Rights that allow for religious freedom, and also a sense of shared agreement for religious freedom. But what Smith does not cover is the converging space between subjective experiences in a space—nationalism—and practices in the space—national sentiment. I would call this hybrid identification “nationality.” This investigation merges the impact of individual actions in a contextualized place of America. One of the most significant characteristics in America is the pluralistic spectrum of representation that is allowed. Studying Muslim women here allows for an open inquiry of “how does it look,” without causing social or political harm.

Ernest Gellner: When Do National Identities Form?

While Smith separates an individual and group thought of nationality, Ernest Gellner's work explains the timeliness of people adopting nationality as an identifier to reveal another exigence for the study of Muslim women's sense of nationality. Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* presents a critical view incorporating time, society, and order. John Breuilly, who wrote the introduction to the 2nd edition printing of Gellner's work, boasts that Gellner's text has been reprinted 19 times and translated into 24 different languages (xiii). Gellner's work is germinal because he problematizes the construction of the 'nation' as a dependent variable. Gellner questions the genesis of the nation. Breuilly details, in the introduction, that prior to the mid-1960s, there were two prominent thoughts about nationalism:

First, nationalism was an aspect of national history... The best way to understand nationalism was through broad narrative histories of individual nations, perhaps linked to a typology such as that between Western and Eastern nationalism. In the second approach, nationalism was a modern, irrational doctrine, which could acquire sufficient power so as actually to generate nationalist sentiments and even nation-states. (xx)

Gellner crafts a new critical approach using an anthropological lens based on social organization and culture that blends these two methods together, minus a cultural hegemonic leaning. His theory of nationalism focuses on the concept rooted in a sense of people, rather than space.

Gellner sets up definitions for his key terms at the beginning of the text connected through culture and politics:

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent... In brief, nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and

in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state—a contingency already formally excluded by the principle in its general formulation—should not separate the power-holders from the rest. (1)

Smith's definition is utilized in a concrete fashion by focusing on a political style to narrow a discussion on the nation's formation. Gellner's definition is based upon a standard of nation, culture, and power, but admittedly has a wide spectrum of connotations. So while individual expression might be unique, maintaining a single style of government and political expression may synthesize nationality. He details two very different cases involving nationalism through these terms:

1. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.
2. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognize* each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, *nations maketh man*; nations are the artefacts [sic] of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. (7, original emphasis)

In the same way people argue whether a chicken or egg began its life cycle, Gellner identifies *culture* as the watershed space to develop a sense of nationalism: do people use culture, like a tool to espouse nationality, or is culture created, like a byproduct, in the process of people associating under a unified sense of nationality? Is acculturation, in fact, a sense of nationalist adoption? Instead Gellner ends the definitions chapter by asking, "what culture *does*" to establish a sense of nationalism (7).

Culture becomes intentionally undefined, but likened to language (42). Gellner argues that two time periods define the world by the structure of culture: agrarian and industrial society. During the agrarian period, there is little to no sense of nationalism because social policy could not be maintained through such a highly stratified population (16-7). Gellner argues that religion acts as a universalizing mechanism to bring literacy, which begets policies to create systems of nations (17). This movement creates the industrial society, where widespread literacy must be maintained by all members

by turning everyone into a cleric, by turning this potentially universal class into an effectively universal one, by ensuring that everyone without exception is taught by it, that exo-education becomes the universal norm, and that no one [is singularly either a consumer or producer of cultural standards]. (31)

Language practices become central to craft a definition of nationality based on culture. The construction of a standard language style leads to a sense of group politics, thus creating a sense of nationalism.

The metaphor of nationality likened to language runs through Gellner's conceptual formation of nationality. So while unique languages are quantifiable, there are also dialects that can exponentially increase that number; likewise, nations can be counted, but territories and unrecognized states can also increase the count (42-3). In this way, nationalism is a subjective characteristic for each person based on their culture. Gellner succinctly says, "Nationalism as such is fated to prevail, but not any one particular nationalism" (45). Moreover, Gellner identifies that, "[nationalism] is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its state" (46). Just like language practices, qualitative research would allow for subjective expressions

while also seeing trends of similarities in nationality. Gellner, himself, considers the impact of religion and nationality in *Nations and Nationalism*.

Gellner on Islam and Nationality

Gellner's argument has many compelling facets, but his writing regular uncovers and diverges from creating bounded answers, like his arguments about culture. Most notable is Gellner's specific commentary about Islam in creating a sense of nationalism in *Nations and Nationalism*. As noted previously, the world is divided into two time frames: agrarian and industrial. The agrarian time had little sense of nationalism because feudal stratification of populations did not allow for social protocols to be practiced and stabilized. But in the industrial age, religion worked as a system to create social protocol and modified contemporary language usage. The role of religion in constructing a sense of nationalism is significantly important. Gellner specifically cites Islam as an example of a nexus between religion and nationalism. He describes how literacy does not act as a stratifying element in Islam, such that clerics are gateways to God. Instead, everyone is equally assigned to worship, but that it also does not preclude one from other roles in society (17). But Gellner's work does not look at the specific intricacies of Islam and industrial nationality. His classification of Islam as having "doctrinal elegance, simplicity, exiguousness, strict unitarianism, without very much in the way of intellectually offensive frills," is poetic, but without empirical backing in *Nations and Nationalism*. He does a more full analysis of Muslim society in a text aptly called *Muslim Society*, but that was not reviewed here because it connects identity first through a lens of religion to reach a discussion of tribes or space. This research focuses first and foremost on an identity tied to space, as is done in *Nations and Nationalism*. As such, a research gap from this work develops from connecting Islam and nationality. Gellner's investigation on religion and

nationality is intriguing and derives a new exigence for research. In response to Gellner's work, I would like to consider religion as being mutually exclusive to the expression of identifying classifications. Thus, my research question explores this space within America: How do Muslim women in America discuss their national identity?

Benedict Anderson: Who Forms National Identities?

Another common source to begin problematizing nationalism is Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, which strictly defines concepts of nation and nationalism as a function of politics: "Nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (Chapter 1). He, much like Gellner, constructs a definition of nation-ness (his term) through time and cultural construction. However he diverges from Gellner's perspective to pinpoint nation-ness as a matter of materiality: "Nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts [sic] of a particular kind." Instead of a quality, Anderson argues that "the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation." In other words, print technology was the watershed moment to construct the modern nation. Anderson's historical argument finds validity through changes in political, religious, and industrial practices that changes the lives of the non-hegemonic class. The ability for these less empowered groups to collaborate can be identified as the genesis for modern nationalism. Looking at the material constructions of a population could lead to an understanding of those people's sense of nationality. This points to the usefulness of a rhetorical study that captures both the material goods along with an articulated narrative of these goods, which would respond both to Gellner's modern sense of nationality and Anderson's imagined group thought of nationality,

as I discuss later. Returning to Anderson, nationality is a criteria developed by pretend affiliations, or imagined communities as he posits it.

Anderson explains that religions “conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power,” thus allowing groups that were geographically and culturally unknown to each other to “underst[and] each other’s ideographs, because the sacred texts they shared existed only in classical Arabic [as a example from Islam] ” (Chapter 2). Language acted as a medium to connect and create a borderless community based on principles. But language also needed to be handled as non-arbitrary: “the Qur’an was literally untranslatable (and therefore untranslated), because Allah’s truth was accessible through the unsubstituted true signs of written Arabic” (Chapter 2). Maintaining these Truth-Like qualities in religion and language creates a social structure that organizes large populations of people.

Nationalism, Anderson argues, may have first catalyzed through religious commentary in a space, but it was a renewed sense of language that transforms nationalism into its modern sense. Marco Polo, the explorer, is quoted discussing the hierarchy of global religions to establish an “our/their” binary. Polo acts a primary diplomat saying, “I do honour [sic] and show respect to all the four [Christians, ‘Saracens,’ Jews, and ‘idolaters’], and invoke to my aid whichever amongst them is in truth supreme in heaven. But from the manner in which is his majesty acted toward them, it is evident that he regarded the faith of the Christians as the truest and the best” (Chapter 2). Gellner uses Polo’s narrative to explain the colonial hierarchy soon-to-be-demonstrated in the global context, but also plants “the seeds of a territorialization of faiths which foreshadows the language of many nationalists.” Religion was used as an initial criteria to cleave people into groups. Gellner uses the example of the Reformation as a moment of actually

catalyzed political division towards secular nations: “In a word, the fall of Latin exemplified a larger process in which the sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized” (Chapter 2).

Anderson’s argument regarding the modern nation comes from changes in language used in materiality. In Europe, the move to make Church Latin more Ciceronian, or classically ‘pure,’ distinguished a new language register to allow for a quotidian style separate from the Church (Chapter 3). Martin Luther’s watershed moment nailing his theses on the chapel-door in Wittenburg altered Christianity’s relationship with language as it was written in German translation. Moreover, Anderson argues that Luther’s work “represented no less than one third of all German-language books sold between 1518 and 1525.” Though religion spurred the modern sense of nationalism, it was in fact the role of printed materials and language that most influenced our contemporary sense of nationality.

Anderson crafts rules to define the modern sense of a nation, which he identifies as an “imagined community.” Anderson argues that previous theorists on nationality removed people from the core of their arguments. In contrast, he identifies “an anthropological spirit” as a gap in literature to connect people and nations. Bearing this in mind, Anderson describes axioms on the network formed by people sharing a sense of nationality:

1. “imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members.” (Chapter 1)
2. “the nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, had finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.”

3. “imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.”

4. “imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”

I prefer this definition of nation to both Gellner and Smith because its boundary identification is based upon actions of people. At the center of any discussion of nation, people must remain intact. However, unlike the former two theorists, Anderson uses the word “nation” in his commentary, which connects more to a spatial orientation. Anderson’s principles are totally centered upon the role of people and allow them to create groups, which are both micro and macro in quantity. Anderson constructs an idea of a nation built upon a premise of understanding between people. I would argue that Anderson implies that there is a rhetorical style that can be understood by all members of the nation. Anderson’s theory is unique from Gellner’s, in particular, because of his recognition of material goods that are shared in the nation. But by removing the physical presence of the ‘artefact’ from the argument, the rhetorical styling of the nation are assumed through cultural systems, such as education or legal practice. I agree with Anderson that there is imagination and also suspension of disbelief in forming a nation, but there also needs to be a recognition of the media through which the nation is presented. Understanding who is forming the nation—as he details—will allow insight into what is also being presented as the nation.

Karl Deutsch: How Do We Identify National Identity?

Smith, Gellner, and Anderson theorize national identity in comparison to other social organizations, like culture, language, and peoples. Another way to consider identifying the range of nationalism is to consider how one can recognize its presence. Karl Deutsch wrote *Nationalism and Social Communication* in the 1950s, and promotes a social studies approach using quantitative values, rather than qualitative ones, to give ‘nationalism’ a concrete frame. Deutsch runs through a comprehensive reading of other theorists who discusses nationality, like Ernest Renan and Edmund Burke, and also details problematic spaces of the definition, like “nation” and “nationality.” From their commentary, he derives not only his own questions to decode the implications of nationality—“when is a ‘common’ heritage common?”—but also works to create a quantitative method to create answers about nationality: “In all the works surveyed ... Not merely had measurements not been made, but very concepts themselves furnished no bases for them” (5; 14). To create a quantitative heuristic, Deutsch has to create definite boundaries for evaluation.

To establish a standard for nationality research, he creates rules for a conceptual model to “fit the known facts, and facilitate some prediction and control of events” (60). Any concept identified needs to abide by the following criteria:

1. Each concept should be operational. It should be clearly specified in terms of possible observations or measurements, from which it is derived and by which it can be tested. In this it should go beyond a mere explanation which uses familiar images but which cannot be so tested.
2. Each concept should be fruitful. It should suggest further observations or experimentations.

3. Each concept should be “critical.” It should permit statements specific enough to exclude the possibility of certain observational data or results, so that, if these results are found, the concept clearly will have to be revised. (60)

This numerical listing creates some boundaries, but still leaves substantial ambiguity in isolating conditions analyzed. For example, the concepts “immigration” and “national history” can be conflated: where does one end and the other start? Alone, this list does not create a complete enough of a bounded space for investigation. Not surprisingly, there is another list to help clarify criteria that would be valid for nationality investigation:

1. It should apply to the behavior of individuals as well as to groups.
 2. It should apply to rational as well as to so-called “irrational” behavior of groups or individuals.
 3. It should utilize data observable by strictly external methods, as well as subjective data available from introspection, and indirectly from literature.
 4. The description should generally utilize the power of specialized disciplines and fit their findings within each field.
 5. It should link the specialties so as to permit the transfer and recombination of their knowledge between different fields; and
 6. It should, therefore, permit group attack on data too voluminous for one investigator.
- (60-1)

Deutsch reduces these issues to facets of communication, but these conditions do not create definitive criteria for features of nationality. A quantitative method needs to have a distinctive measurement style, such that no characteristic may represent multiple classes of identification. Deutsch does not create enough of a rubric to justify a quantitative approach to study

nationalism. In fact, he argues, “Test or measurements, as we discussed them [through binary categorization of qualitative features], can only register the results of social learning that has occurred in an individual up to this moment. They say little about the long-range results of his future learning, and nothing about the probably future results of the social learning of his children and grandchildren...” (89). If nationalism can only measure the contextualized present, I would argue that a qualitative study is better suited to understand its framework and implications.

Julia Kristeva: How Are Others Identified to the Nation?

The theoretical frames described earlier focus on hegemonic styles to define nation(ality/ism), which is fine and good, until we come to the prominent example of America in literature that is often described as a quasi-utopian space for blending or mixing of various populations. America, as a young, democratic, and capitalistic nation, is an optimal space to begin not only identifying criteria for nations and nationalism, but also to hear voices of minorities. To understand some of the literature focused on the Other, I turn to Julia Kristeva, who specifically uses language to decode and problematize the space of the nation. Her commentary highlights the role of marginalized people, like women and immigrants, leading to questions of who plays the role of defining the ‘nation.’ Unlike the other theorists presented, she questions the space of national identity to see how limited our consideration is for Others in building a national identity.

Kristeva’s *Nations without Nationalism* provides an interesting account for answers about nationalism because the text responds to issues of “strangeness” or the impact of others in an established society. In a study about a doubly-marginalized population, her commentary can lend guidance to the questions to develop this inquiry. Leon S. Roudiez, the translator to this edition,

explains that “strangeness” overarches many of Kristeva’s works and even enters her own biography “when [she] came to Paris from her *native* Bulgaria” (x, my emphasis). Kristeva’s personal nationality factors against any theoretical analysis of her texts on marginalized groups. She gets identified as an emic researcher—someone is who part of the same demographic she studies—to establish a sense of credibility to defining what “strangeness” is in nationality and immigration. While anyone’s past will play onto their work, I find the argument focusing on immigration to be illogical (probably because my personal “origin story” does not follow a traditional connection to my present identity, or just because this definition comes as a straw-man fallacy). But Kristeva’s commentary is important to understand the role of the non-hegemonic parties: what happens to the conceptual presence of “nationality” when origins do not match or there is no shared language between people? Kristeva considers a sense of nationality, but also considers the role of immigration and gender to a national identity marker. The exclusion that she discusses throughout the text is important to identify the rhetorical practices necessary for marginalized groups. She traces the lack of theoretical commentary about non-hegemonic groups for a nation from the past to create a contemporary space of inquiry.

In the first essay presented in the text, “What of Tomorrow’s Nation?”, Kristeva details historical examples where gender and national affiliation cross, thus leading to new implications for nationality. The most recursive example from the text is that of the Danaides, “the first foreigners mentioned in Greek mythology [who] are women,” who were forced to marry their first-cousins and ended up killing their husbands on their wedding nights (17-8). But their ancestry is traced back to Io, the priestess of Hera, who had an affair with Zeus and bore his children in Egypt. This royal ancestry allowed the Danaides to gain a social advantage, even though they were not Greek (19). While other theorists focus on a contemporary role of

nationality being an issue of identification, Kristeva introduces the sense of origin, gender, and social balance that commingles other characteristics.

The greater question—“Are women nationalists?”—gets answered in a later section of this essay because “the biological fate that causes us to be the *site* of the species chains us to *space*: home, native, soil, motherland (*matric*)” (33-4). The shorter answer to this question is, resoundingly, no. The longer answer is that Kristeva argues that women “have the luck and responsibility of being boundary-subjects: body and thought, biology and language, personal identity and dissemination during childhood, origin and judgment” (35). Kristeva points at the irony of women’s identification as needing to amplify the social practices, which has been identified as the major point for establishing a nation by Gellner, Smith, and Anderson in various ways. Women are allowed to mimic social plans, but not have subjective responses. Because of this point, an even more important research gap, I believe, is opened to begin studying the personal nationality claims of women. Kristeva does not provide enough evidence to explain this theory in a contemporary space. The early examples of nationality highlight foreignness and gender, but much like the Danaides, they highlight a challenge to social practice. There was no question of whether these groups have their identities challenged, but rather a complication to the micro-styling of their society.

But Kristeva is quite certain that women are removed from any ability to claim a national consciousness. She argues that “[t]he maturity of the second sex will be judged in coming years according to its ability to modify the nation in the face of foreigners, to orient foreigners confronting the nation toward a still unforeseeable conception of a polyvalent community” (35). So without recognizing those who are not part of the nation, but still deserve a human right to space, women are seen as less-than-citizens. She had argued earlier that, “Nowhere is one *more* a

foreigner than in France” because foreigners have no right to vote (30, original emphasis). With very stringent social rules of French patriotism, Kristeva rallies against the status quo of identity that does not consider immigrants or marginalized bodies. France’s role in global colonization and subsequent diasporas illustrates a hypocrisy stemming from the political into the cultural fabric of the nation.

However, she changes the identifier to ‘strange’ and then ‘other’ in the subsequent analysis: “it is reasonable to ask foreigners to recognize and respect the strangeness of those who welcome them;” but then, “For there is otherness for all others, and it is precisely such extension of otherness that...invites us to respect by thinking of the social body as a guaranteed hierarchy of private rights...called *esprit général*” (31, original emphasis). This alteration of signifiers not only blurs the identification of these non-nations, but also confuses the boundaries to identify this population. Kristeva’s arguments group women, foreigners, others, and strangers as incongruent to a French nationalism. Their grouping is marked ‘strange,’ because of its aberration from the average, but then transferred to ‘other,’ as a sign of contrariness to the hegemonic.

Kristeva’s diachronic analysis should not be taken lightly. There is little to no consideration of marginalized or minority groups in the theoretical framework of nationality from other theorists. But while Kristeva keeps her analysis of nationalism tied to history and space, there is little or no implication of the discursive quality of nationalism, that is, what the role of language in building a contextualization of national identity might be. I use a rhetorical insight of nationality to better understand how to uncover language’s intersection with nationality.

Towards a Theory of National Rhetoric

Having highlighted the major theoretical arguments surrounding nationality, I believe several gaps have emerged on the works of national identity: the role of language in its construction and application has not been fully analyzed. The theorists presented above all connect a sense of identity with space, but the role of language in employing ‘nationality’ as a demographic marker is limited. Even Anderson’s theory using language posits it as being in society to *do* something. Instead, language needs to also be complicated in its formulation, operation, and presence. The earlier theories highlighted are infused with a sense of language, but without fully considering its rhetorical complexity in constructing the markers of nationality, both through words and materials. To better understand the perspective of language, I will introduce a few theorists who are essential in understanding a contextualized impact of rhetorical practices, including language and material objects, to assign identifiers. These theorists give us an idea of how to manage language, but we still need to merge conceptual ideas to that of discursive ones.

M. Lane Bruner: How Does Rhetoric Engage with Nationality

Not many rhetoricians have problematized the role of nationality, but M. Lane Bruner did extensive case studies in *Strategies of Remembrance: The Rhetorical Dimensions of National Identity Construction*. Bruner establishes a definition for nationality with which I want to argue: “Nations do not have stable or natural identities. Instead, national identity is incessantly negotiated through discourse” (1). More important than setting up a definition for nationality, Bruner establishes that the marker is manufactured through language. Instead of believing that there is some way to isolate and study nations and nationality apart from contextual spaces, Bruner looks at the concept as a *telos*, or endpoint, to conversations. I question whether

nationality is always placed at the end of an equation connecting social structures, politics, and culture together. Nevertheless, Bruner approaches a discussion about nationality using a language-lens that, I believe, is necessary.

He identifies some salient premises that allow nationality to be constructed; three of four of his points are particularly important to this research. There is a particular importance put on the creators of a national identity:

1. National identities are “assumed to be malleable fictions, assembles out of available historical resources and incessantly negotiated between state and public representatives offering competing accounts of national character”
2. National identities can highlight different features important both to the nation and its global context
3. National identities can be fashioned by various means (3)

Instead of looking at a system that produces a sense of nationality, Bruner allows for individuals to impact the representation of national identities. His guidelines allow for a spectrum of representation, rather than just one variety as presented by theorists outside of rhetorical studies. Bruner looks specifically to national speeches as a stage to describe a population’s belief. But one does not need to get such public works to find moments of national identity. Instead, I see a gap in the research that does not address how individuals detail their personal sense of nationality.

In fact, Bruner’s exigency focuses on identification of individuals rather than the recognition of a state. His theoretical heuristic situates the negotiation of membership, rather than sovereignty of the state, at its center. National identities, he argues, are a matter constructed through public rhetorics (90). These rhetorics are, “historically developed and politically

consequential symbolic constructions citizens are enmeshed in, and understanding their variety is an important step in connecting national identity to world order” (90-1). Time is linear and recursive in building a sense of nationality. It seems that nationality might be running along a Möbius strip pathway, rather than a timeline ray. The Möbius strip allows for a sense of double-ness, but in fact, there is only one side and one edge; there should not be such a stiff separation between past and present to understand national identity. Not only do we not have a point of origin to begin, but it seems impossible to identify the ‘past’ separately from the ‘present.’ Bruner says that through “narrative omissions related to dominant characterization of the nation’s identity, social and rhetorical critics provide a perspective that purely historical approaches do not” (92). Bruner challenges the notion of time that runs rampantly through previous understandings of nationality. Moreover, Bruner destabilizes the sense of acting that allows the hegemonic to represent the entire community.

Based on Bruner’s work, it appears that rhetoricians maintain a theoretical tool kit to critically analyze subjective matters in patterns within nationality. Instead of representing the masses, rhetorical analysis can better understand the subjective, which may lead to crystallized commentary for a larger group. To do such, we must better understand the role of language as a formative material.

Wayne Booth: How Do Exchanges Amongst People Happen?

One such rhetorician, Wayne Booth, offers a theoretical framework detailing the negotiation that happens, from a rhetorical perspective. Based on his 1974 work, *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent*, Booth moves away from a classical definition of rhetoric, which situates rhetoric as an art based upon “mere trickery or bombast or ornament... [For example] The claim...that President Kennedy substituted rhetoric for genuine thought and action can be

found paralleled through the centuries, beginning with Socrates' attacks on the sophists' ability to make the worse seem the better cause" (xii). Booth argues against the idea that rhetoric is only a style or method, thus classifying it as a artistic endeavor. Instead, we need to consider that the language used for expression is just as insightful and powerful as the information shared.

Booth gives us a focus for rhetoric: "the art of probing what men believe they ought to believe, rather than proving what is true according to abstract methods" (xiii). Rather than trying to find the Absolute Truth, or an indisputable fact, Booth argues we should look to understand when and why do people come to believe. This is the power of rhetoric: how one articulates is just as important as what one says based upon the listening audience (xiii). When a rhetor identifies an appropriate message for her audience, then a quality of "assent" begins.

Assent, Booth argues, is the modern state of rhetoric where the rhetor discovers and shares warrantable assertion (11). Modern rhetoric involves a subjective stance to identify values and standards. In contrast, classical rhetoric created standards that establish *how* a rhetor communicated. For example, Aristotle posited three rhetorical proofs, which Booth summarizes quite well:

(1) [Logos or] substantive arguments about the case to be established; for example, to say that we are not as well prepared for war as our enemy can be a cogent argument for not going to war at this time; (2) [ethos or] "ethical proof"—arguments based on the character of the speaker or his opponent; for example; to say that the king's counselor has lied to you frequently in the past is reason for you to disbelieve his claim that we are not ready to wage war; (3) [pathos or] "emotional proof"—arguments appealing to the special emotions or attitudes of the audience; for example to argue for peace before a

group of middle-aged mothers I will stress “death of our sons” more strongly than I would when speaking to senators.

Almost everyone has agreed with Aristotle that the first kind, if available, is somehow superior as proof to the other two. Example and enthymeme; the rhetorical versions of induction and deduction used in dialectic, are the core of persuasion (144) This classical arrangement—privileging arguments situated with logic first—is no longer the standard to be articulate in modern rhetoric. Instead, Booth positions ethos and pathos as more “substantive” features for the rhetoric of assent because these proofs are ruled by subjective values that change with the contemporary times (145-6). We now have a standard of asking, “who is involved in persuasive moments?” and “how does this make me feel?” to establish whether we *assent* to communications.

Booth’s theory of rhetoric is more applicable to the discussion of nationality because of its focus on the subjective, rather than the universal. Classical rhetoric, as Booth explains, details language practices to present the Truth. The modern space, however, is filled with subjective truths. Nationality, as non-rhetoric theorists demonstrated, is a fluid characteristic and individualized. Focusing on emotional and authoritative justifications is more important than the crafting of an argument to establish a rhetoric of nationality. But more than just privileging emotions in arguments as Booth says, I would argue that we have become desensitized to the impact of the logical progression in modern arguments. For example, this can be seen in the constant argument over whether President Barack Obama is an American and thus eligible to be president: even after the public release of his American birth certificate, rhetors still argue his ineligibility for the office after two terms and have gained assent to the argument by a population of Americans who believe Obama is not American. Nationality is not a Truth that is evident in a

binary way, such that classical rhetoric can accurately define it. A modern theory with subjectivity would better address the rhetorical practice of nationality. Moreover, the growing standard of “Muslim” being a nationality in America from my personal experiences made me think to highlight the rhetoric of nationality amongst Muslim women.

In constructing a sense of assent rhetorically, Booth also considers the impact of “doubt” when framing a modern rhetorical situation. Booth presents the idea of “modern dogma.” Modern dogma responds to the demands of assent by questioning how pathos and ethos are defined:

1. *How should men work when they try to change each other's minds, especially about value questions?*
2. *When should you and I change our minds?—that is, how do we know a good reason when we see one?* (12, original emphasis)

These questions focus on the idea of transformation, not about present state. But these questions are not situated with the need to understand the logical steps for alteration, but rather a subjective impact for change. So dogma, or convincing someone to change, is the result of our new rhetorical style focused on assent. But even as an output of an ‘assenting’ rhetorical moment, we cannot overlook the impact of dogma because it is defined as a subjective quality: “the dogma I am here proposing to replace teaches that we have no justification for asserting what can be doubted, and we are commanded by it to doubt whatever cannot be proved” (101). While our modern style of rhetoric is based on assent, we cannot overlook the impact of dogmas as subjective, communicative nuggets. Booth even creates a schema to distribute the varieties of dogmas:

- (a) the *methods* or means for producing change;

- (b) the *nature* of the thing changed—the mind or soul of self or person or organism
(though I have talked only of ‘changing minds,’ I intend the word mind in the
broadest possible sense);
- (c) the *scene* of the change—the world in which that thing changed, the “mind,” finds
itself;
- (d) the *principles* or basic *assumptions* about truth and its testing—the ground and nature
of change; and
- (e) the *purpose* of change. (22, original emphasis)

Booth notes that these features are loosely based on Kenneth Burke’s dramatistic pentad and Aristotle’s four causes, but he articulates these features better for a modern audience. Though Burke’s work is from the 20th century, he does not situate or explain his theoretical premise as well as Booth. Booth’s revision to complicate rhetoric for a modern context accounts for varieties expressed in today’s society. This framework could better approach an understanding for people identifying with a nation. I prefer Booth’s commentary because the examples clearly identify the complexity behind the rhetoric used. For example, he discusses a dogma of motives as the idea of habits: “A given habit will seem useful provided it seems to answer important questions more successfully than any rival habit” (37). Booth uses the idea of religion to illustrate what the dogma of motives means, and then furthermore challenges the reader to pursue an idea of rhetoric without skepticism. He challenges the reader to consider an analytical lens that frames rhetorical understanding without preconceived notions, with a shared sense of community that others who “understand the problem share your belief” (40). This theory frames a communicative style that would allow for the articulation (and reception) of subjectivity, such as nationality.

Scott Richard Lyons: Marks of Rhetorical Assent

Scott Richard Lyons, a scholar based in rhetoric, composition, and Native American studies, takes the conceptual idea of assent to a specified context focusing on the agency and identity of Native peoples with a contention of assent, though not defined in the same way that Booth does. Rather than discuss the role of rhetorical assent as it impacts individuals, Lyons reserves the direction of analysis by focusing on people involved in rhetorical moments and considering the style they adopted to manage the context. Lyons highlights how often Native communities do not have autonomy in their contextualized space, so issues of power, language, and privilege lay at the foot of his analytical discussion.³ I believe Lyons' work on Native communities' rhetorical practices considers issues of a similar nature facing Muslim women in America today because of these concerns: a lack of voice in crafting their own identity, while subsequently speaking in their own right. American culture places both Native peoples and Muslim women in a marginalized, and sometimes subalterned, space. As such, his work is exemplary to discuss rhetoric as it pertains to identity in America for a bureaucratically created characteristic like nationality. What Lyons does so well throughout *X-Marks* is constructing a sense of nationality using cultural markers and identification through specific details. The message that is so important from *X-Marks* is that identification is not a cookie-cutter proposition, but rather something that can be molded for inclusion.

³ June Nash reviewed a collection of anthologies discussing the impact of Latin American indigenous groups in national politics to push for representation. Like Lyons, Nash explores works that connect rhetorics (through visuals and sovereignty) to nationality. She explains that "[i]dentity was not a topic of conversation nor a discourse defining social movements since it was not separated from everyday life.... [T]hese anthologies discern a pan-American discourse that celebrates indigenous spiritual relations to land, consensual decisions, and ensuring harmony in national and international arenas where they actively assert their rights to expressing it" (137). The autonomy of self-representation is immensely important in rhetorical analysis. I focus my study with Lyons' work due to his theoretical space directly involved with rhetoric. He situates theories and praxis of rhetorical representation in a compelling commentary, which I attempt to model through this work. That is to say, I make no claim to compare Native and Muslim rhetorical strategies regarding nationality.

Overall, Lyons utilizes the word “assent” as a means of self-identification. He does not use Booth’s *Modern Dogma* to theoretically situate his analysis, but comments on national theories by Gellner and Smith to build his unique commentary leading to a rhetorical construction of an American Indian nation(ality). Lyons layers different symbolic and literal uses of an “x-mark” to create a representative signifier that maintains all of the historical meanings for Native identification through time, space, and styles:

The x-mark is a contaminated and coerced sign of consent made under conditions that are not of one’s making. It signifies power and a lack of power, agency and a lack of agency. It is a decision one makes when something has already been decided by you, but it is still a decision. Damned if you do, damned if you don’t.”

So in the same way that the letter “x” has two lines that intersect at one point, Lyons’ sees that issues of autonomy for Native groups lies at the moment of negotiation within a system of coercion. But this brokerage of identity is also complicated by the role of other parties invested in the lives of Natives. Similarly, the concentration of x-marks both forms and does not form a rhetorical nation.

Lyons, like so many theorists working on Othered populations, works hard to maintain deconstructive terms within his writing. He cites events that can be identified through calendar dates, as if that is the only criteria needed to claim an event as real—treaty signings, migrations, wars, deaths, etc—along with other more thematic examples to illustrate that a collection of x-marks produce warrants of assent to claim a nationality identity. These x-marks need a contextualization to explain the systems of representation and oppression that are entangled and complicated. To do this, Lyons focuses on the rhetorical situation of identity. This perspective allows for a consideration of time, place, and the necessity to respond, react, or direct other

parties. A discussion about nationality is a hugely discursive moment that needs to include the role of others as well as a contextual framework. Lyons approaches this discursive space by using a similar approach that Booth adopted in his modern dogma style: focusing on ethos and pathos of Native people in their moments of assent in time, space, and discourse. Booth argues that logos—or the logical arrangement—is secondary to the impact of ethos and pathos in framing modern rhetoric. That is not to say that logos is totally devoid in modern arguments, but that rhetors frame discourse primarily through the latter two rhetorical appeals.

A contextual markup is necessary to understand the complexity of identity marking, especially for Native identities. A consideration for both time and space are necessary to understand when and where these identities are made because if we understand what is happening, we may gain an understanding of why people do or do not react the way they do. Booth identified these ideas as modern dogmas, which regularly affect the style of rhetorical assent sought in arguments. Lyons also traces the association between the dual role of persuasion and belief through his own examples in Native communities. He introduces these concepts by considering facts and figures over time, by remembering; Native populations were estimated at 10 million before 1492 and declined to 250,000 by the start of the 20th Century (Lyons). It was not just genocide and war that destroyed cultures, but language, religion, homes, communities, and an overall sense of life suppressed. Thus, we need to create a sense of time, space, and language through Native cultures to understand the complexity of the identity formed under the title, ‘Indian National.’ The contextual understanding of this identity is hard to pinpoint because “X-marks operate in a time understood as neither linear nor ‘circular’ but multiple and always on the move. In similar fashion, the space of the x-mark has multiplicitous quality, having been variously invented over many years as camp, frontier, checkerboard, Indian country, subaltern

nation, and rezzy kitchen table, [etc.].” The consideration for various, and potentially infinite, possibilities of contexts could impact the construction of an identity is a theoretical point that is often forgotten in constructing commentary about national identity.

Moreover, Lyons also allows for the consideration of language into identity construction. Lyons begins with a linguistic approach by focusing on the word choice:

Nation comes from the Latin word *natio* and shares an etymological link with *natura* insofar as both words have something to say about the processes of birth... But the concept became more political and cultural—and less racial—by the sixteenth century... There is no obvious word for “nation” in *Ojibwemowin*, although there are terms that describe some connected ideas: for instance, “territory” (*aki*, which can also be used for “earth,” “land,” “ground,” or “country”), “people” (...*anishinaabe*...), and “governance” (*odaake*, meaning “to direct affairs,” or “steer” in the mechanical sense of driving a car.).

Without the need to create signifiers that separate people into groups, Lyons argues that language became a vehicle to divide a Native identity across lines of practice and spaces. He argues that people who did not use the standardized rhetoric of the United State of America would lose a connection to the land. If for example, someone identified as Ojibwe, and not American, they were nation-less because this space is only American. In this scenario, the very presence of Native people stands as an x-mark for representation. But these resulting x-marks are formed by the necessity to be something non-Native, and not a formation from within “organic indigenous communities.” The identity formed during these problematic times are also, it seems, foreign and domestic to Native populations. The desire to separate and identify what components are modern verses traditional to these groups would be ineffective. Lyons seems to argue that one must stop

to recognize the components affecting identity, but not blindly remove or exclude features as being “inauthentic.”

The final point I would highlight from Lyons’ work is the argument regarding the role of writing: that both those who wrote or resisted writing, were the first “nationalists.” He explains:

When Indians made their x-marks on treaties during the nineteenth century, they entered into a social process that has no meaning at all outside a modern national paradigm; therefore, treaty signers committed themselves to nation status at the moment they made their x-marks.

Much like Gellner, who argued that literacy also started a national identification movement among Western populations, the same impact may be seen among Native groups. Participating in these acts became a moment of identification that these authors associate with a population and are taking up a stance, sometimes legal, cultural, or both. Lyons points to examples of Indians (not) signing and (not) participating in writing moments as a declarative for modernization, especially towards developing a national identity. The cultural associations between items and groups is a very powerful connection. Artifacts, like x-marks, can be taken for granted and stimulate a growing stereotype. Within the American landscape, many groups have to contend with artifacts that represent whole groups. Lyons leads us to a new consideration of multiple representations for identity. Instead of just focusing on words, there is also a call to identify artifacts and material goods that are seen to represent national identities.

A New Space: Context, Language, Artifacts

I have briefly highlighted several compelling arguments on the construction, identification, and representation theories about national identity. Above all, the theorists have led me to observe a gap to discuss the rhetorical impact of a subjective national identity. There

are so many generalized theories of nationality, I believe an individualized sense of nationality needs to be established because of the contextualization of language. Contextualized language needs to play a larger role in understanding the qualities of nationality. Scholars from fields apart from rhetoric have identified a compound crystallization of national identity based on history, emotions, geography, and religion; while rhetoricians focus on the arbitration of identity. I believe if we are looking to understand a human-made term, we must look at our human constructions of languages to understand how we represent experiences. But lurking within these comments in the theories presented, there is also recognition of the material goods that also highlight the role of nationality. But this recognition is placed in passing. Lyons provides us the most compelling argument to connect people, contexts, and language to understand a national identity, but also mentions the treaties, buildings, and goods used in the process. What symbolic representations are also held as placeholders for a national identity? How do we understand the impact of these objects also telling us the meaning of a national identity? Lisa King, a cultural rhetorician and scholar of Native rhetorics, asks similar questions at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

Lisa King: Material Connection with Rhetoric

Rhetorical sovereignty can be represented in a variety of ways, not just verbal. Lisa King considers the role of self-identification in a publically demonstrative space using materials, such as the NMAI. Because this museum carries a narrative from a highly marginalized population, the importance of ‘doing things right’ stands at the forefront for scholars and curators. As a museum representing a wide range of populations and also part of the greater Smithsonian network, there is a spectrum heritages (both past, present, and future) under its direction. This creates a high stakes moment for the parties involved to respond to an exigence for identification,

and ultimately, an inquiry basis for research. As King states, “if the NMAI wishes to make a communicable assertion of cultural sovereignty that avoids speaking something not intended to its audiences, then the very act of communication—the rhetorical frame itself—must be examined” (76). In this case, since Native peoples were heavily consulted and prioritized to create the displays at the museum, King utilizes a different theoretical concept crafted by Lyons—rhetorical sovereignty: “to claim rhetorical sovereignty is to claim the right to determine communicative need and to decide as a people how Native nations should be constructed in public discourse” (78). These exhibits maintain an accuracy and precision of representation within the exhibits for its authors and the groups the exhibit represents. There is rhetorical intention for the presentation of information and artifacts.

King observes the three centerpiece exhibits of the NMAI through a rhetorical lens to understand the range of rhetorical sovereignty present. These displays discuss larger thematic representations: group identification through tribal affiliation; spiritual and epistemological frames; and present-day Native representations. King details various rhetorical readings of the arrangement, organization, and concept in the displays. What one needs to remember is that the authenticity of these exhibits is not in question, but that rhetors negotiate the *range* of representations possible when considering various populations who identify as American Indians. King connects the contextual setting and discourse, much like Lyons’ identifies with x-marks: “the goal is not to find authority for this narrative through careful chronological dating and labeling of objects; instead, the objects are included to illustrate the story” (86).

While the presence of rhetorical sovereignty was well articulated, the analysis focuses on the rhetorical power of artifacts presented for specific American Indian communities. A story is implied in the arrangement of pieces deemed viable for the exhibit. While the narrative presented

was composed by two different sets of curators from the Native nations involved and the NMAI, I wonder if there are any individual representations in the exhibit. These exhibits need to speak for group dynamic of the Native Nations, which means that some people will not have their personal opinions, or *doxa*, represented. These pieces may act as metonymies to represent tribes, but what of the unique rhetoric voice of autonomy? The arrangement of these artifacts could lead to a complicated response to national identity and identification. While quotes are delivered by curators and exigencies are related to specific Nations, I continue to look for commentary by those who see themselves in the displays. While it could be extremely difficult to trace and interview the generous individuals who donated or shared their possessions with the NMAI, those singular voices are missing.

International Museum of Muslim Women

Using a museum as a well-accepted example of rhetorical materiality, I see a connection of tying identity to material. The identity that is catalyzed within an exhibit is complicated through race, gender, language, and origin stories. The combination of these markers seem to carry the same components that also leads to a formulation of a national identity. There is an uncertainty about what features are averaged into the quality known as “nationality,” but broad themes are regularly integrated. I cannot think of an American Indian exhibit that does not include arrow heads and feathered headdresses. But these are specific items for specific tribes. Unfortunately, the result of overused material representation is a generalized commentary. Instead, we need to consider a new epistemology, like Lyons exhibits by tracing x-marks, but framed as a contemporary view. Instead of continuing to look for objects to explain the past to create an identity of the present, I argue we need to look at how people represent themselves in the present. These representations are bound to change because of experiences, but it allows for

self-representation. A material and verbal rhetoric can best contextualize the practices of a rhetorical nationality because of its subjectivity. By focusing on the language practices detailing nationality, a contextualized theory of rhetoric is needed.

Displaying identity is highly political. One must consider the style of presentation, the article, its narrative, and duration of presentation that adds into the impact of the representation. Steven Dubin, who researched representations in museums, details contextual issues of museum exhibits in *Displays of Power*. In his text, he analyses complications of construction, presentation, and reception of exhibits in large museums. From these exhibits, Dubin finds struggles that blur the identities of the groups represented. Dubin explains that the modern style of representation is based on subjective identification and agency (3-6). The result is, “People now feel entitled to participate in these venues, and it would be very difficult to seal them up tightly again” (11). Dubin argues that groups are represented in museums, but there is an exchange with the public to decide what is represented. Exhibits are constructed by authorities and public interest groups, which requires the exhibit to respond to different audience expectations and representations of identity.

An individualized response to identity can be seen on the online exhibit *Muslima: Muslim Women's Art and Voices*, from the International Museum of Women (IMOW). This online exhibition is quite unique in that it also dedicates itself to representing the plethora of voices representing Muslim women in the larger global context. The main page details various projects—video, painting, photography, non-fiction, textile, etc.—written by Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women, Arabs and non-Arabs, Western and non-Western. My point is that these are not voices solely toting a pro-Islamic commentary. In fact, the website provides a dynamic conversation that orbits the larger question of “what does it mean to be a Muslim

woman today?” There are no easy answers, only subjective ones. The most prominent feature from the website is the different styles of representation of Muslim women. This is one of the best illustrations of how varied the Muslim world is, especially as it pertains to women. What is not discussed, however, is the impact of identifying with nations. Some artists, for example, list only one country of affiliation, while others post two. How does this identification impact the voice and their accompanying work?

A Call for New Research on the Rhetoric of Nationality

I have summarized the research spaces that address issues of nationality: (1) theories focused on group dynamics to explain nationality; (2) rhetoricians who have argued for subjective commentary (Booth and Bruner); and (3) rhetoricians who have argued for a specific groups’ rhetorical sovereignty (Lyons and King). The space that investigates the impact of an individual rhetorical nationality has yet to be documented. This project aims to begin answering questions in this space. We need to better identify the role of rhetoric in claiming a national identity: what does that mean? how does it look? when does that happen? Smith and Gellner define the spaces of nationality theories; Anderson explains the boundaries of claiming nationality; Deutsch considers its analytical scope; and Kristeva considers the correlation of gender to nationality affiliation. While religion is mentioned throughout these theories, there is little connection between Islam and nationality. We now have come to a watershed moment of needing to better identify the connection between Muslims and nationality. Even more specifically, I believe there is a need to better listen to and hear the voices of Muslim women. IMOW created a space to connect singular, gendered representation with material artifacts. These dynamic displays share a personal context, but without the authors, we have yet to have any direct answers by Muslim women on their formulation of national identity.

For this project, I look and listen to the individual stories about nationality by Muslim women. All too often, Muslims get associated with specified items contextualizing the religion: prayer rugs, minarets, /hijab/, and *Qurans*. Bathrooms in the Middle East often use a silhouette of a woman wearing a /hijab/ to gender the restrooms. This reductive symbolic representation should not be used for mass identity, just as we do not use a stick figure in a dress, as seen on bathrooms, as an image for American women. I wonder how Muslim women would self-identify their sense of national identity? What are the ways by which Muslim women identify their nationality? Rather than finding reductive patterns of representation, I use this project to hear their identities. Rather than look to blanket statements, I turn to women to ask them to share their experiences, language, and viewpoints to express their sense of nationality: what do Muslim women think of when explaining their nationality? As I discuss in the next chapter, I ask women to share their narratives along with photographs they have taken to see their paths.

Chapter 3. Methodology and Methods

As observed in the previous chapter, many studies have addressed the issue of tracking and identifying the qualities of national identity. Each study targets a different style of inquiry to create an empirical representation of national identity. Scholars, such as Gellner and Anderson, have looked at various styles of national identity, such as connecting to sovereign countries, gendered styles of nationality, religious styles of nationality, and complexities supporting a national affiliation. As I have already shown, rhetorical theorists have a contribution to make to the discussion of nationality and identity. Yet how to do a rhetorical analysis within the context of Muslim women's national identity in the United States is a complex endeavor. With this in mind, a review of previous studies on issues of nationality, especially in relationship to religion and gender, helps articulate a methodology based on established theories of national identity.

This chapter starts by looking at different combinations of key terms used in other projects to understand how identifiers were studied, tracked, and analyzed. I began detailing studies using the broadest terms: Muslim, Identity, and Nationality. The arguments in this chapter are not bounded by any type of global orientation. Instead, these studies discuss a Muslim identity within a nation. Next, studies of women and national identity are also addressed. In this way, I hope to position a larger frame of gendered representation, but without narrowing the inquiry too much by adding in a religious perspective. Studies highlighting issues of nationality, women, and Islam were identified and considered to formulate a method to study their relationship in forming an identity. The final section looks specifically at American Muslim representations in literature. While there are female voices represented in the findings, they are often from minors or young adults. These studies give an insight into ways to study a nexus of gender, religious, and national identities can be expressed.

Based on these findings and the concepts of assent and nationality from Booth and Bruner, I outline and detail the method used in this project. Through a qualitative research framework, a tri-part research protocol was developed. This protocol uses a questionnaire, a self-guided photography prompt, and an interview to begin collecting individual comments about nationality among Muslim women in the American Southeast. Five participants are presented in findings chapters focusing on their language and visual representations.

Previous Studies Regarding National Identity, Muslims, and Women:

Because this nexus of language, object, and identity is complex, I wanted to consider how other studies have isolated and analyzed features of identity. This project brings two large conceptual terms within a frame of nationality: gender and religion. But with so little theoretical work detailing the construction of Othered identities, I maintained these variables on a comparative platform to understand how other researchers have crafted their inquiries. The three sections presented below highlight studies as representative cases of researched styles using the key words. This is not meant to be an exhaustive reiteration, but a representative sampling.

Muslim, Identity, Nationality

I began my search interested in what research was already completed on a nexus of my central conceptual keywords: Muslim, identity, and nation. Immediately I retrieved an article that argued against the construction of a national identity based upon religion. Kwame Anthony Appiah, a philosopher, creates his own sense of *cosmopolitanism*, slightly different than Kristeva's definition:

the cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of her own, with its own cultural particularities,

but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different, places that are home to other, different, people. (12)

Rather than focusing on the impact of national identification, Appiah argues to connect one's sense of cosmopolitanism to cultural facets, such as religion. So one's regard for religion can far extend any political boundaries because one's regard for a "higher moral authority" surpasses any sense of political communities (13). The impact of religious identification should not be ignored because of its boundlessness. Appiah presents a justification to introduce studies on national identity as tied with a religious identity. As discussed in the literature review, there are plenty of historical perspectives that connect the conception of national identity with a recognition of religious affiliation. Religion, it seems, can have a huge impact on the representation of one's national identity.

But this play between religion and nationality seems to be stereotypical when it comes to Islam. So instead of listening to how participants combine religion and nationalism, studies focus on a symbolic representation of the /hijab/, or headscarf worn by Muslim women, as their research focus. Without spending too much time reiterating the same results, I will highlight two separate studies that discussed Muslim women and the representative metonymy of the /hijab/, one in France and the other in the U.S. Caitlin Killian conducted 41 open-interviews with North African women in 1999 to hear their responses to France's political stance that opposed the open practice of Muslim girls and women wearing the headscarf in public spaces, especially schools (568-73). The study's conclusion found that some of the participants thought that /hijab/ should not be worn to better assimilate into French culture, while other participants argued that girls and women should be allowed to wear whatever they would like using Western discourse on rights and freedoms (588).

Somewhat similarly, Samaa Abdurraqib looked at mentions of /hijab/ in immigrant literature in the United States. The article reviewed two different literary works to discuss the symbolic representation of the /hijab/ and concluded that the imagery comes with a sense of informational representation. The Muslim women characters provide a new perspective for readers who do not know about Islam, but one writer aims to “educate Americans about the ‘mysteries of what lies on the other side of the world’” (62). Abdurraqib argues that the representations do not remove the “us versus them” binary often discussed among the American verse immigrant spaces. These studies are helpful to understand ways Muslim women, specifically, are discussed; but as a Muslim woman myself, these results did not push the boundaries of information. A more refined study could produce findings that are dynamic in first isolating a context for participants to share their identification methods, and also by not focusing on an Orientalized symbol to represent Muslim women. Instead of isolating a conversation on /hijab/, a more diverse conversation about politics and culture should take place. These studies feed into the idea that Muslim women only spend their time talking about clothing.

But the impact of Islam in America is a sensitive topic based on recent events such as 9/11, the War on Terror, the continued commentary that President Barak Obama is Muslim, and even crowning a Muslim woman as “Ms. USA,” Rima Fakih in 2010. Whether the backlash towards Muslims continues to grow or is waning is still a highly contested debate among Muslim groups. Articles like “American Islam,” by Scott Korb, a writing teacher at New York University and the New School, highlight the contentious feelings about Islam within the American mainstream. In his article, Korb details the work of three major figures in American Islam: Imam Siraj Wahhab, Imam Ziad Shakir, and Sheik Hamza Yusuf. These men are well known as Islamic scholars throughout the U.S., but gained additional public notoriety in 2012 when the

New York Police Department made national headlines for regularly spying on American Muslims throughout the Northeast. But what I found the most interesting from Korb's article, who happens to mention his non-Muslim status in the article, is that, "These three men, all converts, appeal to young American Muslims. They appeal, in large part, because they were born and raised in this country and have a vision for Islam that is unmistakably American." Though I wish Korb detailed what features made their work so identifiable as American, his work calls for a featured study focusing on Muslim American representations.

One final article about Muslim-American identity complex that highlights a problematic space is an article by Margaret Chon and Donna Arzi, entitled "Walking While Muslim," which explores the linkages between Japanese Americans and Muslim Americans during the respective historical time frames when these groups were identified as anti-Americans. The authors argue that the racial discrimination felt by Japanese Americans during WWII is remixed as religious discrimination by Muslim Americans during the War on Terror (215-16). But unlike racial discrimination, which has plenty of legal commentary to quasi-erase it from the American landscape, the authors argue a major dilemma in managing religious discrimination:

The subterranean quality of religious discourse in U.S. law prevents a full understanding of how and where religion is deployed in post-9/11 terror-profiling. At the same time that the government loudly proclaims its respect of religious differences, it engages in selective terror-profiling of groups based on religious difference. Thus, a rhetorical slight-of-hand is occurring by which the law takes with one hand and gives with the other. (253)

The slipperiness between the two strategic framing of legal rhetoric highlights a continuing spectrum of what features also get detailed as “racial” ones. Religion can be just as specialized in creating opposition and support for groups, like racial distinctions.

The impact of religion correlating to national affiliation can be strongly observed in America. These scholars allow for participants to identify with both a religion and nationality, thus constructing a complex identity. The participants of these studies are simultaneously Muslim and American. The problem with this approach, I feel, is that the conclusions presented by the researchers only lead to commentary about the participants’ nationality. Rather than opening conversation about religious practice, my project asks for participants to define their Islamic affiliation in their own way, especially to understand if it connects with nationality. More importantly, the focus of my project stays on the impact of nationality and its subjective identification. If participants do not connect these two identifiers together, they should have a chance to express their experiences.

Comparing Muslims with Other Religious Groups

A different trend identified among articles on Muslims and identity was one based in comparative religion studies. There are studies that compare different receptions to ideas, like friendship or feminist values, in relation to an individual’s sense of religion (Park, Ali et al.) These two studies used big-data, quantitative methods to explain that religion has varying ties to these cultural norms. Muslim and Christian women report different feelings towards various feminist issues in their culture and daily lives. A major limitation, also pointed out by the authors, is that the quantitative style of inquiry did not allow for a triangulation of the themes (Ali et al. 45-6). Triangulation is a patterned representation of a theme or concept to show that it is a regular occurrence. But big-data studies, like these, do not allow for these moments to be identified because participants are asked direct questions without the researchers having a chance

to probe for more information. They are important to mention, though, because sample questions from their protocols are included in the article. Looking at how researchers ask questions about religious identity is helpful in crafting open-interview style questions.

Other studies focus on comparative religion inquiries outside of the U.S.. These studies, both in and out of the countries with predominantly Muslim populations, continue to pit national identity against a religious identity. In a study in the Netherlands, Van Oudenhoven et al. did a gross comparison between Dutch Muslim and non-Muslims. The qualifying “non”-prefix seems a bit absurd in its ability to over-generalize the massive amounts of people who may fit in any of the two categories, based on personal backgrounds and subjective feelings.

Similarly, Peter Strelan and Angelica Lawani compare a Muslim versus a Western population to examine levels of forgiveness. This study’s population is awkwardly defined, and thus draws concern to the reported findings. While a comparative religions project can be effectively completed, the running comparison of Muslims to a non-religiously identified group is problematic.

Women, Nationality, Identity

I was also interested in seeing recent works specifically detailing Muslim women and their sense of identity. There are limited focuses for the research conducted, often limited to immigrant experiences or participants under 21 years old. These studies offer an important perspective, but this narrow range has started to become representative of the greater population. Outside of the U.S., a study conducted in Oslo, Norway focuses on the gender perspective of Pakistani and Moroccan immigrants. The researcher, however, blurs the identification style of these participant’s nationality by clarifying that, “Women from Pakistan and Morocco were chosen due to their long-term presence in Norway and the relative size of the immigrant

populations” (Predelli 476). The focus on these two specific groups helps clarify the cultural impact of the participants in considering their gender stances. However, my concern is that putting a focus on these participants’ pre-immigration national identity removes any sense of them identifying as Norwegian. Though I was distracted by this, the researcher’s focus is on gender practice, which she constantly references to keep the reader on track (476). The crystallized findings focus on gender practices derived from Islamic standards, although the author also says that Islamic practices are based on gender roles. In terms of modeling, I would argue that the author should have described the connection of these two features as a double helix, like a DNA strand, that revolves around each other. It is not to say that these identity features are written at a biological level, but only that the geometry matches as a metaphor.

In contrast, American research projects focused on gender roles as a construction through a religious identity. These researchers do not try to identify the chicken-and-the-egg dilemma of which quality emerges first to catalyze the latter, but maintain a perspective that looking through one’s religious identity to understand a gendered characterization. One study, by Shabana Mir, found that, “positioned by Muslim and non-Muslim peers, by Orientalist-influenced U.S. culture, and by Orientalist-and-Islamic influenced Muslim forces, American Muslim undergraduate women negotiate multiple identities in multiple spaces” (253). Based on with whom these women speak, they represent their gender styles differently. This report highlights the subjective style of the discursive moment that is bounded by contextual spaces. Additionally, a study conducted on Muslim high school girls challenged the stereotype of the ‘submissive and passive female.’ The study, however, utilized a survey-based inquiry (Abu-Ali, Reisen 187). Participants did not use their own language styles to express their gendered identity. Instead, they had ‘fill in the circle’ types of responses. But it is the subjective articulation of gender that is important to

note. In this way, there are social and political problems in the survey that only posited individuals as female or male. Not including more language—or allowing participants to choose their own identifiers—limited representation styles in any other way or even neutral gendered.

While research has been centralized on the issue of gender identity with Islam, the projects seem to conflate characterizations concerning national affiliation. It becomes unclear whether participants or researchers are employing identifiers. If participants may only respond in set ways to the questions posed, I begin to worry about non-standard responses. The study in Norway rewrote participants' identities as Pakistani or Moroccan, but the researchers ignored immigration stories that may have the participants more closely identifying as Norwegian. The study in the U.S. focused on women's religious identity also used a survey style that situates explicit identifiers established by the researchers. Gendered studies with nationality seem to carry a sense of averaging in the language. Looking towards research on American identity, specifically, might provide more complete answers to develop a methods style for effective research.

The research on women and nationality seems to be even more limited in subjective responses than the work focusing on religion and nationality. Much like the theories that describe nationality, research seems to use language of exclusion and marginalization. Kristeva's work, specifically, points to the extremely narrow space in which women represent a nation, at large. My research tries to respond to this empty space of inquiry by listening to women, exclusively, to hear their conception of national affiliation.

American Nationality and Muslim

Even though changing the search terms to include "American," the articles from the search continued to produce research the conflate identity markers: race, religion, and gender.

Kristine Ajrouch is a prominent Arab-American population scholar but her work focuses on adolescents, not adults; Germine Awad presents his study on perceived discrimination of Arab and Middle Eastern Americans. Ajrouch's work on Arab Americans fills a gap for research on this group embedded in America's "white society." She investigates how Arab-Americans connect with a white identity, but also their reaction to living in white society. Her studies complicate the issue of race identification in conjunction with an American identity. In "Race, Gender, and Symbolic Boundaries," Ajrouch attempted to discuss these themes, but also found the impact of a Muslim identity that gets mangled in the discussion. While wanting to focus on race, Ajrouch's discussion moves to religion. Awad's research does a similar conflation between Arab and Middle Eastern identities in America to be synonymous to a Muslim identity. He identifies the growing population of Arab Muslims in America as the exigence for research (Awad 60). But he quickly uses "Muslim" as an identifier for discussions. While he also isolates a Christian-Arab/Middle Eastern population, the Muslim identifier gets no introduction. It just appears in the text. This exchanging of identifiers is problematic.

Book-length publications, however, seem to provide a better-focused inquiry into American nationality without exchanging the identifiers. *American Muslim Youth*, by Selcuk Sirin and Michelle Fine, is a qualitative research project with over 200 participants. Using a multi-modal approach to crystallize findings across surveys, interviews (both open and closed), and drawings made by participants, the researchers created a data field that allowed for the messiness of identification by Muslim American adolescents experience. The researchers started with over 200 surveys from self-identified Muslim youth in two age groups: teenagers and young adults. From these surveys, a smaller sampling completed over 100 "identity maps" where participants drew a representation of their identities through drawings. Finally, a sub-sampling of

11 participants formed the most detailed collection of data with specific stories about identification from 12 to 18 year olds, both girls and boys, about being Muslims and Americans in a post 9/11 America. Moreover, these participants were English speakers and either first or second generation Americans. Because of their age, researchers argued that these individuals are still thinking about their identification in terms of society and culture. The research tracks a unique space of identification, or “opportunities to understand how young people find their paths as Muslims and Americans.”

Their findings voiced the feelings of a marginalized population: “These young people seemed to value (or not value) both affiliations [as Muslims and Americans] ... in unrelated ways.” The highlight from this work is not only that Muslim Americans consider and negotiate their identities, but also that their multiple affiliations do not cause division. So often, claiming an identity automatically infers that there is a binary partner that is in conflict. And while there is an assumption that a Muslim identity cannot be an American one, this work explains how that is paradigmatically incorrect.

Sirin and Fine highlight both the need to investigate a space connecting religion and nationality, but also methods using a variety of media. Unlike other researchers who focus on one style of data collection, the varieties of rhetorical practice that allows the recognition of thematic patterning. This idea is called “crystallization.” It happens as the researchers comb through the data to organize and arrange the data into findings. In Sirin and Fine’s experience, they found their participants negotiate their identities in inclusive, rather than exclusive ways. This research highlights the impact of collecting data in various ways to allow for the patterns to emerge in case studies.

A Need for Representation

Research on nationality, religion, and gender has to balance social, cultural, and political factors. Looking specifically at Muslim women, the research is managed through narrowed identifiers, language, and methods. While the summary presented above is not exhaustive, it is representative of the styles of inquiry published. The researched styles, participants, and contexts were valuable in opening a space for dialogue of this Othered group. There are studies focusing on representative identities. But a gap in the published literature details the connection of national identities with gender and religious affiliations. We are now at a point where we can create more tailored research to *hear* more Muslim women voices. This project starts this new level of inquiry through qualitative measures.

Methods

A project focusing on understanding the language of nationality can effectively be studied using a combination of qualitative methods. Qualitative research methods present empirical data that captures the subjectivity of individuals. Through methods like interviews, researchers can learn about a participant's history, situation, culture, and style of speech. Discourse analysis uses a linguistics paradigm to understand "language above the sentence" (Cameron 10). By considering the language used, one can begin to reconstruct another person's perception of the world. Instead of looking only to the words used, the speaker and listener factors into the consideration of the message. For example, removing driving directions from a location would be pointless because one might not always be able 'to take a left at the gas station' to find 'the ice cream shop on the right.' Cameron calls this process as "making guesses based on knowledge about the world" (12). The setting is just as important as the message being exchanged.

Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips' *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* details how discourse analysis stems from the social constructionism paradigm to theorize culture and society issues. As an introductory example, Jørgensen and Phillips describe the multiple interpretations of a flooding river: natural phenomena, political mismanagement, a religious act. These different understandings on the same scene means that language acts as a “‘machine’ that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world. This also extends to the constitution of social identities and social relations. It means that *changes* in discourse are a means by which the social world is changed” (9, original emphasis). The impact of language usage is significant to understand the social commentary.

Discourse analysis can support a study on nationality because it connects a person's language to a location. In *I Speak Myself: American Women on Being Muslim*, various women from a variety of backgrounds and experiences details issues in their lives in America as Muslim women. These essays subtly challenge stereotypes—i.e. being submissive, from foreign places, and passive— through autobiographical accounts of a Muslim woman detailing her thoughts and experiences. These personal narratives explore issues like choosing to wear a /hijab/ or deciding to pursue higher education. As reviewed earlier, studies are focusing too much on surveys or quantitative responses to social issues. These studies created the scholarly identification of this group, but an inquiry on Muslim women's language is missing. The written word is important, but a study focusing on different mediums of communication, as Cameron opens “discourse,” allows for a crystallized, or represented, sense of nationality by the consistent references to themes in the data (10).

The impact of word choice in describing nationality has been studied by Homi Bhabha, a major theorist in post-colonial and post-structural theorist. Homi Bhabha's essay,

“DisseminNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” from his edited collection, *Nation and Narration*, focuses on the style of words used to describe nations. He challenges the “Janis-faced ambivalence of language itself in the construction of the Janus-faced discourse of the nation” (3). Bhabha explains that both ‘nation’ and ‘language’ are present as a binary representation either as restrictive or utopian. There is little to no critical accounting of these two spaces. This essay questions “the complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ and make them the immanent subjects and objects of a range of social and literary narrative” (292). Bhabha finds that the nation is first created to establish a genre of language connect to nationality, which then is used to confirm the sovereignty of the nation by having constituents claim their citizenship.

Moreover, in his later self-authored text, *Location of Culture*, Bhabha revises the essay to detail the impact of signification over signs. Instead of considering the impact of language, the focus moves to metaphors and objects that represent the words that are unavailable. Bhabha deduces that communications of ‘the nation’ are physical objects of representation. The impact of considering nations as objects means that we consider its presence as an ethnographic act, as taken from Lévi-Strauss’s work. Redefining a nation into an object removes the impact of ideology. With the object removed of any hegemonic, subalterned, or othered stigmas, the nation (as object) can provide a space for marginal or minority discourse. Unlike earlier theorists discuss, there is a paradigm of *seeing* the nation that needs to be heard.

Using images, for example, as a discursive moment can be quite strong in defining identity. Amy Proppen’s book, *Locating Visual-Material Rhetorics: The Map, the Mill, and the GPS*, highlights major definitions and claims to include visual materials as viable artifacts for

rhetorical analysis.⁴ As noted earlier in Lyons' and King's work on identity, the rhetorical impact of cultural artifacts and materials are invaluable objects to investigate identity. Nationality is a subjective matter that needs to be detailed rhetorically. Bruner uses the word "malleable" to explain the subjective nature of expressions of nationality. A study, like this one, is based off an established practice in rhetoric and composition that uses various media for data collection. In *Beyond the Archives*, a collection of essays that highlight the "serendipity, creativity, location" of data sets in research projects, illustrates the essential role of non-traditional media to analyze rhetorical issues (Kirsch and Rohan 8). Proppen quotes John Berger, an art critic and historian, who explains that art is a representation is the artist's understanding of reality; but more importantly, that reproductions allow for public access and also represent cultural capital (xv). Because of this correlation, Proppen argues that the act of describing and detailing visual artifacts is, in fact, a rhetorical analysis, akin to analyzing speeches as seen with classical philosophers like Plato and Aristotle (xvi-ii). Visual arguments can readily be observed through a rhetorical lens because a claim of assent is being made. The connection of artifacts and rhetoric can be seen in museums, like King's commentary on Native identity in the NMAI. Moreover, her analysis ties objects to a sense of subjective identification. There is meaning behind objects, but we must consider the word choices used to describe these items. This connection of words to objects, theorized by Ferdinand de Saussure is a significant axiom of structural linguistics. Jørgensen and Phillips summarize the complexity well:

signs consist of two sides, form (signifiant) and content (signifié), and that the relation between the two is arbitrary. The meaning we attach to words is not inherent in them but as a result of social conventions whereby we connect certain meanings with certain

⁴ Visual rhetorics is an established field of scholarship often framed by the works of Carole Blair, who wrote an essay in *Rhetorical Bodies* (edited by Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley), and Cara Finnegan's essay in *Defining Visual Rhetorics* (edited by Charles Hill and Marguerite Helmers) (cited in Proppen xv-vi).

sounds. The sound of the written image of the word ‘dog,’ for example, has no natural connection to the image of a dog that appears in our head when we hear the word. That we understand what others mean when they say ‘dog’ is due to the social convention...

(9-10)

Though every sign/signifier pair is arbitrary, we must remember the social construction assigning value is not. We gain value for items to create networks that correlate items together. One of feature of nationality that has yet to be explored is the object representation: how do people represent nationality through artifacts?

One example of this phenomenon of using images to articulate national identity is Paul Gilroy’s text *Black Britain* argues that popular photographs of black people were “powerful visual components in larger, urgent arguments about nationality, community, morality, justice, poverty and inclusivity as well as changing patterns of government at home and abroad” (14). Gilroy constructs a narrative with the photographs to reassess the racial stratifications. The images, he argues, act as a call to action for change (15). Alternatively, Lina Khatib finds that images transmit huge styles of political action in the Middle East. In her text, *Image Politics in the Middle East: The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle*, representations in digital files, art, ephemera, and spaces all contribute to styles of resistance (1). These images are just as significant to the social upheaval as the words or slogans used. In fact, Khatib termed images “floating images,” because they maintain “multiple meanings, references, mediation, reincarnations and presences” (12).

Studying Nationality with Discourse Analysis

Given all of the above, I would argue that a subjective concept is best studied using qualitative methods, like discourse analysis, to allow for varieties of representation. To begin

responding to the silence in representation, I constructed a research question to draw out their voices: How do Muslim women in America discuss their national identity? This project collects their narrated experiences building a national identity. Considering the impact on material representation, I asked participants to build a collection of their own photographs that they found symbolic of their nationality. After participants completed a questionnaire with basic information about their background, they were given the photography prompt that said, “please take 8-20 pictures of things in your life that make you feel connected with your nation's culture” (See Appendix A. Questionnaire). I was interested in seeing how nationality was materialized in my participants’ lives. Smith, Deutsch, and Kristeva all pointed to various material goods that represent nationality in their theories, so I wanted to see how that came to fruition in my cases. I also looked to understand the connection Muslim women have between their sense of gender and religious identities.

Protocol

Because the topic of nationality contains so many points of inquiry, I developed a multi-part qualitative project with human subjects approval from the Office of Research and Development. Each Muslim woman who participated in the research completed three different styles of response: questionnaire, self-guided photography, and open-interview. By collecting the answers, I planned on triangulating the information. In this way, I would be able to show how my crystallized findings emerged from the information provided by participants. I tested my methods in a pilot study during the first quarter of 2013 with five different participants. Learning that multiple photography prompts was too much to ask of participants, the method adopted for this project was shortened but maintained vigor. Participants were sought out from May 2013 until December 2014 throughout the American Southeast.

Initial Questionnaire

Once participants agreed to join the study, they were sent a hyperlink to a Google Docs questionnaire (See Appendix A. Questionnaire). The questionnaire requested introductory information, such as best contact information (phone or e-mail) and age. One of the most important questions asked in the questionnaire was, “How do you respond to the question, ‘Where are you from?’ when a Muslim woman asks you?” This question directly focuses on the identification of nationality. Additionally, it highlights an emic perspective, or a role where the researcher is also considered part of the target population. As a Muslim woman, I find that I am selective about my personal answer to this question. By phrasing my inquiry this way, I aim to self-identify and share a common stasis with participants. James Paul Gee, an established linguist and discourse analyst, explains that speakers cue listeners to direct responses, in *How to Do Discourse Analysis: A Toolkit*:

To understand what a speaker says, a listener needs to know who is speaking. But it is not enough to know, for example, that Mary Smith is the speaker. I need to know what identity Mary is speaking as. Is she speaking to me as a teacher, a feminist, a friend, a colleague, an avid bird watcher....? (156)

When I began recruiting individuals, I made sure to self-identify as Muslim to establish my emic role in the conversation. I have found that my personal conversations with other Muslims have often extended beyond the typical dialogue, or non-religious dialogue I have with non-Muslims regarding affiliations.

Cultural heritage was also an important aspect involved in the questions for the questionnaire. First, questions were asked about where the participant, her parents, and her grandparents were born. The intent is to understand immigration patterns within a participant’s

life. I also asked what languages the participant speaks to understand available linguistic registers.

While this research does not focus on religious interpretation, I am interested in learning how Muslim women define their religious practices. I asked questions about what branch (i.e. Shi'ah, Sunni, Sufi); and what school of thought (i.e. Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Ismailiyah, etc.) with whom participants associated. Participants had the option of responding that they did not follow one or could write in their own answers. Finally, I asked about participants' engagement at the mosque and associations with other Muslim women. I hoped to learn about their sense of community and identity.

Last, I asked participants to self identify in their own fashion by asking them to "list five words/ideas/sayings that describe you." While the project focuses on the identification of nationality, I am interested in seeing how Muslim women portray themselves.

I received notification from Google docs when participants completed the survey. At that point, I checked back in with participants to make sure they felt comfortable with the photography prompt to begin the second stage of data collection and signed off on the consent form to use their pictures in this dissertation.

Photography Prompt

The photography prompt was sent to participants in the e-mail with the questionnaire (See Appendix B. Photography Prompt). Participants were given the following directions:

Please take 8-20 pictures of things in your life that make you feel connected with your nation's culture. Share these pictures with me on DropBox.com or e-mail them as attachments to bmalaiiba@utk.edu when you are done.

If you take pictures of people, please know that the image will be included in this project, but any of their identifying qualities will be obscured for privacy (face, tattoos, piercings, body modifications, birth marks, etc.)

Participants were given two weeks to complete the photo collection before I e-mailed them to ask if they planned on remaining in the study. Participants were allowed to interpret and complete their collection in whatever way they wanted.

Various edited collections describe the impact of image data as viable representations in qualitative research. In *Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People*, Pat Thomson argues that “images communicate in different ways than words. They quickly elicit aesthetic and emotional responses as well as intellectual ones” (11). Since nationality is so readily tied with deep rooted feelings of belonging, affiliation, culture, family, and tradition, photographs would also open up new spaces of discourse. Howard S. Becker, who wrote the central article in *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* that privileged visual representations in sociology, explains that while photographs are seen as ‘truth,’ they are “reflections of the photographer’s point of view, biases, and knowledge, or lack of knowledge” (qtd. in Harper 29). Photographs create a material representation of the photographer’s sense of the world. Their observations of nationality can lead to understanding the definition of nationality. These pictures act as a launching point to verbalize a sense of nationality, which has been seen captured in museums, but remains elusive through words. Using these pictures, I could initiate a conversation about nationality that has not been detailed.

Self-photography

I collected consent forms from participants to allow for reproduction of their photographs in the following document (See Appendix C. Consent Form). The pictures were created on

various devices, which at times produced low-grade pictures. However, the focus of this project is not on the photographic technique or composition style, but on the meaning on representation. The stories about the photographs were shared in an interview.

Interview

Rather than piece together a removed understanding of the pictures, like Gilroy's *Black Britain*, the participants detailed their own subjective perspective of the photographs in an hour-long interview. Once I received the electronic photographs, I arranged a meeting with the participant to conduct a face-to-face interview. Locations and times of the interviews were left to the participants' convenience.

The interview consisted of open questions to begin hearing stories of national affiliation and identification. A general outline of questions was established to begin understanding the participants' experiences with nationality. Using the questionnaire answers, I asked participants to detail their experience expressing nationality in their community. The focus of the interview, however, was to correlate what the meanings of the photographs were, especially in terms of the words they used to describe themselves from the questionnaire. Participants were asked to identify the items in the pictures, the locations, and the meaning of the object. After each photograph was described, participants were asked to arrange the photographs for display.

Participants

Five women agreed to be part of this study. As stipulated in the Human Subjects, application participants were identified as being over 18 years old, self-identified as Muslim, living in the American Southeast, and comfortable speaking in English. Because current publications about Muslim women are extremely limited in qualitative methods, I wanted to

create a study where women told their stories and experiences. Furthermore, I focused on adults because this group has limited representation in the literature.

The chapters are organized by their response to the question on the questionnaire, “where are you from?”. While three of my participants are Americans, two responded that they are from the American South (Findings 1. Sarah; Findings 2. Fatimah Ahmad). The third (Findings 3. Malak) answered, “My family is from Yemen.” It is a unique response because she grew up in the West and more closely identifies with those cultural norms than the ones she experienced in Yemen. The last two participants (Findings 4. Simin; Findings 5. Roxy) are both Iranian. They grew up in Iran as children, but came to the American Southeast as adults. My organizational plan was to represent narratives that were localized and then move outwards to a global perspective.

As self-identified Muslim women, the focus was not on their style of religious practice, but that they were comfortable with using that identifier. This is significant because the geographical area used in this research is limited to the American Southeast. This region was highlighted for a few distinct reasons: (1) because of its moniker as the “Bible Belt,” Muslims are a minority population, so hearing their voices is critical to frame their sense of nationality; (2) research on Muslim populations is practically non-existent. Though I have an established network in the Midwest, this area is well-established as research-saturated area; (3) there has been recent backlash against Muslims in this area.⁵ This project allows for self-representation for the sake of accuracy.

⁵ Murfreesboro, TN, outside of Nashville, has made national news since 2010 over the community’s antagonism against its Muslim community (The Steam Team). The Muslim community attempted to build a mosque to support its congregation, but faced public protest, legal injunctions, vandalism, and Islamaphobia by the surrounding community. The legal battle raged for over two years, until the building was finally erected. However, the community still protests further development of the Muslim community in this space.

Although I have experience with a few other foreign languages, I wanted to make sure that all participants felt comfortable speaking English. I wanted to be comfortable asking and receiving answers, without fear of misunderstanding the participant.

Five separate interviews were conducted with women ranging from their early twenties to their early thirties. Two participants identified their nationality as “Iranian”; two participants as “American”; and one participant explained that she was born in America, but has heritage ties to Palestine. Already, a variety of responses spurs on the sense of national affiliation.

Analysis

I collected data based on case study concepts presented in Robert Yin’s *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Rather than try to create a holistic answer that can respond to an entire population, the unit used to define a case study responds to the research questions (Yin 30). I was interested in understanding how women individualized their sense of nationality. I present five different cases because of their uniqueness in responding to the idea of representation. Interviews create a space to hear subjective answers that both detail the role of nationality, but also contextualize it to the lives of the participants (Yin 106-7). I used nVivo10, a qualitative software program, to transcribe the interviews. The program allows for quick key commands to stop and start the audio files recorded from the interviews. I was able to quickly process through the transcriptions this way. I also used the software’s feature of node coding, which allowed me to group and arrange information by thematic subjects that crystallized from the narratives shared by participants about the idea of nationality they held as a Muslim woman. I found themes within each participant’s interview, and then correlated those themes with important concepts from these theorists: Booth’s theory of rhetorical assent; Bruner’s sense of malleable rhetorical theory of nationality; Smith’s on individuality and group thought of national

affiliation; Gellner's focuses on people forming a sense of nationality; Anderson's theory of imagined communities; Deutsch's view that nationalism can be articulated; and finally, Kristeva's gendered sense of nationality. I use Booth, Bruner, and visual rhetoric theorists to complicate with non-rhetoric theorists who problematized the idea of nationality. I connect the rhetorical issues with these theories of nationality to consider the subjective responses to nationality. By asking questions of how nationality is expressed or how nationality is identified, I could analyze the subjective representations of nationality by my participants. I attempt to describe the rhetoric of nationality using descriptions of their pictures, their stories, and their word choice to give a thick narration that is central to a rhetorical analysis on nationality identity. I included many excerpts from the conversations to present the stories participants shared to illustrate the rhetorical impact of nationality. Their rhetorical choices are central to framing nationality.

While analyzing the data, I wanted to correlate the information together placing an emphasis on language and rhetorical style. I chose to follow Booth's rhetorical assent formulation that puts ethos (author credibility) and pathos (an emotional reaction) as predominant features of belief. The rhetorical appeals carried into the study in particular ways. *Ethos* refers to how the participants named and identified with groups. The signification of affiliation is extremely important to the rhetorical styling by participants. *Pathos*, while thought of as a response by the audience, became a reaction by the participant, herself. The pathetic examples participants drew up were their own reactions, not mine. They were simply retelling what happened in events. But they would get excited, sad, happy, and sometimes withdrawn in explaining the importance of framing their identities in a certain way. I began looking to identify

how participants reacted to their affiliations and experiences. Finally, *logos* is represented by the stories collaborating the images and narratives together.

Finally, I tried to limit my editing to any photograph participants shared with me, while also including as many of them as possible. In a couple situations, I could not share the picture because it was too easy to identify the location and participant from the details. Instead, I presented a verbal description to preserve their confidentiality. Additionally, this meant that I did not crop or alter photographs using any type of software. I only sized the pictures to fit appropriately on the page. In a few instances, participants shared photos with people in them. I chose to cover their faces with smiley faces to protect their identities.

The findings chapters are introduced with a short story about how I met each participant and their personality. It was my hope to present them with a full characterization, because these women are dynamic and strong forces in their communities. Any mistakes in representing them are my own.

Chapter 4. Sarah

Sarah is a dynamic woman. She has an engaging smile, but is extremely reserved. I felt like a dentist trying to extract information from her—she does not give anything away for free. I was excited to meet her because she is so well respected by her peers, but she made me work—hard!—to get to learn more about her. Because she never offered an unsolicited comment, when she said something, I always stopped to listen. Her voice is soft but so powerful, and often punctuated with laughter or dramatic pauses. She stands out in her community because of her sensitivity with language and her youth. When I started looking for participants, she was one of the first people I wanted to interview. I spent almost a year just engaging with people in this community before asking anyone to be part of my dissertation study. Because of her thoughtfulness, Sarah was on the top of my “wish list of participants.” As a college student who identified in the 18-22 age bracket in the questionnaire, she had considered social science approaches to religion and gender. She would be a valuable case study because of her academic and life experiences.

Sarah’s commentary is grouped into four themes that emerged from her interview and photographs: identity, family, America, and Islam. She establishes a sense of nationality that is responsive to a large group of people and has individual characteristics to make a personal identity. This same pattern is identified in Anthony Smith’s work where an individual and population derive national affiliations. Comments in the former style are “nationality” issues, while Sarah called the latter issues as just “identity.” I also coordinated her questionnaire descriptors with her pictures. Her specific pictures could also be organized through her words.

“Sarah” is a pseudonym to protect her identity. All participants were allowed to pick their own name, which they created in the initial questionnaire, but she asked me to pick a name for

her. I choose the name, “Sarah,” because it is a common first name in English and in the monotheistic world (Judeo-Christian-Islamic). I wanted to represent her with a name that is rarely mispronounced in both Arabic and English because Sarah ties various practices, histories, religions, and cultures in her life. Sarah converted to Islam as an adult, but her family history is purely “American pie.” As a born-and-bred Tennessee native, she loves living in the Southeast. Her love for her city and her state were based on experience, not on religion. Religion was just a cherry on top benefit for her. I wanted to know more about these experiences: what made her feel this connection to this space, these people? The conversation that unfolded about nationality was fascinating, especially since it started with these self-descriptions from the questionnaire: “busy, cynical, friendly, committed, and inquisitive.”

Identity

Getting Sarah to answer a question was hard. It required lots of probing because she was very particular about her word choice. There would be long(ish) pauses of up to ten seconds in the middle of a story or example because she wanted to make sure she used the “right words.” Ten seconds might not seem like a long time, but in a conversation, these moments stand out. Questions like, “what does nationality mean?” or “what’s identity?” were answered, but with very simple answers. For example, Sarah used a standard definition to explain that nationality is, “the political entity that claims your citizenship.” In this case, Sarah’s answer focusing on the *politics* centered on connecting with a sovereign state with bounded land and legal definitions of inclusion. She does allow for more problematic spaces where other identity genres take over for nationality. For example, she highlights that race or religion can be personal identifiers, like being Black or Muslim. When pushed to respond to these identities being used as a nationality, she pointed out that some people like to use these identifiers as their religion, “but you’re asking

me, so no. I don't think it is. (laughing)." Sarah hits on the subjectivity of identification, of which nationality is a subset. There is a uniqueness to claiming a connection to any group, which needs to be answered singularly. At the beginning of the conversation, there were lots of clarifications of the "well, my opinion is..." style. It took Sarah a little time to warm up to the idea that she only had to discuss her variety of national identification.

Sarah's story is both unique and common within any Muslim community, but naming it comes with some difficulty. Sarah gave five identifying terms for her identity—busy, cynical, friendly, committed, and inquisitive—that did not necessarily represent her sense as an American or as a Muslim. The "desperate" (her word, not mine) quality of assigning herself labels gets clouded over of time:

I think I had two different things in mind when I was doing it. [Because of the time between completing the questionnaire, photographing, and final interviewing], I probably just had two different mindsets going on. 'Cause these [the words] seem like my goal was to capture, like, if I think of my nationality or my identity, if I can use these interchangeable. These [the words] are the things I think of. But these [referring to the pictures], [short pause] if I think of characteristics of just myself, *these* are the things I think of.

Sarah's insight early on the interview highlights not only the contextual framing of identity, but also of the very specific genres of identification. The timing associated with capturing identifiers is highly selective for Sarah especially with the change in the medium going between words and photographs. These two styles carry a different rhetorical ability for Sarah. Having a lag in time between coordinating the two mediums lead to two different classifications for her sense of

identity. I asked if these words were still applicable to her sense of self-representation, and she readily agreed.

That level of classification, either as nationality or individuality, illustrates Sarah's sense of group or singular thinking. With her sense of nationality, she tries to find ways that she is like other people; while with her singular framing of herself, she only thinks of exemplifying herself. There is not singularity in being identified with a large group nationality. These identifiers are moments of being cohesive. Finally, Sarah's fluidity between the words "nationality" and "identity" is intriguing because it shows how slippery these terms are. Sarah's consideration for her words only highlights how difficult nationality is because she thinks of more than just her nationality to identify herself. She is not an overly patriotic person, but she unequivocally identifies as an American. She does not have a national identity that is messy with recent immigration exchanges. I will discuss this in more detail later.

Sarah's problematic separation of symbols or representations begs for a more stringent crystallization between the pictures and words (either in the questionnaire or interview) she uses. Her photographs are not so much a representation of nationality, but they are her identity. She prefers to design her complex, or *busy*, style of identification. While Sarah says that her pictures do not visualize her sense of *cynicism*, her words do. Sarah's sense of identity, especially as connected to a nationality is both *busy* and *cynical*. There is a strong rhetorical exigence behind each medium, which needs to be considered when complicating the idea of nationality. Sarah's *cynicism* seems to come out through every definitive moment of identification; these moments represent her, but the finality of the representation bothers her. So instead, she looks to create contextual identifications that are allowed to shift as she experiences more. Identity is of the moment and malleable, like Bruner defines for a rhetorical theory of nationality. This view is

strongly demonstrated when we talked about the American identity and her sense of geography as related to her identity.

Family

In the questionnaire, Sarah explained that she was American, but would specifically identify with Tennessee, if another Muslim woman asked where she was from. Sarah spent the majority of her life in Hodgesville, a pseudonym for a mid-sized city in Tennessee, readily identifying with a German background. This area of Tennessee generally sits well within the regional claim of being part of the “Bible Belt,” where people identify as Christian. Of course what is not often discussed is the blurring identities that also assumes the Bible Belt as being white and Anglo-Saxon. Sarah’s history is a close approximation to that, as she identifies as American with a German history but is steadfast in her Islamic identification.

Sarah’s sense of nationality as an American of German decent is a definitive story for her. Instead of that background becoming a point of acculturation for herself, it is an absolute marker with unwavering impact on her life. When I asked her if any other words needed to be added to her descriptive words, she casually said, “I could have added German, American, and Muslim to this list. I guess. As part of the traits.” There were distinctive stops between these statements, highlighted by the periods. These words did not have additionally meaning or context to her. It was reported with the same inflection as defining nationality with her quasi-*Webster’s Dictionary* style. As common identifiers, she felt obliged to include some within a conversation about nationality. But Sarah does not operate on norms or averages, but on what she deems the most appropriate. When I asked Sarah whether the her terms she provided were part of her sense of nationality, she responded, “[pause] Yeah, I think so. I can think of ways to make parallels

between those and attributes of quote-end quote Americans.” At this point, her sense of nationality was better situated without the terms, German, American, and Muslim.

Her set of pictures, however, did include heavily German influences. The first photo Sarah sent to me was her family’s coat of arms (Figure 1: Coat of Arms). Asking her to describe the picture allows Sarah to add the appropriate language to the image. A coat of arms is represents a heritage with a thematic motto for the family. Sarah’s take on her coat of arms highlights the important features:

I don't know all of the details of it. Like, I don't know why they picked each of these things. I think of Vikings, because there's a hat with axes. And a crossbow. Which just means that my family was real hardcore. Or [dramatic pause] elves. Could have been an elf. [Laughing] Umm. So there's something with water. The original members of my family--there were some fisherman—some fishing thing going on...

Sarah did not focus on the historical presence of her family’s history, but crafted one that adds up to her own sense of identity. Sarah’s attachment to her past is not to prove an identity now, but rather about documenting where she comes from. And since she does not have all those answers, she will craft ones that are appropriate for her sense of identity *now*.

The coat of arms arrangement and placement in Sarah’s home also adds some insight into how she stands *committed* to her past. Sarah does not speak German, but she believes that it says “always faithful” at the bottom of the image. Even though that is not the correct translation, this is another moment where Sarah creates the narrative she wants for herself. The fact that she chooses to create a motto for her past, as well, indicates the need to control the *now*. This was not about creating a judgment on the past, but just presenting it as a constant. The coat of arms is actually reproduced in a couple of different forms and was originally shared with her by her

father. Sarah's dad also has a later version of the coat framed and on display in his home. On the reverse side of that image, there is a short biography that details its construction and history. The



Figure 1: Coat of Arms

version that Sarah shared with me includes her family's surname, which is dated from the 14th century. She is not sure how much later this coat is dated apart from that. But unlike her father, Sarah keeps her coat of arms tucked away. In fact, she has two copies of the image: a smaller one that is of better quality out of sight, and a larger one that is centered on a three-fold poster board. For a school assignment, Sarah had to complete a family tree and used the coat of arms as a central image since it spans "from the dawn of time to me." But good luck finding the nicer version in her home, "You'd have to do some digging to find the nice copy that I have. Just I'm just not sure where I put it."

When I asked what being German-American meant, as an identity, she gave me an unexpected answer: “Umm, [pause] umm. [pause] *standard* is something that comes to mind.” I think the look on my face from that answer got her laughing—I had never thought to hear that response. I was not sure what she meant. From her perspective, though, “I mean like, it's not uncommon. There are a lot of German-Americans.” I think she forgot she was speaking to someone with absolutely zero German background. So she elaborated for me: “Like you say, you see a white guy, chances are, he's German. Like, he's got German floating around there somewhere. It's not—that's pretty typical, I think. For American.” For Sarah, whose family is generational links of Germans marrying other Germans (again, “Since the dawn of time”), uniqueness needed to come from some other virtue. German heritage was shared with so many others, that is was the normal. Though she did not share family tree with me, she knows her lineage quite well:

My mom is probably only 3rd or 4th generation America. But on my dad's side, we're like 7th. I'm 7th or 8th generation American. So no one speaks German anymore. We are about as far removed from Germany as you can be. And still claim being German. Cultural affiliation seems to be very fluid with Sarah. That “claim” as German is self identified, which goes back to her standardized identity. But Sarah's ability to overlook her unique take on German identity seems to be lost on her. She never uses the word “immigrant” or “immigration” in her discussion of her family's move America. Instead, she subscribes to the idea that Americans come from another country because that just *is* the historical background of Americans.

Instead, Sarah focuses on her family and her personal experiences to craft a sense of national identity. The second image Sarah included in her collection was of her a photo of her standing with her mother, “and what we are wearing is traditional German clothes that she



Figure 2: Dressing Up German

brought back from Germany. When she went, in high school” (Figure 2: Dressing Up German). Her mom purchased two of these outfits during that trip. While there was no emphasis to maintain some cultural monikers, like language, Sarah’s German heritage was continued through other physical items like clothing and food. I asked her what event was happening to dress up in these outfits, but she did not remember. It was a family practice to rediscover something, like pretty dresses, and put them on for a photo. Sarah said that her mother bought two dresses that could readily be tucked and worn to fit different body sizes. This also prompted the ‘mommy and

me' photo. Sarah's picture with her mom, where she is only eight or nine years old, is a photo of a photo. The original picture is closely cropped and is part of a family scrapbook. She took the picture out of it to get a clear photograph.

Another heirloom passed on to Sarah that connects her to family and national identity is a German cookbook. The Cook's Kitchen is written by the American Historical Society of German from Russia (Figure 3: The Cook's Kitchen). Sarah explained that, "there's a pretty decent sized



Figure 3: The Cook's Kitchen

population of people who lived in German but came from Russia, originally. But then moved to Germany." Her mother's side adds a complexity to their heritage with some Russian displacement:

My maternal grandmother, her family is Germans from Russia. But she was adopted. So that isn't not actually my biologically family. The biological family are also German. She was born German and adopted into a German family. Umm, but they, I don't think they

were from Russia. I think they... the Germans from Russia are only on the adopted side.

But, umm, I have the most association, probably, with that side of my, the family. With the side that's not biological. So I have the cookbook, for instance, and a lot of her stories and stuff, I have that have to do with her side of the family that came from Russia.

Sarah still traces her German ancestry, even though Russia tracks into it. But her comments also give us insight into how people create claims of nationality: since she connected with her maternal grandmother, she readily picked up the cookbook as part of her heritage. Even though she knows this part of the family does not have an elaborate family tree on display, the family network crafted a narrative that includes it. This example highlights Deutsch's stance that one can identify nationality because of its articulation; there is also, however, a rhetorical situation that catalyzes the presence of nationality. So while associating with a displaced population is not part of her identity, this artifact represents a commitment to her family.

Having the cookbook is not really about empathy, but more of a sentimental intelligence towards her past. So much like the coat of arms, the cookbook that her maternal grandmother gave copies to both Sarah and her mother represent a past that was experienced, but not a present day testament. Sarah keeps her Germans-in-Russia-cookbook among her normally used ones in a shelf above her microwave, but does not regularly reference it for meals:

I try to [use it]. But it's more something that I read as a kind of an anthropological eye when I'm reading it. It's just really interesting. It has like a recipe for doing your wash, doing the wash. And how to, like, do it correctly to where you can use the water at the end to wash your floors. It's very, a guide to being a housewife kind of. In a proper German family. And it's really interesting, [pause] really old.

Sarah does not separate her keepsakes from the rest of her home. Though this cookbook affects stories of her family, their history, and their culture, this book remains organized with the rest of the cookbooks in the kitchen. I would like to think that this means that nationality can come across without an emotional leaning. As in Sarah's case, the cookbooks are together because of their shared genre and not based on practicality.

Sarah mentioned that her grandmother even knew some of the people who shared their recipes or routines in the cookbook. Sarah was not totally sure what the relationship was between her grandmother and the contributors were, but mentioned the connection to highlight the close connection between people in this community. Her grandmother was not a contributor, but as noted earlier, she shared copies with both Sarah and her mother. Sarah got her copy before she moved across country to the Southwest for a few years. But moving out of Tennessee was not a motivation for her grandmother to share the cookbook. Sarah said that her grandmother was the kind of person to share things with others on her own schedule. She would not need to reference an event to exchange items with people, like a birthday or housewarming present.

Because there was a lengthy history and contemporary relationship to the cookbook, I pressed Sarah about her practice with any of the recipes. One recipe she has tried was cabbage burgers because, "[they are] a big thing in my family." I assumed they were either vegetarian or pork, because of the German influence, but she clarified the recipe for me:

No, it's ground beef. Umm, it's bread dough that you roll flat and then you take, you chop up a whole head of cabbage, and then add a bunch of ground beef, and you season it.

There's usually onions involved. And then you have a big thing of rolled out bread dough that you cut into four-by-four squares. And you put filling in the middle and fold them and pinch 'em. Then you bake them that way. And then it's just this bun of cabbage

hamburger-y deliciousness. Umm. But I didn't have the original recipe, I only had this cookbook. So I tried to make one of the ones out of there. And it just wasn't the same.

But I did try one of them.

Sarah knows what she wants, and settles for no less. While this recipe may come with a backing of a historical society, it did not pass her muster. With that, history loses again to the present standards for Sarah's sense of nationality.

A more descriptive space of food and family came with the traditional celebration of Thanksgiving (Figure 4: Thanksgiving). The picture is centered on a casually set dinner table with five different place settings. Sarah's mom, step-dad, brother, and husband attended. Spread throughout the center of the table are various dishes that are traditionally associated with Thanksgiving: stuffing, cranberries, Spinach Maria, cranberry salad, turkey, sweet potato casserole, mashed potatoes and gravy. The only dish that was somewhat identified as German was a plate of au gratin potatoes. All in all, nevertheless, Sarah proudly announced, "It was nice. We butchered that thing. Wiped it clean." But even Sarah's appreciation for the food was kept in a modulated tone. It was politely said, without any raised or lowered pitches. Sarah creates exclamation by short and simple sentences, not with a tone shift.

The one time that Sarah got animated during our conversation was when she discussed her family. Her family make up is quite different from the historical record of "Germans marrying Germans. From the dawn of time" style she described before. Instead, Sarah and her mother are both married to people identified in racial minority populations within America:

And then my dad's side of the family is all very white. My mom's side of the family—we keep saying my brother's got to marry an Asian or a Jew because that would just complete our diversity card [laughing]. Because my step-dad has a daughter who is half-

Chinese. And then his son [has a complicated relationship with a woman] and has a half-Mexican baby. So there is a lot of ethnic delight to my family.



Figure 4: Thanksgiving

Race, ethnicity, and culture are fluid identifiers in her contemporary family. While her forefathers maintained a sense of tradition marrying Germans, her nuclear family sets up their own standards for what they want.

America

Rather than focus on the continued representation of German heritage through Sarah's description, another theme emerged in her identification: America. Sarah readily identified as American, and only American, in her questionnaire responses. Moreover, even her parents and grandparents were born in America. Her parents were born in centralized states, but set up their home, where Sarah was born, in the Southeast. Even with Sarah's interest in her lineage, as described through her workings with her family's German coat of arms, she was unable to name

a specific state where her grandparents were born. They were associated with a general geographic space of “being born in the Midwest.” American regionalism would be a specific highlight in Sarah’s mind.

While Sarah takes up an “American” title, she is particular about being identified with the Southeast, especially Tennessee. Another picture included in the collection was of a simple flagpole that held both a waving American and Tennessee flag (Figure 5: Flagpole. USA and Tennessee State). From the dramatic crinkles in the flag, there is an implication of a heavy wind to extend the fabric outwards. The flags appear almost totally horizontal. The background sky is



Figure 5: Flagpole. USA and Tennessee State

utterly clear, not even a cloud in sight. The depth of the flagpole, which seems almost parallel to the picture’s plane is extreme. I began to wonder if Sarah had been using a telephoto lens or maybe took the picture from an elevated place. For example, being on a higher level floor of a

tall building would lower the pitch of angled photograph of a flagpole, especially with a wide lens. My first question to Sarah was about her process capturing the photo. She had pulled the picture from the internet. She explained, “I was going to just take one, but I always saw them all when I was driving and it was dangerous.” Even though Sarah lived in Hodgesville, a city with ample patriotism and regular flagpoles, “[she] rationalized it [using a public photo from the internet] to [herself].”

Presented in the collection, without any narrative, one would never know that the flag picture was not personally taken. Only because the angle is different compared to the other pictures does it not fit in the set. But in fact, Sarah’s quick thinking about finding another means to capture the image highlights a critical approach to responding to the prompt. Her problem solving aligns with her sense of *inquisitiveness* that Sarah self identified with in her questionnaire. Rather than not include something, Sarah considered her available options, including the internet, to complete her collage. In describing why these flags were so important, Sarah fell back on her *Webster’s Dictionary*-style response, saying that the country’s flag readily representative of nationality, but she “identif[ies] as a Tennessean specifically.” Sarah actually sees American comprised of multiple regional identities.

The American Southeast is described as the “Southern identity.” She included a picture of a famous landmark in her city. She finds pride in being from Hodgesville:

Ok, so some people will refer to this area as “Dixie.” Umm, so I associate myself with that. Like I grew up with people who are very country. But not in a mean way. Although they probably had that in them, I just wasn't any kind of threat to them at that time. So it's just like a sweet, little Southern people. You know, Bible Belt, that kind of life style.

Umm, I identify with that probably because I was raised around it. My family isn't like that, but I was raised in that culture.

Being from the South, and especially Dixie, carries a threatening persona. Sarah continues to amend the personality of it, while still trying to carve out the definition of how it relates to her. The 'it is, but it isn't' style was hard to pin down for Sarah. Because the South has, what she calls, a range of personalities. I asked Sarah help me better understand her classification by giving me three words to identify Tennessee: the Smokys, comfortable, and not dirty. She was extremely anxious about the last classification because she did not want to offend anyone. But the regionalization of America comes with a sense of hierarchy. There are better places to be from in Sarah's mind.

Sarah's sense of America breaks it down into a jigsaw puzzle of regions. The pieces included are as follows: Southern, Northern, but New York City ("gets its own space"), Midwest, California, Pacific Northwest, and Texas. America gets redistributed into a very simplified puzzle, but with significant outliers. The outliers, like New York City and Texas, come from an inability to blend with the region associated by its neighboring states. New York City does not act "Northern" to be qualified with them. We did not have time break down the finer points to her fragmented America, but she did nuance her sense of the South.

We focused a lot of the conversation on Hodgesville because she is very proud of being from this place. Apart from one other participant, she ranked living here a 5/5. She included a picture of a notable landmark to include in her collection of photographs, which is not included to attempt to shield her identity. Though there are activities to do at this tourist site, Sarah never goes to see it. She used the picture to symbolize the greater sense of the city. As an outsider, I was not totally familiar with the city to understand her passion for it. She called it "awesome,"

partly because of its urban sprawl. She had grown up in a more rural space, but preferred to live in a larger city like Hodgesville.

Islam

Sarah's Islamic identity was also on display in her photo collection. She presented two pictures that were both taken from the internet because she did not have time to go to her local mosque for her own photographs. Sarah plays an active role in her community's mosque, especially when it came to redesigning the women's section. Mosques are typically designed to be gender segregated, with the men's section occupying the front side of the hall and women in the back. There has been a greater emphasis, especially in Tennessee these past years, to create a more equitable distribution of interior design and arrangement. Many time, the women's section smaller and less elaborate than men's section. In this case, she only highlighted that a renovation had been achieved, but none of the details or concerns were mentioned that lead up to the final look.

I had visited this mosque a few times before the renovations. The outside looked like a small business, and the inside of the women's section was barely decorated. It was harder to understand the layout inside the building. The door leading to the woman's section opened to a small entry way that was crowded with cubbies to put one's shoes. The space quickly opened, but it was just a collection of closed doors. I had no idea where the prayer hall. In fact, I thought I was in the prayer hall. I was sure that behind one of these closed doors, with random pictures covered up the inlayed windows, women would be in attendance for prayer. Slowly, yet surely, they trickled in and began opening doors left and right. The arrangement was not inviting to any new Muslim coming to the mosque.

Sarah saw this flaw, too. She participated on the committee to upgrade the women's hall. The first picture she included of the hall was of a decorated wall to align women in the right direction to pray (Figure 6: Mosque, facing front). The arch facade on the wall stands out, but also hinders the prayer process. There should always be an unobstructed view from the last row in the hall to the person directing the prayer. The solid wall does not allow for that. Sarah had hoped that the screen would allow for projections to show the men's section, which would allow for members to pray synchronously. Sarah is still trying to move the board forward to correct the problem.



Figure 6: Mosque, facing front

The second picture highlights some Arabic calligraphy decorating the walls (Figure 7: Mosque Artwork). This picture provides two views of the prayer hall. The top looks just off center, while the bottom photo focuses on the side wall, entirely. The room is bright and inviting. Sarah found it a good representation for her own sense of identity:

I wanted to, I was trying to come up with some way that I could include Muslim in my umm, conception of my nationality because a complete picture to me is German American Muslim. Like it's all of three of those things. Even though that's not what I said at the beginning where nationality is a certain specific thing. So I wanted to find a way to include that. And this seemed like a good way to do that. Because it has some of the classic architecture that you would think of Muslim places... It just seemed very fitting.

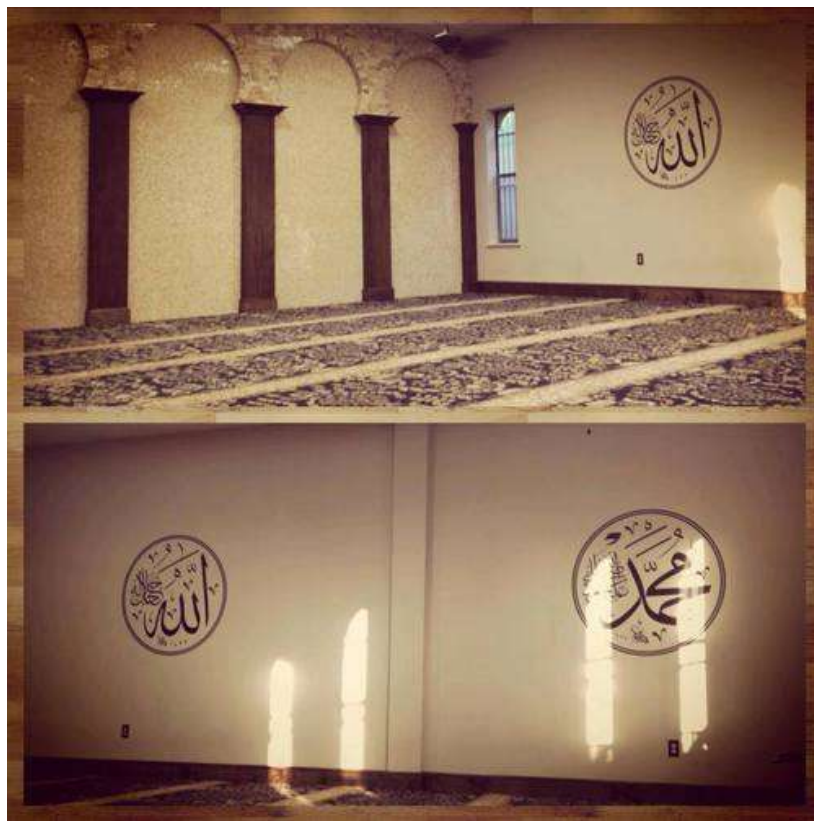


Figure 7: Mosque Artwork

Sarah's desire to include her history (German), her present (American), and her religion (Muslim) creates a model that is unique to her place in life. Because these identifiers come with

layers of information and detail, it is no surprise that Sarah connects with these idea to construct her national identity.

Conclusion

Sarah presents four important themes in defining her sense of nationality: her personal relationship to affiliations; her family; her connection to America; and her sense of religion. Her sense of nationality is difficult to frame because she wants to identify herself outside of group identities. All the while, she holds tightly to her family structure. Sarah's rhetorical practice follows a Boothian style of rhetorical assent where ethos and pathos are more important structures than logos in arguments. Her ethos comes from using terms like "German" or "Muslim." She identifies with categories that connect her with her local community. This moment of identification is one of ethos because she gains credibility of knowing the practices of the group. Moreover, she creates additional definitions about her German or Muslim heritage that are accurate to her knowledge. It is not to say that she won't avail herself to more information, but that she presents her identity in concrete examples that explain her definition of identity. However, I would cite her incorrect translation and actual use of the cookbook as a loss of logos, or logic, to her rhetorical argument of nationality. Just because she does not speak German does not mean she will not attempt a definition for the German sayings on her family's coat of arms. Her background is not mentioned to break the continuity of time, but rather as modifiers to her authorial claims of identity. Booth's focus on ethos and pathos could be seen in Sarah's statements on nationality.

Sarah's construction of nationality comes from a contemporary moment. Her arrangement of criteria that influence her sense of nationality could be fashioned in one schema, but then change because of her developing sense of identity. Bruner's sense of malleability

explains her rhetorical handling of nationality when Sarah describes herself. Sarah's rhetorical styling of nationality only applies to her, but can extend to people she connects with, like her family.

This commentary extends Anthony Smith's sense of nationalism and national sentiment. Smith explains that nationalism is a subjective feeling or emotional appeal, while national sentiment creates a group thought. In this case, however, there is a give and take between the two spaces. I would term Sarah's commentary through a sense of *nationality*. For example, in her discussion of religion, Sarah did not fight the idea of gender segregation in her community's mosque, but rather focused on the idea of equal representation and presence. Her discussion of having a working projector to see into the men's hall was a matter of supporting both her own and the women's section religious goals. She represented the projector as a resolution for many women. In this moment, nationality responds to both herself and many others. Contrastingly, Sarah's identification with America was a matter of individualism. She highlighted her family's longstanding life in America as a moment of uniqueness. In this case, this rhetorical style applies both to Smith's national sentiment because this tradition is based off her lineage and family members. On a different level, it matters to her nationalism because she explains how her family lives in various regions of America. There is both a broad and narrow association to her claim. Because of this, I define this rhetorical style as nationality because of the levels of connection. Sarah talks with a mindfulness that represents one and all, but also all but one. This ambiguity furthers the need for subjective inquiry into the rhetoric of nationality.

Chapter 5. Fatimah Ahmad

When I first joined this Muslim community, another member told me to speak with Fatimah and described her “like a cupcake.” I was startled into laughing at that description. But then I met Fatimah. To say that Fatimah is sweet and caring would be an understatement. She is a woman with a warm heart and a ready smile to share with anyone around her. She is a well-respected member of her community by younger and older members alike because she is lovable, charming, and intelligent. She was one of the first Muslim women in Gardner City, a pseudonym for a mid-sized city in Tennessee, who readily volunteered her time to be in this study. As a young professional less than 23 years old, Fatimah had a very positive outlook on life and readily referenced her religion to describe her present life and future plans. She readily used a spiritual vocabulary highlighting her Arabic ability. Her Arabic accent clearly identified her to a Levantine country; while her English was perfectly American. Fatimah’s family has a blended nationality story connecting her ancestry to Palestine and America. Some of the stories Fatimah shared with me blur styles of identification. Fatimah is American; Fatimah is Palestinian. But more important than that, Fatimah leads with her sense of religion first: Fatimah is a Muslim. To detail Fatimah’s story, I broke her commentary into two distinct features that make up her sense of nationality: people and places. Layering the photos and her commentary together, I hope to illustrate a joint consideration for these two features to define another case of constructing a national identity.

One of my favorite things detailed by this participant is that she gave herself both a first and last name pseudonym: Fatimah Ahmad. Most participants just picked a first name, with the exception of Sarah, but Fatimah was the only one who also picked a surname. She picked

‘Fatimah’ in honor of the youngest daughter of Prophet Mohammad(ﷺ).⁶ She is revered as one of the most influential and steadfast women in Islamic history, and as such the name is quite popular in the Islamic World.⁷ I was not really surprised she picked this name knowing how proud and knowledgeable she was about Islam. I was also interested in understanding her choice of a last name.

The name she originally gave me was, in fact, her family’s true last name. I say ‘true’ because it turns out that when Fatimah’s father immigrated to the States as a very young adult, his name was truncated prematurely. In the Arab World, individuals are given four names: a birth name; their father’s first name becomes their first middle name, their paternal grandfather’s name becomes their second middle name; and then the family name. Girls and boys alike are named this way because one’s name acts as a marker of lineage. One always knows who her relations are. In Fatimah’s father’s case, during his bureaucratic conversion into an American citizen, the government official managing his paperwork mistakenly used the grandfather’s first name as the last name. So when Fatimah created her pseudonym, she picked her family’s *true* last name. However, I felt that using that name could lead to a breach of confidentiality, so I modified it. I wanted to maintain a surname for Fatimah, but modified it to ‘Ahmad’ because it is readily used as a last name throughout the Islamic World. The name ‘Ahmad’ means ‘much

⁶ Arabic phrase meaning “may Allah [God] honor him and grant him peace,” spoken after naming a prophet, as a sign of respect in Islam. It was a personal choice to use the Arabic text, rather than the English acronym “pbuh” [peace be upon him]. It has been my experience that most Muslims would rather stumble through a poorly delivered Arabic utterance than resort to the English translation out of pride and affiliation with the language of Islam. As an emic researcher, using this Arabic phrase acts as a personal beacon of identification and belonging within my research.

⁷ The Islamic or Muslim World has both a historical and religious connotation. The historical connotation refers the Ottoman Empire that was centralized across the Middle East, but also included Central Asia, North Africa, Southern Italy and the Iberian Peninsula. The more contemporary connotation refers to countries with major Muslim-majority populations. Regions included are the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Indonesia, with a secondary representation in East Asia and Russia, North America, and Argentina.

praised' and is a name for the Prophet Mohammad(ﷺ), which follows her close identification as a Muslim.

In her questionnaire, Fatimah took a different approach to identifying herself. The final question of the questionnaire asked participants to “list five words, ideas, or phrases, that describe [herself].” Rather than portraying herself through a literal sense, based on how she names her behaviors and opinions, Fatimah characterizes herself through language to represent “who I want to be.” Rather than a retelling of herself, she defined herself through a future lens. Here is the list she shared with me:

1. Faith guides my daily life for God knows us better than we know ourselves and wants the best for His creation. Therefore I strive to submit to His guidance.
2. "You have not believed until you love for your brother what you love for yourself." - Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ)
3. Family is precious - we must not take our loved ones for granted.
4. Love
5. Live a good life with the knowledge that we will leave this world. If we remember our eminent passing—not in a depressed manner, but rather in a realistic one—we are bound to live more meaningful and beneficial lives.

Her list is more like the ‘Monotheist’s Golden Rules.’ Fatimah, herself, called the list “universal.” But was steadfast in maintaining their validity as her identity because they were genuine:

These are things that go with every part of my life. It’s just sort of a mentality that, I don’t know, is present no matter what. When I’m going out to eat, with a friend, for example, the idea that’s there is to spend time around good people. That I’m in good

company. And anytime that, you know, I'm in a place, like, we try to look for ways to remember God and to stay close to God.

Religion maintains a regular and continuous sense of Islam. In fact, the one thing that upset Fatimah about her photo collection was that it did not include pictures of giving back in her community. The Mosque Community (MC) in Gardner City regularly runs a small meal delivery program to the area's homeless population. She was upset that she did not highlight giving back because her community and network is a central core of her identity:

Ugh. There are a couple of things that I wish I had taken pictures of! Like, there are important things that we do that are about giving back to the community. 'We' being...different groups in Gardner City. Most of this stuff[referring to the pictures] is personal, like what I do, like stuff I do on my own. But I feel like there are, I don't know, things about reaching out to other people. And just trying to be there. And just be, you know, good fellow citizens. I shy away from saying, "to help people" because that, kind of, has a sort of, you know. [Pause] what's the word I want. It's almost a vertical sense of perspective of like, "I'm up here helping you," and that's, kind of, I don't know. It's a way of thinking I try to avoid. Because, I feel like, I don't know, we're all here to help each other, to be there for each other. And it's not because I'm better or [runs off]. It's just that we just all have different circumstances, and we're all going to need help in different ways and at different times. So I wish, I guess, I don't know, I had captured some of those moments of interacting with the community at large.

Fatimah continued detailing the topic of serving others for a full two minutes, uninterrupted. She was extremely passionate about the idea of not victim blaming, but her commentary focused on the need to give to others because "that's a huge idea in Islam," and "that's how my friends and

family live.” Her style of identification focused on presenting the best of herself by being as generous as possible to others around her. I included this one minute excerpt to illustrate how quickly she changes the conversation of describing others to focus on her role with labeling and engaging with these people. She would continue for two more minutes, uninterrupted, about the need serve the community. But also highlighting that ‘the community’ is not some intangible social construct, but actually a compilation of real individuals. During other parts of our conversations, she would name important members of social network that help her define and act in the way that aligns with her identification.

Fatimah was very particular about how she defines things around her. She would often start laughing at my questions because I wanted to know what she meant by her one to two word answers. For example, during an interlude in our conversation, I asked her what ‘home’ was, because the word kept on coming up. Because so many other people were involved in her problematization of the concept—family, friends, nations—she did not want to make declaratives about it. What I noticed about Fatimah was that she would turn her answers to a very specific style: she would talk about best practices. Instead of highlighting cases where she was wronged by others or acted poorly because of cultural tensions, she would describe things based on what the best way to react, particularly as a Muslim.

When I asked Fatimah to correlate her list of descriptors to her pictures, she said that was not possible. The photographs were personal reminders from her life. All the pictures were taken using her cell phone. These were pictures that she wanted for herself because they held a personal significance. While she specifically selected pictures responding to the prompt, for representations of her nation’s culture, she was choosing from the larger collection of photos from her camera’s gallery. In contrast, her descriptors in the questionnaire were not of the

present, but rather a description of her ideal personal identity. She did not want these two pieces mixed together because they represented different timelines for her sense of self. She strives to be what she describes; the pictures are who she is. When I asked her how she would categorize the pictures, since the words were not fitting, she simply put it that they were her “experiences.” She was not inclined to use more words than that.

Nationality

Fatimah’s sense of nationality, instead, created a heuristic to organize the photos as representations of people and places. At the very start of our conversation, Fatimah told me that she was very nervous about giving answers because she “wasn’t well spoken” and that her ideas were not “enough” for a research project. After reassuring her that she was eloquent, which was why I wanted her in my project in the first place, I also told her about how many scholars have vaguely answered questions about nationality, so I just wanted her opinion. While my answers could have been better crafted, it seemed that Fatimah relaxed enough to start talking about her perspective. My little encouragement earned a brief description about her sense of nationality:

[Laughing] Oh gosh, that’s a really good question...What comes to mind is a place and the people who live there. It’s a really simple answer. [Laughing] Oh gosh, nationality. It’s not really something you think about. Not about defining it. [Pause] But I think it’s possible to have multiple national identities. So for, like, example, I consider myself Palestinian-American. And America is my home. I—‘cause I was raised here, I grew up here. I love it. I’m familiar with the people and the culture. But at the same time I also consider myself Palestinian because that’s where my heritage is. I have a very, you know, close connection to that country.

Connecting people and places, in the broadest of terms, allows the foundation to create an national identifier. But unlike her early noted stance about mixing time lines, Fatimah allowed for more mixed sense of time connecting her past and present. But even in these moments of connection to multiple places, the terminology alters from “nationality” to “national identity.” A national identity allows for more indirect, yet applicable, connections to both *people* and *places*.

Food

One immediately recognizable pattern in Fatimah’s pictures is food. She included two pictures of food she had at restaurants. But they were not the typical foodie pictures people are prone to take with their camera phones of artfully arranged meals of exotic or special meals. Instead, Fatimah took pictures of her food after she already started enjoying it. Silverware is used, spreads applied, and bites taken. The meals were enjoyed at local casual dining locations, not at exclusive, five star restaurants. While describing the scene around these pictures, Fatimah found that food was a standard theme in her life because of its social role: “I think it's just food. Food brings all sorts of people together. No matter where you are from, you know. It's kind of this unify force, you know.”

This picture of a burrito might seem awkward, but it actually represents community and connection to Fatimah. While she had already enjoyed part the burrito, Fatimah was overwhelmed by the size of the portion (Figure 8: Fatimah's Burrito). Eating with the right hand is particularly important for Muslims. The right hand is specifically used in the daily prayers to bear witness to the testament of the prayer. This act of faith also translates in other daily rituals, like eating with the right hand. So Fatimah held her cell phone in the left to capture this picture. Fatimah sees that food carries a tangible relationship to people and their interpersonal behavior.

This burrito was an immediate symbol of diversity to Fatimah: “I think food is awesome. Food is a huge part of people's national identities. And you know, I think were luckily here to have a huge variety of different kinds of food. And stuff like that. [Pause] It's all good.” Even a meal from a chain restaurant was cause for Fatimah to think of other people because she enjoyed the meal with friends. Even though food represents a huge theme for Fatimah, she briefly



Figure 8: Fatimah's Burrito

described its importance. Instead, she shifted the focus to describing the impact of food on people:

I don't mean to sound like someone who is obsessed with food, because /inshAllah/, I'm not. I do, I do see it as something that brings people together. Like, you know, we've had

all these international, I don't know, food festivals and things like that. And, umm, no matter people's differences, no matter the the political perspectives that are there. You know, family background or what have you, like if you get together with a bunch of good food, generally, you know, you're going to enjoy your time together. I think that's kind of cool.

Food is not praised because she is a foodie—in fact, she does not want to be defined by her affinity for it. She even uses an common Arabic word, /inshAllah/ [if God wills it], to highlight her concern with being considered a single-track minded person focused on food. Fatimah was worried about expressing a sense of gluttony, to food in this case, as it is considered a sin. Religion is never too far away from her conversation style.

And it is her sense of religion that turns the conversation to the role of people who consume meals with her. A simple Americana-burrito might not be a symbol of international communities, but the burrito is just a metonymy for Fatimah's experience with a diverse community. Even with all the geo-politics happening, she found that people are better behaved and cooperative when food is present. And since Fatimah likes to think the best of herself and of people, it comes as no surprise that so many of her pictures are focused on food. Her commentary, I should say, rarely focuses on tastes, smells, or textures of food. The commentary is always about the people and event coming together.

Fatimah included two other pictures about food: one from her meal at a regional chain and another highlighting the signage at a tailgating event with a specially crafted item for the event mashing the names of the one football players with an appetizer. I could not use these photographs in this chapter because there were too many details within the pictures that would reveal Fatimah's actual identity and city. I wanted to use pictures with the least amount of

editing to them once shared with me by Fatimah (and the other participants, as well). But their commentary is important, so I will briefly detail some highlights from the conversation around the photographs.

One of the pictures she included was of grits, fried green tomatoes, biscuits, and homemade jam. These items were the best of what Southern cuisine had to offer, from Fatimah's perspective. While the options of what could have been included are seemingly endless, I want to highlight that none of these items included any pork products. As a very observant Muslim, Fatimah would not eat pork as it is a mandate in the religion. But these vegetarian grits responded to her sense of regional character:

And, umm, I don't know. I just thought it captured, like, our good Southern cookin'.

[Laughter] And Tennessee. Umm, that's something--the sort of Southern culture is actually something I really do identify with having grown up in Gardner City all my life.

And, umm, it's funny 'cause I definitely don't think of myself really as a, as a Southerner.

You know, Southern accent, country—that's sort of the the stereotype, I guess of the Southerner. Umm, but at the same time, whenever I'm away, traveling either to Florida or some other State, overseas, and then I come back home and I hear that Southern accent, it's just like ok, I'm back home, you know. So I don't know, I think the grits are something err-something, the grits are something commonly associated with that sort of Southern culture.

Fatimah created a regional identity tied with specific food. She even changed her tempo and accent of speech when she said "our good Southern cookin'." She pronounced the words in a slower tempo, with last syllable often truncated or modified to create a sing-song like feature between the stressed and unstressed syllables. It was hard not to laugh after her obvious

linguistic change to emphasize something very specific to this region. She does not carry any heavy Southern accent markers in her own speech, but felt it was necessary to represent that here. Even though she identified the South a self-defined “stereotype” of “being country,” she still saw herself as Southern. It was the speech style that acted as an indicator of home. But that home was in Tennessee. Even other states affiliated in the Southern region, like Florida, were ousted from Fatimah’s sense of home. Moreover, “other States” and foreign countries are both grouped as alien. Fatimah’s experience abroad is in non-English-majority spaces, like Palestine. The accent change in other regions and States in the U.S. were as foreign as other languages to her. But Fatimah is quite comfortable with foreign languages as she majored in a modern romance language in college and had a working practice with Arabic, as well. I will come back to the term, “home,” in the next section because Fatimah had a unique relationship with defining it across numerous spaces and people.

The final food picture that Fatimah included in her collection was of a homemade banner for a football tailgating event sponsored by the Muslim Student Association (MSA) at the university. The photo was taken close to the banner, so the perspective is looking from the side of the banner. This angle creates an effect to the picture called keystoneing, where it seems that banner is curved and not straight. The distortion warps the letters on the banner. The effect can be corrected using photo editors, like Adobe, but that was not done. I verified with Fatimah that she had not done any post-production editing to the images. As a casual photographer using her iPhone, she did not feel compelled to edit the images. The banner highlights a major opponent in college football for her alma matter, a well-sized public institution in Tennessee. Using the school colors, the white banner features a motto of encouragement for the team on the left side, and highlight a fun snack they were sharing with other attendees. They were sharing the snack

with any person who attended the tailgate, since numerous groups set up their own sitting area on the grounds. So for both MSA members, typically Muslim students, as well as any other tailgater could enjoy the light treat.

Unlike the other times when Fatimah brought up the people at these events with food, she included a photograph of some of the tailgating participants (Figure 9: MSA Tailgating. (Picture uses sepia filter to protect identities). This picture was slightly modified from her original photograph. To protect the peoples' identity, I changed the color filter on the photograph. Instead of being a colorful image, I used the sepia filter to mask the colors and present a brownish-range of colors. As a game-day tailgate event, everyone was wearing some variety of the university's school colors. The picture was important to present because it illustrates a wide diversity of people involved in the MSA community, which Fatimah finds so important in her life. But more than just uniting people, it was about celebrating the culture of collegiate football in the South:

It's something that brings it all together. you have the Muslim student association, right?

And then you like have football. And it's this big Southern thing. Yeah, and so I think it's really cool that we can take our group of Muslim students and just like, just have a good time.

Once again, Fatimah changed her pronunciation of some of the words to highlight emphasis to the topic. She lowered her voice before saying "football" to create a sensationalism and fanfare, while also punctuating the words "big Southern thing," with an affected twang. It comes off as if this style is necessary for the genre. One may not discuss college football in the South without presenting a 'true' passion for it. But Fatimah has a 'secret' about football: she does not watch it, particularly college football, which marks her as a known outsider. Her engagement at the

tailgate was about connecting with friends. Fatimah presents other pictures about the varieties of people in her life that she says have similar feelings towards life.



Figure 9: MSA Tailgating. (Picture uses sepia filter to protect identities)

People

Within her collection of photos that Fatimah shared with me, a quarter of them were centered on people for whom she cares deeply. And there was not a piece of food inside the frame. I like to think that Fatimah connected readily to the screen of ‘food’ because it was just a readily available genre in her life. But her real love is for people.

The first two pictures from her collection focused on people are filled with too much meta-data that identified her and her larger community. Instead, I will pass on the stories and insight Fatimah detailed about these images relating them as symbols of her nationality.

Fatimah included two different pictures of her closest friends. The first picture is of an adult friend who is carrying a small child on her shoulders. The woman in the photo is wearing a bright /hijab/, or headscarf, with an even brighter smile on her face. Her head is cocked slightly to the side to look at the camera, but also to act as a comfortable resting area for the little girl's hands that are folded on top her head. The little girl, who probably is not even old enough to attend school, is wearing an adult's sunglasses on her little nose. From the brightly lit sky in the background, it seems like this was a typical gorgeous weather day for a group to be exploring outside. The little girl's wayward curls are scattered around her face, but dragging downward. There is not even a hint of a breeze to lift them up. Fatimah said, "I don't know. That was just another daily life kind of things. I mean, this is what we do. We spend time with friends." There is a blank honesty to her response, as if to say that it having pictures of friends is absolutely necessary to the extent of not needing to justify the behavior:

And I think that the people we spend time with have, obviously a huge impact on our perspectives. And how we see how we live. Umm. I don't know. We kind of form our own cultural identity within this larger culture. And so, you know, for me, this is a lot of what my life is about. It's just, you know, having a good time with friends, and little ones. And enjoying the outdoors, going out to eat, and you know, and just basically living our lives.

That individualism to allow for certain behaviors or feelings to be expressed is a running trend for Fatimah. While she identifies with being an American, the stronger group she associates with is being a Southerner. I noticed the distinction even during the interview, and asked her if there were smaller organizations of national identities within a larger one, rather than just one large group. While she admitted that she never thought of it that way, she quickly took up the stance:

Despite all the, you know, sort of. Bible bashers, if you will, that people will say are kind of in this part of the country, and despite that sort of idea. And the idea of really close minded white supremacists groups and stuff that are also often seen as being part of Tennessee and part of the South, in general, I actually think that the majority of people, in my experience, are entirely opposite of that. They are very friendly, open, waving at you as you pass down the street. And I think that, for me, that's what Southern culture is all about. That Southern hospitality. That, you know, willingness to hold the door open for you when you are going into a place, you know. Saying thank you, nodding your head. I think, for me, that's what a lot of it's about.

Her speech got faster and more animated as she described what her experience of being in the South, and specifically Tennessee, meant to her. A particularly interesting construct used in her commentary was the idea of a “Bible basher.” This was a very nuanced and savvy change by Fatimah because the Bible is considered a holy text for Muslims. Instead of creating a context that is antagonistic towards Christianity, she chose to highlight the misdeeds of people using the Bible as a means for missed interpretation. More often called, “Bible thumpers,” or people who push and prompt Christian philosophy through extreme interpretations of the Bible, Fatimah uses her own terminology to highlight the argumentative propaganda. This change in word choice maintains Fatimah’s unflinching belief in the goodness of all people.

The other picture Fatimah included was of a married, heterosexual pair, smiling as they watched something on the woman’s smart phone. Described in this superficial way, it would seem that Fatimah included a picture that did not challenge the ugly stereotypes that are so often associated with Southern culture. But this picture, as she described it, challenges so many of the assumption because the young couple were both recent converts to Islam, young, and from

different racial backgrounds. The candid shot highlights how, “these young people chose to become Muslim—have that freedom. Despite issues with their family, they found a community to be supportive.” This couple challenges the average construction of the South held by so many people, but Fatimah plays by her own rules. This couple exemplifies what the local national culture is.

More specifically, Fatimah finds a refined sense of diversity inside the mosque in Gardner City. She shared another candid photo she took when we went of a young Muslim girl (Figure 10: Precious Girl Praying):

This precious little girl [was] trying to, umm you know, kind of, follow the motions of the prayer. And she kind of looked up. And I just thought it was so precious, /mashAllah/. And umm, I don't know. I just. I love our Muslim community in Gardner City. And I think a huge part of it is that we have people from all over the world. And yet, we're this family within this bigger community of Gardner City, and Tennessee, and the U.S. as a whole. And I don't know. I don't think you see this kind of diversity and this kind of connection, love in some ways, very often. And to that extent, I feel, more often, we see people separating into their own groups, their own, sticking to people who are like them. But I think, /Alhamdulillah/, our faith unites us. /Alhamdulillah/. And our community is just that right size, you know, we're not so big that it's necessary to have separate groups. And it keeps us, /Alhamdulillah/, able to stay together and to. I don't know. Something that I sincerely love is, just like, going in and see sisters from Somalia, Kenya, Pakistan, Indian, Middle East, like, all of these places—converts. For me, I don't know, /Alhamdulillah/. And to see this precious little girl growing up in that environment, I think it's really awesome and inspiring. /Alhamdulillah/.

Fatimah has an ability to say a lot in a very short amount of time. Without any prompting on my side, she correlated the picture of this one little girl acting as a symbol of the larger Islamic



Figure 10: Precious Girl Praying

community. Fatimah's gendered representative, however, is not an emphasis. She did not pick this picture because of the little girl, but because of what she was trying to do: learn the habits of a Muslim. Her attempt at mimicking the prayer style might have been imperfect, but Fatimah was overwhelmed by the very risk of such a young member of the community trying to join the practice.

Her continued use of the Arabic word, “/Alhamdulillah/ [all thanks be to God],” highlights a common practice style of thanks in the Muslim world alongside her explanation of the community. While Arabic is considered the language of Islam, as the Quran is written in Arabic and is considered to be the direct words from God, not all Muslims speak the language.

Many people will try to learn as much Arabic is possible, though they may limit the vocabulary to just a central selection of vocabulary. Often times, /Alhamdulillah/ is one of the words because the phrase quickly praises a monotheistic God. Though she used other words in Arabic during the conversation, like /subhanAllah/ [Glory be to God] or /mashAllah/ [God has willed it; a positive or joyous exclamation], her constant utterance of /Alhamdulillah/ would tie her immediately as an insider in a Muslim community.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Fatimah prefers community events that celebrate,



Figure 11: Bikes

rather than create divisions in the community. She shared a picture of various bikes lined up, some leaning against trees or laying on the grass (Figure 11: Bikes). There was a event celebrating an local cyclist where members of the community—not just the Muslims ones—brought their bikes to celebrate the weather and the achievement:

And, umm, that for me was a really cool thing to see all these people from different backgrounds just coming together to celebrate this guy's accomplishment. And, I don't

know, I love, I love these kind of unifying things. Where, we're not there to discuss, like why we're different or how we are different or anything. We're just there having a good time all together as part of this community.

While Fatimah talks using a plural sense of community, she will readily change and alter the association of people to conform to her standards. Most of the conversation we had focused on being affiliated with Muslims and their organizations. But this time, the event supported an individual, regardless of his religious affiliation, if any, so she was in attendance. In this way, the conversation starts leading to a more detailed examination of places as it pertains to Fatimah's sense of nationality.

Places

Fatimah rarely used the words “identity” or “nationality” during the course of our conversation. Instead, she relied on discussing her sense of self through a lens focused in the South, but particularly in Tennessee. Earlier she said she identified herself with cultural features of the South, but does not identify as a “Southerner.” But even when she identified with region of the South, the specifics she gave focused on a very small area focused in Tennessee. But place is so important to the expression of self, Fatimah readily referenced landmarks, architecture, and settings that maintain her sense of identity.

Urban

My favorite picture from Fatimah's collection was a purposefully staged photograph Fatimah took for this project. Out of her entire collection, this was the only photo she said was specifically planned and framed in the camera to respond to the prompt. Her staging of the photograph places an emphasis on associating with Gardner City, as a place, but also to highlight a pretty urban space. In the picture, Fatimah placed a tall glass with her city's three-digit area

code on it, filled with water, in front of a large window. In the background, a blurred cityscape extends to the horizon line. A prominent city feature is centered in the background. Because the glass is filled with water, the city's hallmark is also reflected on the glass, almost appearing as if the landscape was also printed on the glass. The reflections that occur throughout the image at different angles acts as a great metaphor to Fatimah's sense of identity: there are various reasons why she connects to this city, and only this city.

Rural

Fatimah also shared pictures highlighting the natural beauty of Tennessee. In one picture, I asked her to describe what she saw (Figure 12: Rural Farm):



Figure 12: Rural Farm

Umm, it like the outdoors, the East Tennessee culture. And all of that. Like the—it's sort of a barn, and as you can see a fence. And I don't know, that's just sort of the life for me.

Or like the ideal East Tennessee existence. And of course the mountains are the in distance.

She put a special emphasis on the word, “ideal,” using a dreamy-like quality to her tone. She did not comment on the people who are in the picture or her purpose of being at this remote farm. Her limited description of the location did not show any knowledge specific to architectural features for this setting. While this was not her constant, she regularly experienced outings into parks and undeveloped areas in Tennessee.

Fatimah also included a commonly photographed location in the Smokey Mountains to represent her love for America’s natural landscapes (Figure 13: America, the Beautiful). Tucked



Figure 13: America, the Beautiful

in the left side of the frame, however, are the buildings of a popular tourist stop in East Tennessee. But clearly, Fatimah’s gaze was centered on the majesty of the land, as she said:

I think that our nature, our natural resources are a very important part of our culture as a nation. As a part of what we pride ourselves as being Americans having from the--oh, what's the song, "America, the Beautiful." [BM speaking: Waves of grain...] grain..blah blah blah. I'm sure if I sat here and thought I could remember the lyrics, but anyway, I think it's a very real part of, you know, what's amazing about the U.S.. The vast amount of different types of environments we have. And landscapes, umm. I think it's pretty phenomenal we can have people spread out in such a huge landmass and still feel united as a nation, for the most part. In general.

Both she and I—two born and raised Americans—could not remember the lyrics for "America, the Beautiful," but made a go of it. While she brokenly mentioned the lyrics, it was easily identifiable. Moreover, Fatimah never mentions any of the other varieties of eco-diversities present during our conversation. All the geographical and geological features she mentions are quite particular to the East Tennessee region.

International Identities

National identity, for Fatimah, is not an easy definition. She holds both of her parents' immigration stories as a unique feature to her identity:

I guess part of it for me helps like, I feel like my background is kind of interesting in the sense that my dad immigrated here. Whereas my mom was born and raised here. And her parents were as well, so it was her grandparents who came here from Europe. So I kind of have this second generation thing, as well as, I don't know, fourth generation. Umm, so it's kind of an interesting perspective, I think. It's probably, maybe, my mom's background that, I don't know, gives me this sense of, like longevity, more. More, more, of an ability to take a stance and say, 'ok folks, if you want to look at my background and

actually look, you might be interested to note that, my great-great-grandfather was here so long ago." And you know, I don't think the fact that my dad immigrated here himself, like, illegitimizes his citizenship in any way. Because I think, that's another, umm, value, that umm, generally America says we hold dear is that people can come live. Strive to live the American dream.

The past comes to play a distinguishing role in defining Fatimah's present identity tying her to America. Moreover, there is a hierarchy established by presenting a chronological accounting of immigration. As an American, it is important to highlight longevity over generations of people. That elapsed time causes authenticity and, more important, a sense of entitlement for the classification of "American." She does not fault her father's more recent immigration pattern to America, but also does not fault the problem of anyone asking for Fatimah to present for credentials regarding historical duration. It comes off as an assumed interrogative about her cultural affiliation. Not that she could be American, but that she must be able to trace her foreignness *and* to detail that history for anyone asking. Fatimah did identify as Palestinian-American on the questionnaire, so I began to wonder how she managed her sense of *home*.

When I asked Fatimah where home was, the answer was not an easy one. She is torn between having to identify with any one nationality because of her connection to both the U.S. and Palestine both with people and places that she enjoys:

Up until last year, it was a simple question to answer. Because last year I went to Palestine since I was six... And, like, I had wanted to go so desperately...before going, I would have very readily said that, 'Gardner City is home. I want to be here forever. I don't want to go anywhere else. Yeah, this is what I know, what I love.' But then going to Palestine for two months definitely kind of shook that, I don't know, mentality in me.

And made me fall in love—I fell in love so quickly with the place and people. ...And so it's harder for me to answer that question now, so ‘where is home?’. Because there is this constant, sort of like, draw. When I'm in Palestine, like, I miss the people here and the places, but when I'm here, I'm like constantly missing everyone there. It's like, that's the part of the challenge for me. Now in answering that question. But I mean, it's a much strong conflict ever since that trip and coming back.

There was a hesitancy about describing the pull between the two locations when Fatimah talked. It seemed as if she could not express too much about one place for fear of not showing a similar appreciation for the other.

Government

Over the course of our conversation, Fatimah would often blend the impact of people and places together to discuss the role of the “government.” She often talked about a government that protect citizens and their rights. But for all her talk about Tennessee, she was, in fact, referring to the Federal government and the Constitution’s First Amendment that allows for freedom of religion. She included a picture from a trip to a national park, where the Muslim women are praying together, saying (Figure 14: Freedom of Religion):

It's one of the great things about this country. So here we are, in our national forest and /Alhamdulillah/, we're just able to pray. And you know, there were other people, around taking pictures and stuff. And you know, /Alhamdulillah/, they didn't give us any trouble. And I think that's an amazing thing, /Alhamdulillah/. Umm, so that's one of the things that I'm very grateful for in the U.S.. And of course, our faith is something, Alhamdulillah, is something we should strive to practice no matter where we are. So the fact that we are

free to do that here and that it's not a struggle. In terms of the government protecting our rights and everything. It's really amazing. /Alhamdulillah/.

While there were numerous times for Fatimah to mention difficulties faced by Muslims trying to



Figure 14: Freedom of Religion

practice their religion, she always navigated around those mentions. She kept her faith in the political standards of America, vocalized by her repeated “/Alhamdulillah/.” She trusted in God, not in the legal system, to maintain her right to believe in the way that she saw fit. Fatimah expressed her connection to Islam.

Conclusion

The correlation of Booth’s construction of a rhetorical argument privileging ethos and pathos over logos is slightly modified in Fatimah Ahmad’s commentary. Booth highlights ethos and pathos over logos, but Fatimah connects her pathos and logos together. As such, her pathos

is centered first and foremost in her conversation. She created a national identity framed first through narratives on her religious convictions as a practicing Muslim (pathos). Her religious commentary comes off as self-guided reminders to think of God and act accordingly. Any mentions of her religion came off as a emotional call to herself. She focuses her Muslim identity to do and be the best she can be for her community, both in terms of people and places. From these standards, she constructs a sense of national pride that collapses greater American maxims (like Freedom of Religion) with regional representations (farms and grits) to craft her localized sense of nationality. What is most interesting in her pathetic appeal is that is personalized to herself. While we normally thinking of an audience being outside of the speaking rhetor, Fatimah's emotional appeals ran to herself. She wanted to be moved and affected by the actions she took. Those feelings decided which pictures she included in the collection, and thus affected the stories shared (logos).

The pictures, as visual rhetorical materials of nationality, framed her sense of nationality. She included pictures of food, for example, to highlight her connection to people. At first glance, seeing some many pictures of food could lead to the wrong impression that Fatimah is a gourmand. While she certainly appreciates a good meal, her stories explaining these details were about people, emotions, community, and her Islamic identity. Without her stories the detailed her connection to the images, one would never had known how community-driven her sense of nationality was.

Moreover, Fatimah complicates Gellner's take that religious identification became obsolete after the secular construction of nationality. Gellner's argument was framed anthropologically, but Fatimah's arguments were also driven that way. She is deeply connected to her network of people and to the greater sense of community because of what she believes

Muslims should do. Her identification as a Muslim was one of the most repeated ideas during our conversation. Her religious convictions drove her identity as an American and also as a Palestinian. She connected mutually-exclusively to both these nationalities. Gellner did not problematize the impact of multi-nationals.

Additionally, Fatimah's rhetoric responds to Anderson's sense of imagined communities, as she believes that communities are networked even if not everyone knows each other on a first name basis. But this imagined community is especially important in religious communities, like Muslim ones. Fatimah sees her religious expression as a nationalistic expression. Anderson does not explore the impact of religion on the sense of imagined communities. Fatima discussed the connection in her local Muslim community to be multi-national. Her religious identity ties her to people to a point where service to the community plays a major role in her life.

Chapter 6. Malak

I almost missed meeting Malak. After ten minutes of talking with her, I had to have an interview with her. Luckily for me, Malak has a heart of gold and did not make me work hard to capture her attention for an interview. I met Malak when I attended an annual event in Dunnington, another pseudonym for a large metro city in the Southeast. The event was sponsored by a local Muslim community organization. It was a weekend-long conference on diversity among Muslim women. I was notified of the event because another community kindly added me to their list serve, where they announced the upcoming event. At first, I did not think to attend because there was so much already to do within a short distance from my epicenter. I was not thinking of driving to an entirely different territory in the South to start more conversations. But as I thought more and more about it, I realized I was turning my back on a perfect setting to find more perspectives. This event in an organized Muslim community would have many women, some of whom are bound to be talkative and will join my study. Because the event had a registration fee that was more expensive than a dinner for two at a chain restaurant, I was worried that I would not gain a representative exposure to the local people. But the idea of not meeting anyone was enough to get me on my way to Dunnington for the weekend. During the last hour of the first day, I finally got to speak with some young women who were extremely personable. One of these women was Malak.

Malak's discussion of nationality was one of the hardest ones to pin down because the concept means very little to her sense of identity. She recognizes the impact of places, people, and culture on her lifestyle choices. But her sense of Islam is the feature that drives her attitude to be a helpful member of society. While Fatimah Ahmad also used religious language to brace her sense of nationality, Malak takes a different approach by focusing on generalizable rules for

herself. This idea comes up in a section on clothing, where Malak wears her style, regardless of her physical location. She creates a universal identity based on her criteria and experience that may change her beliefs. Malak's words also serve as a boundary between the American and Iranian commentary I received. While she is an American, Malak's sense of nationality is framed through her family: "My parents are from Yemen, but I was raised in the West."

Like so many other Muslim women I have meet in the Southeast, Malak has a complicated narrative about her nationality. She was originally born in Saudi Arabia, though she is not a Saudi citizen. Saudi citizenship is passed from father to children. Malak's parents are both Yemeni. Her father's family comes from Ethiopia, while her mother's family comes from Yemen. Their childhoods were spent in Yemen, but Malak's was spent in various other countries. Though she is only in her mid-twenties, she sees the world crossing back and forth over the Atlantic Ocean. Her changes in home bases, I believe, have added to her very philosophical approach to describing her life. Malak, like Fatimah Ahmad, holds her sense of religion as a central post to her identity. In describing her nationality, she used generalized terms to explain her connections to nations, like identifying things as "Western" or "Middle Eastern." Her commentary is organized through divisions including clothing and gender, geography, and national identity. Rather than argue to be affiliated with any sense of nationality, Malak took a different perspective to argue that nationality is not a core facet to identity.

In the questionnaire, Malak gave descriptors that were extremely thoughtful. Unlike any other participant, Malak called herself, "Muslim." While Fatimah alluded to her connection to Islam citing the Prophet(ﷺ), Malak went straight for the association. She is not one to leave any obscurities. She also included the words, "loyal," "introspective," and "hopeful." I was originally unsure of what she meant by these words, but she quickly tied them together to her photographs.

She identified with the quote by Henry Van Dyke, an early 20th century American writer, that says, “Use what talents you possess, the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.” While Malak is not a Van Dyke fan, the quote spoke to her because of its sense of doing what one can. For Malak, life was about going forward with one’s abilities, not about collecting awards or accolades.

Another way that Malak separated herself uniquely from the other participants in the study was that she included a quote and song as part of her descriptors. Three days after she completed the questionnaire, she sent me an urgent e-mail explaining that she wanted to add a song to her descriptors. The song that Malak included was Boyce Avenue’s “Dare to Believe,” a song about changing one’s perspective to be a proactive member of society. In her e-mail, she attached a link to the transcribed lyrics of the song:

It's feeling like the time's run out
But the hour glass just flipped itself over again
The sun is slowly sinking down
But on the other side a new day waits to begin

If you dare to believe in life
You might realize that there's no time for talking
Or to just wait around while the innocent die

No more
We're gonna lose everything
If we believe all the lies

I may fall but I swear that I'll help you believe

No more

This world's running on empty

And there's no reason why

You may fall but I know that you'll help me believe (AZLyrics.com)

She told me the song was about being a better person. It was a social call to improve our communities by changing our complacent nature over “wrongs” happening. The band’s official video for the song begins with images of various social upheavals, like the World Trade Center attack, riots, shootings, and natural disasters tearing apart urban spaces. The song is a soft ballad with a soft piano accompaniment. It had powerful imagery to match with the message of the video asking to change the social mentality that is quite destructive. While the video was quite powerful, she liked the song because it brought a sense of hope for the future by being self-changing, by changing one’s attitude. Malak focused her commentary on the lyrics and not the video.

Once again, Malak presented a new perspective that no other participant took by including a song to describe herself. I believe it was a pretty gutsy move since many Muslims do not listen to music because it said to be distracting and have inappropriate messages that, as Muslims, we should not condone. But this was Malak’s song. Because it meant so much to her, I asked her if this was her theme song, if this song would have been included in her collection that describes her sense of national identity. She liked that idea, but only if it meant incorporating a performance or just the lyrics. She was not sure what type of visual presentation she wanted instead. I suggested a selfie, but she looked at me with a gentle smile that reminded to me to let others define themselves in their own way.

Malak's sense of introspection translated into a slowly delivered analysis during our conversation. Unlike others who talk out loud to develop a stance or belief, Malak waits patiently. She measures her words, articulates her point, then guards it. She is not defensive about her descriptions of herself, just conscientious. Because of her planned style of speech, I was surprised when she did not identify a pseudonym on her questionnaire. I asked her during at the end of our conversation if she had thought of one, but she brushed it off, "No. It doesn't matter." I picked the name Malak for her. This name is not only quite common in the Arabic speaking world, but it also is a unisex name. It also fits her poetic nature since it means 'angel.' While Malak identifies as a woman, she holds a general standard that all people, but particularly herself, should do right. She does not create gendered standards for how people should act, just like "Dare to Believe" did not have a call to action for certain groups. It was a message to everyone; Malak also created universal messages for her own identity.

Malak would also force me to modify my targeted questions to her about nationality because she was focused on her religious identity. I should also mention that our conversation unfolded across seven different time zones when we connected. While the American Southeast is Malak's home, she had just started a four month long temporary position in the Middle East. She was working at a large institution in a cosmopolitan city where she had never lived before. She borrowed an internet modem from a neighbor in the expatriate compound where she lived to connect with me on Skype. Though we started with a video conversation, we learned about half way through our conversation that the connection was clearer and stronger if we removed the video feed. It proved to be a great boon as she changed her voice to become more animated.

Clothing & Gender

One of the first themes I encountered with Malak was over clothes. Especially because she was in a new place with vastly different standards, Malak wanted to voice her opinion about the clothing standards that were part of the culture where she was living. One thing she noticed in the first few days was her need to dress differently. She explained her subtle fashion choices to stand out in public:

I actually try to not look so much like them. So for example, I don't wear all black. My /hijab/, my /hijab/ are colored, you know. And umm, and I haven't really seen that much here. And I wear, umm, the jacket on top of the /abayah/. Umm, instead of like, wearing it, all, weird looking under the /abayah/, I wear the jacket on top. A jacket or something. And I do that in Yemen as well. I wear jackets on top, instead of just wearing all the clothing under.

The /abayah/ (Arabic, singular) is a black cloak-like garment worn by women in many Middle Eastern and North African countries. It is worn very loosely and made in flowing fabrics, like silk, chiffon, or crepe. They can be like a caftan, that is put on over the head, or have fasteners, like snaps or hook-and-eye catchers down the front. Sometimes, the garment is embellished with beading, embroidery, or fabric inlays. Speaking from personal experience, a woman wearing a jacket on top of the /abayah/ would stand out with the different tailoring, fabric, and color. While the majority of the /abayat/ (Arabic, plural) are black, colored options can sometimes be found. (But they are typically not as pretty and embellished.) They are typically worn with a black /hijab/. Many times, women buy sets that have the same design applied to both the /abayah/ and /hijab/. But in Malak's context, only non-nationals wore alternatives to this standard. Malak enjoys standing apart from the other women.

But do not mark this fashion choice a moment of ‘rebellion.’ Instead, Malak considers her fashion sense a philosophical choice because she has, “studied and worked hard to understand the meaning” behind the Islamic justification for this practice. Not only is Malak very connected and proud to be a Muslim, she prides herself in being active in crafting her religious standards. To Malak, her identification with Islam is, “Not so much as a religion, as it is a way of life.” She wants to have a meaningful life, so she questions mandates put on her if they impose a hardship on her quality of life. This is not say that she will give up option or choices for the sake of her belief, but I mean to emphasize that she highlights her introspection about why she practices Islam in the way she does.

One of the pictures Malak included in her collection is a colorful collection of /hijab/ hanging on a rack (Figure 15: /hijab/ Collection). The rack has a metal frame with horizontal bars running across. One scarf is draped across a section, with some left unoccupied. The scarves on display are of various colors and prints. No two are alike. No other participant took pictures of her /hijab/ in her collection. I had assumed that this would be the shot that was reproduced over and over again since so much research is focused on Muslim women and their relationship to their /hijab/. Malak highlighted her /hijab/ collection as a symbol of excellence:

it goes back to, you know, my, my beliefs. I think it's really, it's probably the biggest most important decision I made to wear it. And not only that, but, umm. I think it's, I think I value it much more. Umm, because when I did start wearing it, I didn't really know why I started wearing it.

Because there was so much autonomy associate with wearing the /hijab/, Malak takes pride in her collection. She still remembers the lessons learned along the way about wearing the /hijab/ and also creating an identity with one:

I just wanted to be like my mom and my older sister. And so it wasn't until a couple of years later, when I was in high school when, you know, I had been asked, 'what's the meaning of that?', 'why do you wear that?'. And that time when I had to start doing my research, and, you know, I had to understand why I wore it—why it is that we wear it. I put in the work and the effort so I value it much more.

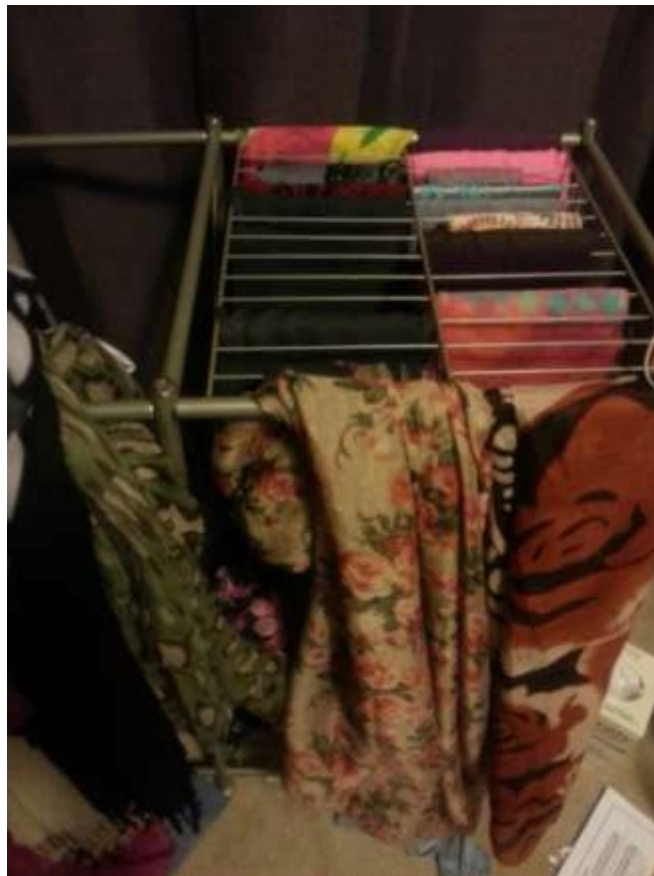


Figure 15: /hijab/ Collection

There is a sense of mimicry or imitation that is part of learning any culture, but Malak also found herself having to explain and defend her choices. It is also really telling that she shifted the

pronoun use at the end from “I” to “we” that connects her to a larger sense of Muslim women. Owning this change meant that Malak could identify with this group.

It is quiet common for English speaking Muslim young adults pick up coined term, ‘/hijabi/.’ It is not a formal Arabic word, but a play on the word to imply that a woman regularly wears a /hijab/. People say things like, “she’s a /hijabi/,” or “I’m a /hijabi/.” However, in Arabic conventional grammar, it actually translates to “my /hijab/,” a possessive noun. But using this code-switched word is not completely accepted. I have heard women argue against this moniker because it reduces Muslim women to an inanimate object; it removes our humanity and replaces it with a thing often associated in negative connotations of being objectified and, worse yet, othered. Much like the Marlboro Man representing America, when there is a social campaign against smoking, the metonymy of a hijabi as Muslim women limits their capabilities. Malak was in total disagreement with this tension:

Yes! Definitely [use the term]...Yes, [I’m proud to identify with it.]—most definitely!

because you know, one of the reasons we are, we are encouraged to wear the /hijab/ is to kind of--sig--what’s the word I’m looking for?--to kind of, be recognized as a Muslim.

And so, this is kind of one of the symbols that we should hold up high.

But the social pressures of the /hijab/ are present. Malak told me about her experience visiting a famous mosque in the Middle East and running into the religious police, or /mutawat/:

I was, I was very shocked to see [the mosque], [the mosque] police, the /mutawat/. Like telling me, telling me that this is good—bad and you shouldn’t do this. You know, umm.

And even though, in his mind he thinks he probably is doing right. Eh, I don’t think that’s the way to do it. And in the West, you would never see that happening. To each their own in the West. And that’s what I love about being there.

The impact of someone coming to tell her how to present herself as a Muslim was deplorable. Moreover, the /mutawat/ are considered to be 'societal cleaners,' if you will. If any behavior is presented in public that is not considered appropriate, they are the first ones to respond. In the same way one expects the police to arrive at the scene of a crime, the /mutawat/ hurry to observe and correct any behavior. But their legal impact is not all that clear to citizens since they are quick to declare publically one's trespass, instead of offering any type of citation. And they never give praise to citizens exhibiting good behavior. Malak showed this by self-corrected her statement quickly going from 'good' to 'bad.'

There are both male and female /mutawah/ who go to various public spaces, like mosques and malls, to keep their eyes on the general public. Malak told me about her first run in with a female /mutawah/

Not to me personally, but with a friend, as we were walking together. My friend is actually not a /hijab/i. She's Muslim and she doesn't cover her hair. So, you know, in the mall, in public, she wears her hijab very loosely. So, we're, we're in the mall. And somebody, one of the women asked her to cover it. To wrap her hijab, basically, to put it on. And, I don't know. I guess, I guess, in the West if that happened in the West, I would take it different. I would take it like someone is genuinely trying to advise you.

Even though she was living in a space where the social mandates require everyone to participate in hijab practices, and Malak already participates in covering her hair, she still wants people to have their own choice in doing so. She was not the one being addressed, but she found the commentary rude and out of place. Moreover, the style of exchange between two people highlights the distinct difference between how people treat each other. Just like Malak

established a binary between wearing or not wearing a /hijab/, she also formed a sense of Western and non-Western etiquette among Muslims.

The focus that Malak wants to make regarding her clothing choices are fashionista debates, not ones about adhering to a certain type of dress code. She explained her point very succinctly when I asked her what the appeal of maintaining her own style, instead of acculturating the average practices she observed:

I think it kind of goes back to the religion thing, 'cause umm I (pause). Of course whether I'm here or in North America, I'm going to make sure I'm properly covered. And that I'm in Islamic attire. So as long as I'm covering all the right things, umm, then, then, I'll do it my own way. So, so it doesn't have to be covered in the ways that are normal here.

Malak would probably be considered a conservative dresser in the States. But balking at what color palette her clothes are falls back to her sense of Islam as a “way of life,” to be incorporated as routine. To Malak, she can still be Muslim and wear flowers on her /hijab/.

I wanted to understand more about how Malak defined her sense of “Islamic attire,” since that has been a hotly contested category in America about Muslims. Malak kept her answer short, saying, “Islamic attire would be debatable, depending on who you ask. But generally speaking, you know, loose fit clothing, and covering the hair and the neck. That's pretty much it. It's basic.” And she clarified her feelings about how to wear the /hijab/, as well, saying, “And so, you have your hijab and it doesn't have to be all black. And I don't have my face covered, because, you know, that's not a required thing. It's just kind of an optional thing.” There was no specific item that needed to be worn, only a sense of modesty. Malak took advantage of her rules by allowing herself the chance to wear /abayah/ in the States for the Friday Sabbath prayers at

the mosque, but also when she “did not [have] the energy to put together an outfit.” Her favorite outfit to wear was, “without a doubt, just a pair of jeans. And a long cardigan that covers my bottom. Because we have turned into a butt culture. We are created in a way that makes us beautiful. And we shouldn’t draw attention to things like that.” Men, it seems, have drawn the short end on the looks department.

But this does not remove Malak from having a gendered commentary for men’s attire, as well. In photo collection, she included a picture focused on garments hanging on a coat stand. Hanging on the left side is a white /ghutra/ (Figure 16: /ghutrah/). The /ghutra/ is a traditional head scarf worn by men across the Middle East. It is typically a square, that is then folded connecting two corners that are opposite of each other. This triangle shape is then intricately folded around the head to protect men’s heads and faces in the harsh arid climates. The style men adopt for the /ghutrah/ is regional or tribal. It clearly shows affiliation, much like a Scottish tartan bears claim to a clan.

Malak’s picture shows a slight blur on the image because she was in a rush to photograph the items using her smart phone. The picture is well lit so one can notice the banded designing running down the /ghutrah/. The brown hued detail is specific to Yemeni design, Malak said. She highlighted that all she sees in her temporary home in another country are red and white checked ones. She does not like those, as much. The brown ones were familiar.

Malak thought of herself as part of a Yemeni group. She included this picture because it was part of her culture, even though it was not something that she wore. She explained that the /ghutrah/ was in the hallway because it had just been returned back to her family:

A family friend of ours had just worn it for /eid/, I think. And so, and he's actually

Palestinian and he's married to a Yemeni girl. And so, I guess, she's trying to make him a

little more Yemeni.(Laughing) And so he wore that for /eid/. And I thought it was kind of cool because, umm, those types of designs are more well known in Yemen than anywhere else in the Arab World. Here...all I see are the white and red ones. Right? So that is more specific to Yeman, so I liked to see that.

The /ghutrah/ is as gender specific as a /hijab/, but it also bears testament to a regional affiliation

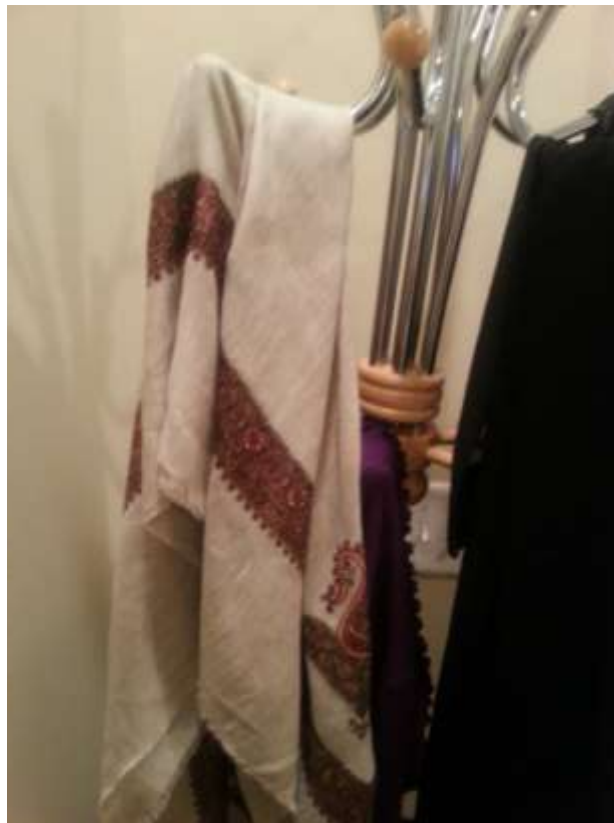


Figure 16: /ghutrah/

for Yemen. But the affiliation is not one that is biologically engraved. Just by borrowing the /ghutrah/, the family friend was able to take up an identity that is not his. The idea of that the /ghutrah/ can cause one to gain more Yemeni credibility is based on practiced affiliation:

Umm, well, honestly when I was taking the pictures, the matter of gender did not come across my mind at all. In my mind I was snapping pictures of that were representative of my nationality, not my gender. You know what I mean. It's [Nationality] not gender specific.

So there is a neutrality behind affiliating with a country, but not in the representative ways. There are styles specific to the expression of Yemeni identification. But much like Malak's sense of "Islamic attire," nationality requires a contextualization to specify how it manifests.

It is also of note that the man wore the /ghutra/ to /eid/ prayer. Muslims celebrate two major holidays every year: one after the month of fasting, Ramadan, and one after the Holy Pilgrimage, /hajj/. Regardless of what /eid/ celebration was being attended, it is standard practice to wear one's best clothing for prayer services. For this man to publically wear this /ghutra/ shows the national identification, but also a more subtle recognition of how one wears the item. While it sounds easy enough to do, wrapping a /ghutra/ takes skill bound in practice and patience.

East vs. West

About twenty minutes into our conversation, I had noticed that Malak used a more global dichotomy to explain locations. Remember Fatimah's style of representation moved from a regional Tennessee identity to a broad Palestinian representation. In contrast, Malak created a language about her identity based on East and West Hemispheres.

When she kept using the word "Western," I thought she was capturing the Edward Saidian-binary from *Orientalism* that is heavily reliant on colonization practices and the layers of intersectionality creating social strata within populations. Rather, Malak developed a sense of East and West because her family moved from the Middle East, where she was born, to Canada

when she was two years old. They remained there, in a large cosmopolitan city for the next ten years, until they moved to the American Southeast. These moves were spurred by her father's career, but it was not the goal. Malak said that they wanted to stay, but moved out of necessity. So finally, after more than dozen years of living in the Southeast, it was home.

She was incredulous with herself because America only came to be her home as the result of spending two “miserable” months in Yemen. Since this came so late in the conversation, I was surprised that she did not actually like Yemen. She had spent so much time detailing their practices and owning that identity, I did not think anything of it. I had to learn more about her trip to understand what made it difficult:

I stayed mostly in the capital, then I spent one week in [a village], which is where my family is from, the village where we go, where we come from. To be honest with you, I just realized how, umm, lucky we are in the West. All I realized was that we were very spoiled we are. Umm, yeah, and there was a lot of things, inconvenient things, umm, that I complained about, like soap in the public bathrooms. And I'm a clean freak. I'm a germaphobe. So things like that. I couldn't, I couldn't live with. It's, it's making me anxious right now. Things like that were really huge to me. But it was no—it was no big deal to the others who lived there. It made me feel very spoiled. And, and it makes you grateful for the way we lived here in the States.

Malak liked the idea of being from Yemen, just not having to live in Yemen. She did not understand the complexities of their lifestyle. But it was also a life style that she had not experienced before. The subtle change of positing Yemen against “the West” blurs what national identity she is comparing: what is “the West,” how far does it extend, who is part of it, why are you part of it, etc.

We went back to the questionnaire to address how Malak responds when another Muslim asks her ‘where are you from?’:

It kind of answers the other question about my nationality. When I answer people's question. When somebody asks me, "where are you from?" I say, 'I'm from Yemen.' It always, I always have to follow it with, 'buuut [drawn out, with added emphasis]. I was raised here. In the West.' Right? And so, eventually, somewhere along, down the line, I just started saying, that ‘my parents are from Yemen, and that I was raised in the West.’ Because if I don't say that, someone will have to say, “But you speak perfect English, were you born here?” You know? And so. Eh, yeah. Yeah, eventually I just started thinking, you know, that I, that ‘my family is from there.’ And ‘I spent all of my life here.’ Even though I wasn't born in the West.

Malak is forced to problematize her own identity because of the questions about her nationality. She already knows that people will not believe her answer, so she had to modify her delivery to cover the assumed doubt of her identity, which came out as being born in the West. But that slip of truth hangs on her. Claiming that association ties her identity down, along with her language ability in English, to be Western. Yet she understands the social conventions—the ones that let her know that people will not believe that she can only be either totally from America or not from America, and not something more complicated—are based in language practices.

She shared a unique perspective of her spoken exchanges that complicate her national identity:

Even though Arabic is my first language, I think that I'm sometimes better at English than I am in Arabic. Right? Because we only spoke Arabic at home with our parents. Everything else was in English, even with my siblings. We spoke English. And so, that's

kind of strange, right? Because Arabic is your first language. My father even didn't allow us to speak to him in English at home. If we speak to him in English, he wouldn't answer us. Unless we said it in Arabic, right? So that kind of thing is very strange, you know? Everything is just familiar to me, more familiar to me in the West. So I just group it together like that.

The role of language and culture driving the fervor to claim a nationality gets problematized in situations where multiple languages are exchanged. There are certain policies for systems of communication. Malak does not like that tension, so she does not use the labels—American or Canadian—that provoke that unrest. But knowing the language, and not the culture, also allows her to claim a Yemeni background.

Another picture that Malak included was a close up of a common decorative piece symbolizing Yemen. The picture is a tight shot of an angled, hinged frame of two traditional pieces of Yemen: on the left is a contoured silhouette of a notable landmark; on the right is a traditional, ceremonial dagger (Figure 17: Souvenir). The color scheme is gold and black. It also follows the conventions of Islamic art by not containing any depictions of living creatures. The idea being that no one should try to replicate something that only God can create. So instead, Islamic art often focuses on calligraphy, geometric patterns, and architecture.

Another notable feature from the picture is that there is both English and Arabic phrases on the piece. Malak said that these two features are quintessential pieces of Yemen that her family purchased there: “It was definitely from in Yemen but I'm, I'm going to assume that it was written in English, as well, because it's a souvenir type thing so it's translated for people who don't speak Arabic.”

Like the /ghutra/, the /jambia/ also carries a national tradition in Yemen:

It's a dagger. It's considered, it's considered a symbol of (pause) I guess you could say, prestige or class. And also the color, the color of the belt that you are supposed to wear it on. It also, it also kind of explains the person, what tribe the person is from, their social class. So that's why it's a very big symbol of Yemen.



Figure 17: Souvenir

Malak, at the end of our conversation, would argue that men were used as national spokespeople, not women. The /jambia/ is only worn by men and is tucked into an embroidered belt, often a bright green color. She said this style of decoration featuring the /jambia/ was common and could readily be found in other Yemeni homes.

The silhouetted icon in the frame was also the central focus of another picture Malak shared (Figure 18: /dar al hajar/). This photograph is another tight shot. The lighting is a bit dim,

but the foreground of the photo is focused on a hanging porcelain-like feature of a home. There is a small chain running up the back side of it, creating a sense of depth to the background filled with random bottles and objects. The close up and angle of the camera makes it hard to immediately create a proportion to the item. It is actually a small keychain replica of /dar al hajar/:



Figure 18: /dar al hajar/

It literally means, "House of Rock." It's actually, like a, touristy place in Yemen. It's actually very beautiful. It doesn't do it justice at all. It was built on a cliff. And so it's very very high up. You have to climb up a whole bunch of stairs to get to the top. It belong to one of the former rulers of Yemen... I've been twice, in my life. And I just thought it was very cool to see that. Because I'm a bit of a fan of history. So going up to

the top and seeing how they lived. And just the life style, the simplistic life style was very intriguing to me. And I just thought it was very cool. Because they have nothing, yet they have so much.

Unlike her own experience of having a simple lifestyle in Yemen, appreciating it as a historical place is readily possible. The idea of history and currency runs into another photo.

The final picture Malak was a change bowl. The signature close up shot of a bowl with petal-like fringed edges is filled with coins, mostly American pennies. But on the right



Figure 19: Coin

side, is a silver coin with a distinctive Eastern Arabic numerals embossed on its visible side (Figure 19: Coin). When I first saw the picture—well before our conversation—I thought Malak was making a grand statement about capitalism or the economy. I was happily mistaken:

Whenever I see a coin from Yemen laying around the house. Umm, sometimes I will keep it for, I guess, like, memorabilia. Like I, not, not because I would want to save it and

use it whenever I go. Because I don't go very often. Maybe like every five years I go. Umm, but, more so, you know? If, for example, the opportunity arose where somebody would ask me, "Do you have anything from Yemen? Can I look at it?" or even, you know, in high school, or in college, whenever there would be international festivals, I would always, always participate. I always like to have, you know, some, some symbolic object to, to at least show that I know a little bit about my roots.

Malak created a narrative behind a coin to construct a sense of her family's past. But it is somewhat separate from herself. The coin represents a different time, or an iterated time of visiting. That space is not permanent, her present time, or hers as an identity.

Nationality

Over the course of our conversation, Malak shared a unique stance on nationality: it is overrated. Instead of focusing on a country identification, Malak turned to her religion, "because I've never considered myself Yemeni. I'm ashamed to say I don't know more about my country. I don't know the national anthem. I know the Canadian one, I know the American one, but not theirs." There are key features that are part of being Yemeni, but Malak has counted herself out of any "real" Yemeni claim. So she collects things that should gain her access, like a /ghutra/ or a /dar al hajar/ keepsake. But the pieces that she found that were distinctive to her sense of Yemen were all somehow unavailable to her because of her gender, her lifestyle, or her geographic location. Instead, she finds her identity within her sense of Islam, just so long as she picks the outfit.

For Malak the extent of national identity is, much like Sarah carries her German heritage, a matter of knowing, but not enacting. The rhetorical assent in describing her nationality is void because she privileges the logical ideas of claiming a nationality before her stances. She does not

like Yemen, but her family is from there, so she will claim it. She could separate between her family and the place. She loves her family, though at times she does not agree with them, but she does not want to be in that space. Because she does not pass as American, people ask her where she is from. Not having any control over her identification, I am not all that surprised that Malak takes her identification as a Muslim more importantly than her nationality. As long as she can practice her styling and interpretation to be Muslim, she is pretty much going to make her living situation work for her.

Conclusion

The rhetoric of nationality can be missing from a person's rhetorical library. At least it was in Malak's case. Much like Fatimah Ahmad who appealed to her sense of religion before her sense of nationality, Malak focused on framing a rhetorical argument that privileged pathos and logos. Her stories, her reactions and feelings, and her justifications of what happened were important to her identity. This became clear in Malak's commentary about her clothing. Malak cited her personal style standards to explain what choices she made. For example, she explained that she wears clothing that intentionally separates herself as a foreigner because she found social privilege in it. Being seen visually as an outsider was acceptable because she stayed true to her convictions as a Muslim as well as getting her tasks accomplished.

In Malak's case, the role of ethos is situated slightly different. Instead of using an identifier, such as "Muslim" or "woman" to frame an argument, these designators were situated as a telos to the argument. If we think of rhetorical arguments as a space, then Malak frames her argument as the synthesis of her pathos and logos allows her to claim an ethos. Rather than define why she identifies with a group, her commentary is about how she connects. For example, she explains that her modest clothing style allows her to identify as a Muslim woman. Because

of this, she photographed a small portion of /hijab/ that she wears and mentioned various experiences about /hijab/ in her life.

Malak's photography collection most reminded me of the importance of visual rhetoric that Lyons and King discussed in their research. Almost like a museum exhibit, Malak presented items that could be represent a large population of people, but she used her individual stories to connect with them. Unlike the examples in *X-Marks*, however, the items in the photos did not marginalize Malak from connecting with groups through nationality. Looking at only her photographs, Malak's rhetoric of nationality comes from identifying with Yemen. But it was also a collection of metonymic items, such as a keychain of a landmark and traditional artifacts with prints and textiles. In response to the prompt, Malak stood most steadfast to representing her nationality. But through the conversation, I learned that it had little impact on how she identified herself, which was through her Islamic status as a Muslim.

Gellner argued that religious identification took second position to national affiliation in the industrial age, or our contemporary setting. But with Malak, religious identity was more important. So her /hijab/ and other religious markers coordinate with her national identity, but as an afterthought. While I appreciate that Gellner was not arguing that religion is totally devoid in national debates, I think Malak's case highlights a need to more critically consider the nexus of religion and nationality.

Malak's commentary also better responds to Kristeva's call for a cosmopolitan identity because Malak stayed true to her philosophies on religion. Unlike Fatima, who drew on communal standards of religion, Malak took a more subjective philosophical view. Her research, as she calls it, was what led her to her demonstrations of Islam in her life. Kristeva calls for a similar action, though she calls for one removed from organized parties like religious identity.

But the subjective identification, the call for uniqueness with the appreciation that we are all global citizens by Kristeva is certainly upheld in Malak's commentary. Conceptualizing nationality as subjective and generalizable to the point of saying that everyone should express their own sense of belonging can be observed throughout Malak's rhetoric.

Chapter 7. Simin

Simin was not a big talker. But she did listen; she listened very intently. Talking with Simin was a unique experience only because she was one of the first people I spoke with regarding the presence of nationality among Muslim women. I was still getting used to the idea of interviewing. When I first met Simin and told her about my project, she quickly offered to be a participant and even a gatekeeper for me to enter her own circle of Muslim friends. Her generosity with her time, and even her feedback on my protocol was huge. So when we finally got our schedules to align for the interview, I started feeling very comfortable with what I thought would develop during our meeting. Instead, I found myself listening to stories and perspectives that were so different from what I had experienced and what others said they did. The interview unfolded comfortably enough, but it traveled in directions that I had not expected.

This chapter traces Simin's sense of people, her research, and her immigration to America. Both representing economic and social privilege, while also at the hands of gender and religious ostracism, Simin is left to work within a system that both represents and rejects her. Because of this she is quite reserved about sharing her story, all the while wanting to present it. Simin's sense of nationality is that she practices features of an Iranian citizen, but wanting to leave it to be an American.

Part of why I assigned this participant the name 'Simin' is because it is Persian for "silvery." Our conversation reminded me of the alien-like movement of mercury, or quick silver, when a thermometer is broken open. I had to be ready for a constellation-like conversation, with various watershed points connected by conversation. Originally, she used a nickname she had developed in the South. People, she told me, could not pronounce her name, so they would ask for her for another name. But because that pseudonym she picked for herself in the initial

questionnaire was actually one that others knew her by, I changed it. This experience, along with others, would actually make our histories run parallel, albeit with some variations.

Since I met Simin a little before I interviewed her, I was not surprised by the words she used to define herself from the questionnaire: Iranian, woman, PhD student, researcher, sport lover. She had mentioned all these things in other passing conversations. I was interested to see how she connected these ideas because she immigrated to the U.S. for permanent residency barely a year earlier. Especially as I come from an Arab background, I was excited to have a participant tell me about her experience in a culture of which I knew very little. I knew we would lead to discussing Islam, of which she was not an observant practitioner. She affiliated as a Shia Muslim, the majority group in Iran, but this identity was, “something inherited from my parents. It is not my own.” Listening very closely to Simin highlighted a perspective in the spectrum of Muslim representation of a regular presence, but with full dissociation.

People

Simin was from Iran. Her English has a foreign accent to it, but there is also a fluency behind it. She was not shy about talking about her youth and young adult experience in Iran, but she was selective about what details she gives in her stories. Her reserve of judgment was not necessarily a product of her life in Iran, but more of a defensive mechanism. Simin loved deeply, but she also was hurt deeply. People, and their support or rejection of her, weighed heavily on her willingness to join larger groups. At the time of the time of our conversation, Simin was rebuilding herself emotionally. That was a bit harder to do without her support system of her family being in close proximity.

Family

Simin is the eldest of three kids in her family. Her brother still lives close enough to visit with their parents in Iran. Her sister, who she has not seen in the past three years, is living in Europe. Simin got a little quiet and maybe even sad when she talked about them, but she also smiled a lot. She stayed in close contact with them, and had in fact had spoken with her mom on the phone the night before we met.

Her family is quite accomplished academically. Her mother holds two different Masters degrees in library science and informational technology. Simin's voice took on a hint of pride describing her mom's accomplishment:

She got, like, her first one, one of her Master's 30 years ago when no women, like, in Iran got one. And she got it in from England. So she is perfect in English. Because she lived there for a while. And the other is in. So one is in library science. And she used to manage a big, like, engineering library. For a long time. And the other is in something like IT, what we have now. But an old version.

The dedication to education is also patterned by her other family members, like her sister who had just completed her Masters in Social Work in Europe. That accomplishment required that she be proficient in English. Simin's mother had pushed her kids to gain more linguistic ability:

My mom sent me to English schools, or, like English classes. Not schools. Because in Iran everything is in Farsi. So I used to go to these private, sort of private classes since I was eight...My brother sort of resisted that. He was not as open as my sister and I. So like right now, his English is not that good. But I went to classes from eight to eighteen.

Simin completed graduate work in Iran, but also pursued her studies in the States. These English classes would supplement her ability to engage with people in her community, but also created a

standard of excellence in her academic engagements. Simin had confided in me that she was having a hard time talking with people in her community because she was regularly accused of having “bad English.” It bothered her to get this feedback because she was conscious of the standard she held while learning English:

The English institute it was renowned for its human capital. To use management terms.

[Laughing] Everybody knew that. Everbody who was recruited and hired in this

institution, they are very good in English. The selection process was very

competitive....[Because of my work] I was the best [in the family, speaking English.]

She did not like admitting that her skills were better than her sister's. Because she valued education and also knowing the plight of Iranian women, Simin was uncomfortable giving and negative comments about her sister. She only spoke of her in good terms.

Her positive feeling for women is clearly indicated through her connection to her mother and aunt. She included two pictures that were the direct result of these women sharing things with Simin, but a third photo also highlighted the sharing and love exchanged between the family members. The first picture that Simin shared focused on a hanging picture of a still life flowers. There is a classic, black and gold embellished frame surrounding the work. There is a texture to the work that is hard to distinguish because the picture was not taken close enough to see the detail. Simin would explain it:

This is a gift I got from my mom. And actually she had got this gift from my aunt. So whenever I see that, I sort of, it reminds me of my mom. Who lives in Iran. And my aunts who live in another part of Iran. And this is a very typical art thing in Iran. It's a rug. We put rugs in the frames. And usually very precious carpet things. So this is a carpet, which has been sewn by hand.

As a traditional style of Iran, it represents a historical past of craftsmanship, while also connecting Simin to her family.



Figure 20: Iranian Tapestry

Her mother, especially, would come up often in the conversation, as someone very important to Simin's life. A major theme that would arise in Simin's talk of her family was her mother's generous giving. In fact, Simin would complain that her mother would spend money trying to send basic goods to her out of concern. It was that same motherly concern that let Simin with a small collection of paper Iranian currency (Figure 21: Iranian Rials):

My mom gave this to me on the day I was going to, to airport to come back to [school].

Because she thought that I would want to pay for something. In Iran's airport I should pay for something there and I should have, like, some Iranian money. And I have it here. I

had actually forgotten about it, like, these money. Here, in the other day, I found it in like my--and I was like, ohh.

Simin was not careless about money, but she was well aware that this money only serves as a reminder of her family. She explained that Iran was currently under various sanctions and



Figure 21: Iranian Rials

embargos. Exchanging the Iranian rials would not be a sound decision. Simin has come twice before the U.S. for long vacations, so she had reason to watch the currency exchange ratios. Before the sanctions, Simin quoted the exchange as being 1,000 rials to \$1 U.S. dollar; now, however, it was more like 3,000 rials to the U.S. dollar. Prices have almost doubled on regular grocery items, like milk. Though it appears as a lot of money, it probably is enough for a small meal.

The sanctions imposed on Iran under the suspicion of nuclear weapons has tightened the

spending by her parents. Both Simin and her sister no longer live in Iran, while her brother still lives with her parents. That is not out of hardship, but because it is customary for adult children to live with parents until they are married. Meanwhile her parents have formally retired, but they continue to work “because that is the kind of people they are.” In the end, however, her parents have not had the chance to visit either of their girls. I was curious if Simin sent money to her parents, but that is not an option for her. She laughed when she told me how little she was making through her temporary position. An entire month’s wages would be needed for her to purchase a ticket to visit her family at the end of the semester.

Relationships

But not all of Simin’s relationships with people in Iran were supportive like her family’s. Simin was previously married in Iran for four years. She was divorced barely a year before coming to live permanently in the American Southeast. There was a tension in her retelling the events involving this her ex-husband. She was both very shy about discussing it, while also very proud of having moved past it. Early on in the conversation, she looked at me and said, “I don’t tell many people about this...” and “I don’t want others to know...” To me, these were clear cues to not include this information. But within ten minutes of our conversation, Simin leaned in and said, very solemnly,

I don't know if you want to record this or not. You know, you know Oprah Winfrey?

[BM: Yeah.] I'm, I am [drawn out] determined [heavy emphasis] to tell her my life story one day. I've gone through so many ups and downs.

We both fell over, laughing. Our conversation, much like our slumped over posture in that moment, shifted to one of more casual feelings. Instead of being stiff and hesitant, measuring each word, we lightened up. The process changed from interview to conversation. And even

though Simin was extremely serious about her drive to meet Oprah, the utterly public display of revenge against her ex-husband was the most heinous act she could impose on him. She wanted to publically shame the man who walked out on her.

I should back up to clarify that I had no idea that Simin had ever been married. Even with the few casual chats we had before the interview, it never came up in any sort of passing way. She kept that information very close to the chest. It only came out in our talk because of the pictures that were in another of her pictures she produced responding to the prompt on national representation.

In this picture, there are two photographs on a table pushed up against a wall (Figure 22: Family Photos). On the left is a larger photograph displayed in a beaded and accented frame. The frame is slightly hanging off the surface, just begging to be pushed back and centered. There is a slight glare on the picture, and the depth from which the picture was taken makes the people in the picture seem blurred. The features of the man and woman standing together are not totally clear. The smaller picture on the right looks like a passport photo. It is a tight head shot of a woman in a decorative frame. Between the two photos is a porcelain dervish dancer. His arms are raised and the skirt is floating above the surface of the table, giving him a mid-twirl movement.

When I asked Simin to describe the photo, she focused in on the people because they were the subject:

This is a picture of my sister. I haven't seen her for three years. Because I couldn't go to Sweden. And this is a picture of my mom and my dad on my wedding day. I don't tell anybody, but it was my wedding day. [Laughing]. And this is [indicated the figurine]

again, a gift from my mom. She bought it from Turkey. When I see them all together, I.

All of them remind me of my, of my nationality, and my parents, and my sister.

Because the picture of her parents is not contextualized by her upcoming wedding the same night, the picture is a happy reminder of her support system. Her mother would be integral in Simin finalizing the divorce proceeding less than five years after their wedding.



Figure 22: Family Photos

The dervish dancer also reminded Simin of her mother, who she describes as being quite spiritual. While her mother regularly observes her Islamic prayers, she also follows extensive spiritual practices, like meditation, chanting, and yoga. Simin's mother went to Turkey to participate the "birth celebrations of Mawlana." I did not recognize the name at all, but Simin was sure I knew who the poet was, "he's basically Persian, but some people say he's Turkish. But he's Persian and wrote in Turkey." She was talking about Rumi, which is consequently the

only name by which I know him. Her mother watched the dervishes dance and brought the trinket back home for herself. But on Simin's last visit to see her mother, she admired it once again. And her mother gifted it to her.

Simin was married when she was 23 years old. She argues that part of the problem with the marriage was that she and her ex-husband "were not part of the same social status. I was a PhD, he was like [left unelaborated, her voice trails off]. This really suffered our relationship. From some time." Simin seems to have been both cognizant and also complacent to the tension because her ex-husband, who remained unnamed during the entire conversation, did not come home one day:

My husband just left without any explanations. Yeah, so that was a very mean. And I think you have such a thing in Saudi Arabia that men can divorce their wives without any reasons. We have this. So I don't know what happened. He left Iran. He left me, he left Iran. He didn't even say goodbye and we were living together. He came, I came home. I, I kept calling him on his cell phone, but it was off. And I was sort of, 'what is wrong?' So I called his parents, and his dad said, 'oh, he has left the country.' And in Iran, women's rights are awful.

Simin mentions Saudi Arabia because she knew from previous conversations that my family came from that country. She was connecting with me about a shared social practice that disadvantages women. This was not just an Iranian cultural absurdity, it was one that extended into other countries as well. A strong similarity between Iran and Saudi Arabia is the political role Islam plays in the countries. I have to insist that the parallelism is limited because each country manages their ideological practices slightly differently. But I am also biased and read the Saudi scenario a lot more charitably, while having no knowledge about Iran to make any

judgment call on any of their practices. Nevertheless, Simin does not mince words about the outcome of this scenario: women are disadvantaged in their marriages; and there are laws that allow this mistreatment.

When she quoted her former-father-in-law's tone, she used a lighter pitch that almost had a sing-song characteristic to it. Simin's tone implied that her ex-husband's father found no problem her not knowing that he had left the country, as if to say she should have been taken back that she was not privileged to that information.

Her tempo also changed when she repeated, "He left Iran. He left me, he left Iran." There was a definitive pause after the first statement; the latter two were rushed into each other. The slippage between the words "me" and "Iran" created a tension for Simin: from what was he running?

There are many unanswered questions left in Simin's mind. She has narrowed down his location to the United States, but that is still a massive space. And on a student budget, there is little that she can do to get the answer she so desperately wants from him. She has tried to contact him, but he will not respond to her messages to him. It was not just that he left her without any comment, but that he also had a divorce issued without still being in contact:

So three or four months after he left, without any, I was hopeful that he would come back. And I was still living in the same house that we use to live together. Because I thought he would come back. One day, I came back from my work. And I saw these papers from court. They had invited me to the court for the divorce thing. And that was awful. Because I never expected him to do such a thing. So yeah, I went to the court. So after a while, I, my mom would go to the court dates for me because I was not present

there.... after 2 year, we got divorced. I mean, he divorced me. Because I, I have no control on anything. He just applied for a divorce.

The inability to be proactive in managing her relationship was hurtful. The fact that she had to present herself in court for her absentee husband to give her up was demeaning.

Simin was very conscious of the fact that divorced women are not considered viable partners in Iran. But she also carried that burden with her in the States. Simin liked the idea of being in a relationship with someone, but the prospects are limited, if at all:

Here I don't get any American people to come to me for dating or anything. So there are just these Iranian guys around me. Some of them are jerks. They really hurt me. These are the ones who are here. So these are the people around me for getting, to get remarried. And some of them are very sensitive about the divorce thing. So as soon as they realize I have this divorce thing, they don't want the story. Actually, if they knew the story, they would become even more scared.

He ex-husband's flightiness has caused her continued stigma with other men in another country. But the nationality ties that continue to connect Iranians together also maintain the cultural politics that are in play. So while Simin is waiting for details, it seems as if the men in her community continue to offer judgment and abandonment.

Dating

Simin, though, is no wilting flower. She thought to re-enter the dating world, but found it difficult to over look the trespasses of her ex-husband. It certainly did not help that the next relationship she entered with a man also ended in heartache and further public scrutiny:

I dated a guy six months ago. (long pause) And he just hurt me so much. Everything took one month. So he came to me to ask for dating. Started. And I didn't know that at the

same time he has an American under his radar...But then, he. I would see, like, confusing behaviors on his part. He didn't try to directly finish the relationship, but he was showing some behavior that I was like, 'why are you behaving like this?' He drove me to a point where I said, 'Let's finish this.' And then immediately, as soon as we finished, he just went to this, this long blond. Iranian guys are really into blond, like girls. Because we look like this...But what he did really broke me. Because he reminded me of all those things that my husband had done. And then I see this guy and his girlfriend in the Iranian community. Every, like, month. And he brings her to the community. And he shows her off to me. Like, "See! I dumped you and got this!" And my close friends are his close friends, too. Many of them know [we dated], but I preferred they don't know because now they say? They would say, "Oh, he dumped her." So can you image that what he did to me made me feel so bad that started going to counseling for six months.

Simin is still trying to navigate her way through a new relationship, only to have to deal with someone not willing to match her standard, again. Additionally, though, is the cultural tension of trying to manage both the Iranian social values, but now with additional players who are not held to those same exacting measures, like the man's new girlfriend. Levels of social hierarchy are also demonstrated by the commentary of social beauty. It seems that if one has the right combination of looks, they get a social pass. There is no rite of passage for the "blond" upon entering the Iranian community. Instead, an added level of mistrust is leveled against Simin because the relationship did not end well.

Research

Simin described herself as a "researcher," because it was one skill she crafted for herself. While I met Simin as she was making her way through a doctoral program, this was not actually

her first time in that process. She had begun a doctoral program in Iran a few years before she moved to the States. During a six month period, she would end up not only losing her husband but also her job at a university. Her religious views were antithetical to Iranian social and legal policies. Without enacting hallmarks like wearing a headscarf or attending the daily prayers, she was seen as a liability and fired. It was also during this period that her husband had abandoned her. The only option she had left was to come to the U.S. with the hopes of starting a new life here. But she had to finish her earlier program:

I started [a doctoral program] in Fall 20[## in the U.S.]. My [Iranian] dissertation was incomplete. And I had collected my data from Iran and brought it here. I went through the first two semesters here, I was working on the data analysis. And I kept sending the stuff to my Iranian advisor, but he was too angry with me because I left, so he wouldn't answer my e-mails or anything. So I had to call 10,000 people please tell him to check his e-mail. And I couldn't tell them I had started another PhD because this is illegal in Iran. If you are PhD student, you are not allowed. They could have kicked me out of the university. So people, my friends, my other professors would ask, "What are you doing there?" and I would just say, "I am a visiting scholar here." I couldn't tell them I had started another PhD. So the first two semesters pass, it's the spring time. I finish my second semester here and I'm almost done with my dissertation. And I went back to home to defend. I went back home in May. And I had some time from May to August. But my advisor, he made some trouble. And I didn't get to defend. We scheduled the date for my defense, so come and defend Saturday morning. At the last minute, they cancelled everything. So I came back in the Fall, and I started my second year here. And I was really down because I had spent so much time and effort. And they had realized I was doing the PhD at this

university—that was one of the reasons that they. And they would ask me, "are you cooperating with our enemy country?" One part of the obstacles they made from stopping me from defending was cooperating with our enemy country. So I came back here, fall, totally depressed.

Once again the cultural standard of how to operate shook Simin's sense of doing. Rather than the story highlighting Iranian tenacity or work ethic, she tells it to highlight the extremes of the cultural etiquette: needing to have intermediaries negotiate her forgiveness with her advisor; the sabotaging advisor; and the dormant sense of nationalism that needs to be protected through graduate studies. The need to account for her doings in the States also illustrates a sense of mistrust over her actions. Since they could not see her, she obviously was doing something wrong. But Simin only applied to the program in the U.S. because she could not find a faculty position. (And yes, she had legal documentation to do so—more on that shortly.) The good news is that Simin went back in October and was able to successfully defend her dissertation.

But two other pictures that she shared in her collection highlight the beginning and end of her trips to Iran to defend her work. The first picture is of a card hanging on her refrigerator (Figure 23: From Dad). While there are other pieces in the picture, the focus is centered. The card is opened to lay flat against the background. The top part is filled with handwritten Farsi, while the bottom portion of the card displays the pretty cover of poppy flowers:

The first time that I went to defend my dissertation, I got, like, to the airport at one in the morning. My parents came to the airport to pick me up. We went home. I was up. My mom and brother came to the airport to pick me up. My dad had to go to the work, so he hadn't gone to the airport. When I got home, he was sleeping. So when I slept, he had got up to get ready to work. And he had written these like message on a piece of card for me

and put it in the bedroom that I was sleeping. And he just go. It says, "Welcome to your home. I know you are tired. Just take rest and I'll see you in the afternoon." It's sweet. I like it so much.



Figure 23: From Dad

The support that her family has for Simin is a constant reminder to her of Iran. Though she might not enjoy living there or the extended grip of the cultural practices, her family remains behind her as she completes her goals. Even though this trip would be unsuccessful in completing her program, it is this card from her father that she remembers. She held on to this token from that trip.

The other picture that Simin included in her collection was of a small, ornate vase (Figure 24: Vase). It was given to her by a good friend from college upon her successful defense. The style, Simin told me, is exemplary of the city where she went to school. She likes the token not

only because it reminds her of her friends and her academic success, but also as a general reminder of the time she spent in college that she enjoyed so much.



Figure 24: Vase

America

My conversation with Simin had two very distinct topics. We either discussed her life in Iran or her life in America. Even during times like when she was trying to complete her doctoral program in Iran and was crossing back and forth into these separate countries, she maintains a very different attitude when detailing her experience. While her commentary about Iran was solemn, only lightened by mentions of her family, her commentary about America was a mixture of puzzlement and excitement.

Because of her very recent immigration story, I was interested in how she thought of nationality: “Nationality means where you are from, where you are born. Where you were brought up.” Her affiliation with an Islamic identity is connected to her Iranian nationality. But since she had said that “Islam is not something [she] does,” I thought she would also identify under some other nationality. Simin identifies as an Iranian, but is also looking forward to changing her status of affiliation. It turns out that Iranian citizens are not barred from holding a dual citizenship with America. What Simin wants is American citizenship, an American passport, and her Iranian passport tucked away in her home, like a trinket.

The first time that Simin got animated in our conversation was when she was describing this picture of her Iranian passport with her American permanent resident (PR) card (Figure 25: Identification). Earning a PR card is no small feat. Unless one is fortunate enough to have a corporate sponsor with employees who know the paperwork, it can be a bureaucratic jungle of paperwork. A PR card allows legal entry and employment in the U.S., but carries the requirement of six months living in the U.S.. Simin is very happy to have hers, “because I can stay here, I guess. It's important that I can stay here.” She does not want to live in Iran.

Her passport is a symbol of movement; but the idea of an American passport offers a chance for opportunity. She has not seen her sister, who lives in Europe, within the past three years. On her Iranian passport, Simin would need to secure a traveling visa and then a plane ticket, which are out of her price range. But with an American passport, “I can go whenever and wherever,” she said with a dreamy voice and her arms extended up the in the air. The idea excited her. The benefit of the PR card is that holders can become fast-tracked to earn their citizenship. It requires a five year period in order to maintain a solid status with the PR card.

Simin is steadily counting down the two years left before she can trade in her PR for full citizenship, and then a passport.

Food

Traveling is hard for Simin. She hates it, in fact. Not because she does not like the long flights or the time in the airports. But because she knows that she will always be one to get



Figure 25: Identification

‘randomly selected’ out of security lines. She had grown accustomed to having full body searches and longer custom checks. One of the things that had almost always gotten confiscated from her luggage was any random food items she brought from Iran back to the States. No matter what it was, she told me, “they always take it. I stopped bringing anything.” Of course, it was her mother who changed her luck with that.

On one trip returning from Iran to head to the States, her mother slipped in a heavy zippered bag filled with /zereskh/ (barberry in English) (Figure 26: /zereskh/). The berry is a

vibrant red color and looks very much like cranberries, but even more sour, if you could imagine. /Zereskh/ is a very common ingredient in Persian food. Simin has searched in all sorts of grocery stores in her city to find it, but it was limited to specialty Middle Eastern groceries. Even with that, though, they were not as good in quality as the ones her mother snuck into her luggage. Having these available to cook with “reminds [her] of that fact that [she’s] Iranian.”



Figure 26: /zereskh/

In another photo, Simin shared a quick note that her mom sent to her in a small care package with a friend who was coming back to the States after a visit in Iran. I did not include the picture because it had Simin’s real name on it. Even though it was in Farsi, I thought it prudent to keep it out. The note is also on her fridge, next to her father’s message on the card, but Simin took a completely different picture to highlight this message. The note is only a few lines, as per her translation: “Ehh, Simin, We all love you. God keeps you.” What overcame her was a feeling of love. In the middle of our conversation, Simin got reflective about her family:

Right now that I think. So when you see something every day, you just get so much used to it that you don't see it. So I'm just, right now as I'm seeing these things, I'm feeling so sweet about them. At home, I see them, because they are just on the wall, on the fridge. So, yeah, but I like all those things that are related to my family. It reminds me of my family, their love to me.

The defamiliarization of the note could only happen being far away from her family. If she were still in Iran, “seeing them every day,” it would be normal. But as hard as it is being apart, Simin finds a way to be happy because of their memory.

Nourooz

The final picture that Simin included was of her Nourooz table setting (Figure 27: Nourooz). Iran follows a Persian calendar that begins on the first day of spring, typically around March 21st. While some people consider it a religious holiday, Simin enjoys it as a national holiday. She explained that Iranians celebrate setting a table with traditionally features, including candles, some garlic, a mirror, and an egg, among other things. While Simin did not detail their meanings, each of these place settings is part of the Iranian tradition to herald a positive and successful new year.

Simin’s adherence to a traditional Nourooz table in her American home falls back on her sense of nationality being an expression of one’s background and experience. Because this was what she had done, this is what she does now. So even though her table celebrates her family that is not with her, she continues to celebrate with them by placing their photographs around the table. But it also highlights the subjective representation of nationality because Simin does not include all the items on the table. I am not entirely sure why she included or excluded other pieces. I learned more about the Nourooz setting from other Persians I met during my research.

identity was still very important to her. I learned that Simin constructed a rhetoric of nationality that is very private to her, such that she is still developing how she wants to present it to others, such as myself.

At this point in her life, Simin was not interested in connecting with an American identity as her present, while also connecting her Iranian identity as something from her past. So as it stands now, Simin does not connect to a sense of nationality, though she does use terms to connect with. Simin connects with identifying words, like “Iranian,” to establish a sense of ethos, but she relied on explaining her experiences. When discussing her divorce, she situated the story in the country and explained the legal precedent that favored men. She generalized that women were treated badly through Iranian judicial practices, but did not personally connect herself as a victim of their standards. This imbalance between social practices in relationships, and later work, in Iran constructed a narrative that was isolated. Her rhetorical style was to explain, in general terms, the contextual frame, and then to place her story within it.

The end result of her commentary is that Simin highlights connections with people, but does not focus on the rhetorical appeals to construct a sense of national identity. One of the most significant networks was her family. She connects all the major events in her life with her family as her support. While her connection to her family makes her emotional, it is because of their role in a past event that makes them special to her. For example, she got teary-eyed when she discussed the card her father wrote her because it reminded her of how hard that experience was and his absence from her life in the States, while he was in Iran.

The recognition of an expressed nationality changes Deutsch’s commentary on identifying its presence. He argues that variables for national identification need to have certain criteria to create a quantitative argument: (1) present, (2) observable, and (3) refined in its

definition. In light of these criteria, Simin's commentary is not applicable. But to remove her insight on nationality from a critical space could be damaging. If people do not express a sense of nationality in a quantifiable way, then a qualitative measure needs to be taken. In this case, I received subjective narratives and artifacts to situate her commentary. Even with this, however, her commentary did not fit within a mold. This is not to say that Simin's argument is not rhetorical, but rather highlights the role of case study as the methodology. Case studies present small, but deep, spaces of inquiry that can root out unique features. Simin can readily identify herself—Iranian, woman, PhD student, researcher, sport lover—in the questionnaire. But her descriptions of these ideas have a minimal representation of her sense of nationality. Because she does not connect with a country, and rather through experiences, she frames herself in these spaces. Kristeva's cosmopolitan representation is better suited for Simin: she is present; she is here; she is not tied to political states.

Chapter 8. Roxy

Roxy was very unsure of me. Maybe a better way to say it is that Roxy was not interested in being highlighted in some project trying to convert Muslims into more devout Muslims. We spent a lot of time exchanging e-mails and text messages to prove that I really just wanted to talk about nationality. While her religion might come up during our conversation, I wanted to hear her expression of her identity. My initial conversations with her would set up a precedent I had with any later participants to emphasize my focus on nationality. I started thinking that Roxy had been harassed by *hard-core* Muslims. (I am hesitant to call anyone a ‘conservative Muslim’ or ‘Muslim fundamentalist’ because current social practices, both in America and the Islamic world, imply that attitude to be politically antagonist towards other beliefs and can threaten many individuals, especially a democratic America.) Hard-core Muslims are people who want to push their variety of Islam on other Muslims, regardless of whether they were asked to share their opinions. They are quick to give their thoughts on how one should practice and express Islam. It can be malicious, but it can also be given with good intentions. Nevertheless, these individuals can be threatening to Muslims who do not share their same standards.

I think Roxy thought I was a hard-core Muslim trying to get her to see ‘her evil ways,’ through an elaborate ruse of a dissertation. I cannot fault her anxiety to speak with me. I have met those types of people and have seen project designs with that intent. But whether it was just my personality or comfort of being in my space, I turned down participating in those projects. So when Roxy was initially very hesitant about joining, I was worried my project was coming across as ‘hard-core Muslim’ biased. With other participants, I would share an elevator speech proving that this project is about representation. Instead, I spent most of my time telling Roxy, “You don’t have to do this. It’s ok. You need to be comfortable.” At one point, I remember

saying, “It’s not important,” even though I desperately needed participants. To Roxy, I looked like the perfect megaphone of a heavy-Muslim-agenda: I wore a /hijab/; I was vocal about having a connection to the Middle East; I spoke Arabic; and I spoke English. She was never malicious, but she was cautious. The beginning of our interview was very formal. I would like to think that she got more comfortable because she started laughing with me more. But I also do not think that she completely relaxed until the interview was over because, above all things, Roxy is very patient with others.

In this chapter, I follow Roxy’s discussion of national identity through material goods, a restaurant overflowing with Persian artifacts, settings, love, and God. Her comments led to an independent sense of national identity. While her photographs present a typical representation of Iran, her conversation focuses on an individuality to the pieces. While she would explain that her religion and national identity are different qualities that are unrelated, they are both built through her views, and not by any standardized organization that others would follow or understand.

In the questionnaire, Roxy actually asked for a different pseudonym. I asked her at the beginning of the interview if I could change it because it was only one letter different from her real name. It would not hide her identity at all, especially since American-English speakers would pronounce the two varieties the same way. She was a bit surprised about this, because she said, “No one says my name right. It doesn’t matter. Pick a Persian name. I don’t know any American names.” Her focus on presenting a Persian identity was particularly important to her. I ended up choosing the name ‘Roxy’ because, while it means “dawn” or “bright,” it is actually a very old Persian and Urdu name. Because of linguistic movement and slides, the name would move into Greek (Roxane) and later into other modern Germanic languages spoken throughout

the West. The meaning of the name along with its transatlantic movement seemed like an appropriately fitting name for her.

Her version of nationality was crafted through a sense of shared culture and thus a need for compassion. In the questionnaire, Roxy identified with Shia Islam, which was not surprising because she comes from Iran. She still identifies with a specific sect, even though religion plays a minimal role in her life. Her descriptors neither seemed specific to her or about nationality: peace, love, God, friendship, honesty. Her pictures would also bring these features into play to develop a sense of nationality.

Roxy built together different features of a society to create a sense of nationality. Her definition was probably the most detailed one I would receive from all my participants:

Foods that we grow up with eating, customs, festivals that we go, or the time we celebrated together with people, language, umm, culture. Culture is just a general term that contains foods, festivals, language. It's important people in our culture, like poems. She lists items like a grocery list. But it also trails off at the end. There could be other features that make up a nationality, but they can be connected under pieces of the culture.

But culture and nationality, to me, are two different features. I asked Roxy to explain what the relationship was between the two features. Nationality, to Roxy, was the merging of culture with the country, specifically the geographic location where the practices are seen expressed. She put it as, "The Land. Everything comes to me as nationality." Being outside of Iran meant that Roxy had to recreate a sense of Iran in America. This would prove to be difficult in the Southeast for her.

Roxy came to America three years ago to be a student at a public university. She mentioned that she was homesick at various times. Her new home had limited representations of

Iranian culture to her. The few attempts that she saw were not to her liking. It was a fake version of Iran, and there was no heart in the representations.

Textiles

One of the first things that Roxy noticed in America was a significant change in attire. She came to America with her presumed essentials:

I think maybe I brought (pause) just maybe. Just maybe my clothing. I didn't bring something that would, like a picture frame or rug or stuff like that. There was no stuff like that to bring with me. I think I brought a lot of clothing. I brought a few luggages [sic]. And, what else did I bring? I brought some foods, actually...Some stews, some preserved foods. I put them in my luggage. But it was bad idea because they broke inside my clothing and made a mess. [BM: Were the clothes ruined?] Some of them I washed them, but the stain was there. Not all of them. But one of the cans broke inside the luggage.

Roxy's speech pattern highlighted her newness to American English. Her speed of speaking related a familiarity with the language, but had pauses that implied a regular sense of choosing her words. I shied away from asking her any questions about her language skills because I was worried that it would offend her. I was sure that she had been trained professionally, so making a comment about how she spoke would suggest that I was listening to how she said things, rather than what she said. Her ability to move quickly through the dialogue was enough for me. She was having a hard time understanding some of my questions because she told me my English accent was difficult for her to understand. I know I picked up a fairly standard Michigan accent in my childhood. I am not sure what she was hearing—maybe I mumble and that distorts my speech?—so I wish I had asked her to describe what she was hearing.

Nevertheless, I asked her why she was so intent on bringing clothing, was there some environmental or fashion reason for the focus? It turns out that she was given advice to buy things from Iran since it was cheaper:

I think it was true, but I didn't know that there were still some options. That some days, a lot of days a lot of things are on sale. So I don't need to go shopping. A lot of people cannot afford it on regular days. Yeah, so (pause) it was kind of misleading, but at the same time it was true because. It still is true. We have to wait for the right sale. The right sale. You can't just go wild where you want.

Her avoidance of free-market spending made me chuckle. Many people I know rack up credit card debt, but can go to events wearing the latest styles and the most prominent brands. Roxy took the advice, but because of a broken jar in her suitcase, she also learned a little bit more about the American market space.

Her lessons learned from shopping in America were also quite observant:

I think clothing is a lot more. Everything is a lot more expensive. But I, I. To me, if you have. If you do specific times a year, during the year, you're ok. You cannot just. Some stores are. I'm, I don't allow myself to go inside. I don't want to be tempted. Because they are really expensive. And some places, when I walk in, I look for the sale (long pause) signs. And when I see them, I just look. And when it's on sale, it's good.

Roxy learned to read the rhetorical cues given in stores to be a productive shopper. She was not someone who bought whatever she wanted on a whim. Her self-imposed abstinence from certain stores highlights her self-control and her self-awareness of her means. Her fiscal responsibility is well thought out, but requires a consciousness of timing. Too early, nothing is on sale; too late, everything is gone.

Because she was regularly going to the stores, she probably has a refined sense of American clothing standards as compared to the Iranian style. She assumed that student life would encourage a more formal clothing standard:

It changed in the sense that I dress up simpler. I was expecting more fashionable. I was expecting that, people would dress up to go to work. Like good skirt, a nice skirt on and umm. Dress up like a professional woman. But when I came here, I saw everybody was in jeans and t-shirts. Why would I want to bring that many nice jackets? Or skirts, nice skirts? Why do they spend their money when they never use them basically. They are just in my closet. A lot of my friends, my guy friends, they brought a lot of ties. They thought they had to suit up every day to go to work. To go to school. Come to school, suit up, and then with tie. And there's no time to use them except to go conferences.

The more relaxed sense of style would translate into a more casual public and professional standard for Roxy. She had admitted that she ended up “giving up” many of her clothes she brought from Iran because they did not fit within the American landscape. Because their style was too formal, Roxy felt out of place. But she also recognized it as a waste of money. Because there was not a greater sense of formal dress practiced, Roxy determined it to be less acceptable. Without a group consensus or regular representation, that individualization was not admired. Instead of wearing her own style, Roxy changed her tastes in clothing to be more status quo. This leaves her professional wardrobe unused until she finds a space that requires it.

But there is a sense of practicality to Roxy's sense of fashion. She mentioned that gold jewelry is the standard “back home.” She had a stiff standard for what should be called ‘jewelry.’ The items that women wear here came off like plastic trinkets:

It's ornament. It's just decoration, but it's not real. It's pretty, but at the same time it's cheap, so everyone can afford it. So, and there is no pressure on your family. So it is good. Back home, women put pressure on their husband to, to buy this stuff. I, I like it better that it's simpler, cheaper. So life is easier, in this term, is better.

The idea of a simpler dress code appeals to Roxy because she has adopted a “simpler lifestyle” in America. Being too stringent in following standards or rules does not appeal to her because spending time worrying about those things hinders her chance for experience and maintaining a comfortable life style. She does not want to spend time polishing shoes for work, but rather enjoying her life.

The other major textile that Roxy mentioned to me was detailed in her first photograph in her collection. When I first saw the picture, I thought the focus was on the cat lounging on her back. In fact, Roxy included the picture to highlight the rug on the ground (Figure 28: Rug).

The photograph is taken from a slightly off-centered angle. The lines of the woven pattern create a grid-like pattern across the face. But the cat's angled body draws the user's eye and creates a visual flow to glide across its body. Because the background is so heavily detailed, but the cat's body almost uniformly white, the cat's body stands out. Her fur is blown out, or so reflective of the light hitting it that all the detail is lost in the image. It is hard to focus on the detail of the rug because the cat is too much of an attention-catcher.

In contrast to my perspective of the rug, Roxy was heavily connected to a symbolic representation of it to “[her] country.” The rug, actually purchased from Ikea, is similar to a style she knows:

Because it is red. The design. We always cover our house with rugs. And usually, when I was growing up, we had a lot of rugs on the same pattern. And mostly in red. Red is the

dominant color in those rugs. And so it reminds me of home... I don't know why they used red a lot in, back in time. Now it's just modern day. They use lighter color like green and then creamy colors. Back in time, it was red was dominant. I don't know why it was it was maybe it was easier to make because it was natural. So it was easier to make it. They used things already red.



Figure 28: Rug

The recognition of time highlights the little concern for knowing the details. For Roxy, knowing what was represented is enough. (Just like Sarah's commentary on her family's German coat of arms: she did not know the details, but it was part of her history.) The details are unimportant, as long as the replica is good. In this case, Roxy saw the rug and connected to it because of its similarity. This is the only rug in her home, and it soothed her sense of longing for Iran when she first moved here. But she knows this is a temporary reminder because the rug is not constructed

for longevity. Roxy cited the loose weave of the rug and the cheap material, manufactured on a machine loom as reasons for why this rug will not have a long lifetime in her home. In contrast, her family in Iran and even friends in the U.S. have handmade rugs which have been with their owners for decades. These rugs were also used in picnics, which started a larger conversation about family outings and food.

All in One

Half of Roxy's pictures came from a single Iranian restaurant she visited when she was compiling her photograph collection. In this section, I will discuss three of the photos; the last photo depicting a religious affiliation will be discussed later in this chapter.

The first picture that Roxy shared from the restaurant was focused on her meal she ordered (Figure 29: Kabob). Her kabob meal was very special to her: "It's like a national food, it's very important. It's kabob to serve in different ways, and celebrations. Or wedding reception. or usually it's not the food that we make often, everyday." The photography belies how complicated the dish is to make. It looks like an easy enough dish to reproduce, but it takes time and patience. The ground beef has to be properly seasoned and prepared. But even harder to manage for most cooks, including Roxy, is forming the meat around a skewer, which is then grilled. Roxy said the problem was the meat either sticks to the grill or it falls off the skewer into the hot coals below.

Food was the first characteristic Roxy identified with nationality. It would become a huge theme throughout our interview. She identified the kabob, unofficially, as the meal of Iran. But where and how one eats meals is just as important to her Iranian sensibilities. This contextualizes her definition of nationality that ties culture with a physical location:

We have, we go outside. How important it is here to barbeque or. For us it is very important to have picnic. So we make it the lunch. So the aunts and uncles, and then everybody bring the food. And then we go outside and have a picnic. And we put the rug on the grass or everywhere, just somewhere it's green and where water is. And then everybody sits there. Everybody spends one day outside.



Figure 29: Kabob

While the food is necessary, the focus of her commentary is on the location. The place the family meets, is typically outside of the city limits. It is an all day event. Spending time away from their urban lifestyle does highlight the need to plan for a meal, but the focus is actually on spending the day in a more rustic way. That exposure is supposed to derive a sense of appreciation for nature.

Roxy's participation with American barbeques bothers her because they are short stints. The focus on creating a kitchen-like feature outside focuses only on food, and not friendship or relationships. She sneered at the mention of "sit[ting] on the bench." She does not like picnic tables. Moreover, the food options are limited to hotdogs and burgers, but her palate is more refined and Iranian. Roxy finds that the whole focus of barbeques to eat—"we just go there to eat and come back"—rushes and limits people's ability to move and engage with their space. They are losing out an opportunity to appreciate nature.

The one holiday that Roxy told me about celebrating in Iran—another feature cited as part of nationality—was "Thirteen Bidar." This Iranian celebration follows Nourooz, the Iranian New Year's celebration. (Nourooz was discussed in Simin's chapter, where she photographed the table setting that is part of that celebration.):

We have one specific day in our culture. Nature Day. It is very important. Everybody in the country goes outside to picnic. That is the day that you have to go outside. You shouldn't stay inside... It is bad if you stay inside. Thirteen is a bad number, so you have to, to outside.

The establishment of a national holiday around picnicking seems to have been embedded in Roxy's sense of national identity. She has observed this holiday with her family and friends since her childhood. She maintains a strong connection to the idea of picnicking.

The picture that Roxy associated with Iranian nature was a mural at the restaurant (Figure 30: Mount Damavand). The painting is framed with a shaded, painted border of bricks. It gives the illusion of an arched window that opens to the outside. The shaded bricks on the bottom ledge are drawn in three-dimensional perspective to add a depth to the painting. The bricks of the ledge are uneven in depth, that create an illusion of the right side being pushed back. I have yet

to decide if this detail adds or detracts from its appeal. The central focus of the painting highlights a landscape view of Mount Damavand, the snow peaked mountain famous for being Iran's highest point.



Figure 30: Mount Damavand

Roxy broke down the pieces of the painting that present Iran in a positive frame. She called the mountain a “very known landscape. Yeah, it is the highest point. It's close to Tehran, the capital is Tehran. It's called Damavand. It's like a symbol for our country because it's the highest point.” She did not know if there was an actual river like the one shown, but she thought it was added for affect. The sheep are in the central ground and are important because, “we eat the lamb a lot, and we drink the milk, and make the cheese out of it. And yogurt.” The multipurpose use of the animal shows innovation and adaptation.

The last symbol in the painting I asked her about was the flowers in the near ground. I remember I had casually read an expose about the opium war coincidentally a few days before our interview. When I saw the flowers in the picture, my mind immediately went back to the commentary I had read in there. I asked Roxy if these were also poppy flowers, and she adamantly denied it. From her perspective, the drugs produced from harvesting those flowers marred her sense of Iran. So when I asked, “Are these poppies?”, her voice went hard when she replied, “They are forbidden. They cannot grow these things. They will get them out. I don't think it is, I don't think it is.”

Even though this interview was conducted months ago, I still think that they are poppies. But Roxy's stance to protect the image—literally and figuratively—of Iran is significant. During the entire course of our interview, she never once focused on any hierarchical social strata. Everyone just seemed to exist in his or her space. Without any power structures, especially political ones minding representations, Roxy created subjective individuals who did not answer to a state. Through Roxy's sense, people participated with an individualized sense of nationality. It was a relationship that was formed between one person and the country, as an abstract concept. Nationality, it seemed, was not based on interpersonal connections.

This solitariness of nationality would be represented in another picture taken from the restaurant. In this photo, which is awkwardly framed in the shot because of the angle, Roxy captured another painting on the wall of an old man (Figure 31: Painting, Old Man). The picture is taken with the camera pointing upwards. The perspective of the walls, along with the proximity of the whole painting to the upper corner of the room makes me think the restaurant was overfilled with Iranian memorabilia. Like an Iranian-TGIF restaurant, the interior designer

kept filling wall space with artifacts to authenticate the national culture of the food that was served on the table.

I am so distracted by the room's cannot focus on architecture and design—what is this cabinet standing below the painting?—that I the picture. The details of the painting are hard to identify unless one is already familiar with the objects. I needed to create a copy that was focused on the painting that Roxy detailed as traditional Iranian (Figure 32: Focused and Cropped, Painting, Old Man).



Figure 31: Painting, Old Man

The closer perspective of the painting allows the observer to see the details of a man propping his arm on the table, while holding the hose of a hookah pipe. There are many symbolic items in Iranian customs. Having learned from Simin's explanation of her Nourooz table setting, one can see similar objects, like an apple, garlic, some eggs, and possible a vessel holding vinegar. These items have particular meanings in Persian culture, but participants did not give their meanings.

Roxy enjoyed this painting because the “old man, the grandpa after enjoying his lunch, was smoking his hookah, waiting for his tea.” She also created a back story to the painting:

It's a guy and it's a hookah. And next to it, he's having lunch. And tea service. And he's having lunch. It's a very traditional lunch he's having. It is meat and beans and chickpeas. They are inside it. And they are cooked. And they mashed up. They are cooked all together then mashed up. Then we mashed the meat and everything and make small wraps. And vegetables. And then tea service.



Figure 32: Focused and Cropped, Painting, Old Man

The tea service and the hookah are very prominent features in the work, but I still cannot decipher the wraps of which Roxy spoke. My attention was carried about her conversation about the hookah.

While she used the word, “hookah,” to describe the tobacco water pipe, that is not the word that Iranians use for it, /galayan/. She called it a “hookah” because that is the common used term in America. This showed how Roxy had a contextualized language ability. After all, I am the American, but I still use the word, /shesha/, which is limitedly used in the Arabian Gulf area. Roxy, herself, has tried smoking a hookah. But she did not like the feeling of the smoke clouding her lungs. She could not inhale.

Indoor Nature

Roxy’s appreciation for nature extends into her home. She included two different plants in her collection, but was very brief about their importance. The first picture was of a basil plant, (Figure 33: Basil) the second of a pothos plant (**Error! Reference source not found.**), a common house plant. I understood her need to bring nature into her home was of great importance:

This is basil. Vegetables are very important. We eat them all, vegetables and herbs. This, this basil is from [a local grocery chain]. It's in the kitchen, by the window. I've had it for a long time, for two or three months. It's still alive. This is basil and some plant [pointing to the two pictures separately]. I don't know what the name of it is. It's an inside plant.

This, ah, this one [the pothos plant]. I had a plant but I had to give it up because it was poisonous to my cat. And this one, a friend of mine, he, she couldn't take care of it. She's too busy...So I had to take care of it. It's still kind of dry. But, that was her fault. She killed half the plant. Then she gave it to me.

The ability to maintain a plant in her home is the central focus for her. Being able to grow a plant relates to patience and giving. Roxy is from a more arid part of Iran. Having green plants means that one has an awareness of the natural world:

We really like nature. We keep plants inside. When we go outside to nature, from time to time. With family and friends and relatives. We don't just barbeque and eat. We celebrate the moment with friends. Inside the nature. Nature is very important.



Figure 33: Basil

The plants were seen as a natural beauty. Unlike the artwork that she included, these plants appealed to her sense of innate beauty. She would later describe herself as a someone who “likes things simple.” Plants allow her to keep her space simple because “just water and light” are needed.

Love

Another picture that Roxy included was of a napping cat atop a pile of throw pillows (Figure 35: Lingling, the Cat). Roxy is in a monogamous relationship with an American she met two years

prior. While they both have moments of feeling excluded from the greater American population because of their cultural backgrounds, they created a common bond of interest and openness in exploring the world together. She was interested in getting a pet cat because her home town is littered with the animals: “In my country, cats. Have you seen a squirrel everywhere? They are everywhere, jumping everywhere? Cats are like that back home in my country. They are



Figure 34: Pothos Plant

everywhere, basically.” So together Roxy and her partner went to a shelter and adopted Lingling, the cat. I asked about the name: “The shelter gave it this name, and we didn't change the name.”

Lingling filled a gap that both Roxy and her partner felt individually as being on the outside of American culture. Keeping her means that they are a unit: “And this is us, we already

have a family. This is our daughter. The three of us. It's very important to me that she is my daughter, and that cats are everywhere back home.”



Figure 35: Lingling, the Cat

God

Along with her nontraditionally crafted family, Roxy had also remixed her sense of religion. The final picture that she took from the restaurant was of this poster of Islamic calligraphy (Figure 36: Islamic Art). The photograph is taken from some distance from the framed work as noted by the huge iron-scroll window shadows projected against the wall. The huge arch allows for sense of distance from the wall. But the blown out proportions play nicely into Roxy’s description of the artwork:

It's like a, umm. It was a very, this is a Arabic. (pause) It says in Arabic, "in the name of God." (longer pause) And then this is very important in our culture. Basically, we put it

everywhere in our houses for protection. For protection, for safety. It's like God is watching us....It's always a religious marker...it reminds of the presence of God in your house. When I was growing up, we had a clock. A wall clock. And part of it was saying the same phrase. But different style. I think I've seen it everywhere. Every houses, every places.



Figure 36: Islamic Art

Roxy shared this description with me early in the interview. Because of her poetic way of talking about the artwork, I made an assumption that she practiced Islam. But later on she would tell me that the heavy role of Arabic to enact Islamic rites, like daily prayers, was ostracizing. She felt separated from her relationship with God because the connection was, “through a language that was not mine.” Instead, Roxy creates her own religious rites: “I can pray in different places, at my own time, in my own words. I like it a lot better. And I feel like it changed me. And I can see

my changes.” This connects well with her earlier comments about keeping her life simple. Her religious identity does not produce her national identity, or vice versa. But much like her national identity that is her singular expression, Roxy practices a religious identity that is also her own formulation.

Nationality

I asked Roxy to correlate her descriptors—peace, love, God, friendship, honesty—to her photographs that she took. After all, I wanted to know how people saw themselves and how that affected their sense of association to a nation. I was not ready for Roxy’s answer:

These features are not part of nationality. Because people are different back home. Very complicated. But I’m pretty simple. The society is complicated. The location. Everything. Especially because it’s a conservative society. So it makes it very complicated. For everybody.

Not only was there no correlation between identity and nationality, but there was also a change in the subject focus within her answer. Her personal identifiers could not be used for any other individual in Iran. Part of the problem stems from the interpersonal relationships that Roxy has seen unfold:

A lot of time we talk about something, or we offer something but we don’t really mean it. Or we try to be nice. So it’s just, it’s part of the culture that (pause) show off (pause) I don’t know how to say it. But I like it to be whatever what I want to show same thing... I don’t like to hide myself. But back home, it’s very common to hide oneself. Otherwise you cannot survive.

The lack of honesty between people causes Roxy to remove her identifiers from her connection of nationality. Above all, she stays true to herself in her principles.

I pressed for a relationship between nationality and religion; which one was more important:

Nationality is more important than religion. But I use religion as a way to survive. When I want to pray and be connected to God. Nationality is a love and connection to the people. Religion is a connection to God.

Since Roxy created a style and outcome to connect with God, she could never do it wrong. That individualization allows for her contextual moment to construct, employ, and close it. But her national identity, while also a singular expression, relied on other people. She connects to a network to share cultural customs. In that way, she is more focused on “connect[ing] with people” since that navigates across different standards. That her religious observations can never be impacted by nationality reminds me very much of the American ideal of a separation between Church and State. The fact that Roxy sees nothing about herself as American, but only as Iranian, is ironic.

Conclusion

Roxy’s sense of nationality hinges greatly on her sense of ethos within the Boothian binary that prefers ethos and pathos over logos to describe identity. She identifies herself as Iranian, and that declaration allows her to readily associate with other Iranians. That association is not a political one, but a social one. The emphasis is hinged on shared experiences in nature, with food, and with family. She shared stories of celebrations in Iran that connected to her sense of cultural practice tied to celebration. People came together in parks and natural spaces because that was what one did in Iran. Her time in America, however, set a precedent for a different style of celebration that was less earthy. It was no surprise that she clung to her identification as an Iranian, though like Simin she had no interest in returning to Iran.

Roxy's rhetorical appeal for pathos comes from her sense of love and family, seen with her cat and mentions of her fiancé. Unlike other participants, Roxy's photographs were more traditional metonymies of her national culture. Focusing on traditional symbols—the mountain peak, the rug, and Islamic art—she represented a generalizable national identity. But it was only through her conversation, that I began to see that these features had extra meanings for her, outside of a cultural nationality. The logos, if not inquired after, derived from her stories would be lost, leaving her photographs and identifiers from her questionnaire to be unrepresentative of her sense of nationality.

Roxy's commentary connects most with Kristeva's theory of a cosmopolitan woman. She crafts an identity based on where she is now. That contextualized sense of self goes outside the realm of political or cultural nationality. She creates an identity based on what experience she has had and wants. The majority of her photographs came from a visit to an Iranian restaurant where she took half (four of the eight) pictures. This was not a moment that she crafted to have multiple layers of affiliation, but rather a space where there was already an abundance of Iranian representation. The pictures of food, art, and the Iranian mountain peak are metonymic of Iran. Like Malak's pieces of Yemen, these are traditional icons; but unlike Malak, Roxy connected to these items more personally. This calls for a consideration of what nationality does provide for individuals. Group identification is not necessarily important to everyone. So the rhetorical construction of an antithetical sense of nationality means a minimal, but not marginal, voice of representation. The important rhetorical insight from Roxy is that a rhetoric of nationality is not essential or always present, as many theorists provide. Instead, it could be a non-issue for individuals.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

This project's research question investigated the subjective representations of nationality among Muslim women: how do Muslim women discuss their national identity? This central question was further broken down to understand, "What is the relationship between nationality and gender and nationality and religion?" and "How do Muslim women visualize their national identity?" Five case studies were presented to begin formulating a sense of the rhetoric of nationality. Each case drew upon ideology, culture, people, and places to frame a national identity. The participants' narrative style as rhetors of nationality were combined and arranged through time, people, places, motives, and warrants to construct their identity. It is the way that they articulate and define themselves that forms a sense of national sentiment, rather than a repeated action of affiliation. These Muslim women find meaning in their daily lives to correlate identification with nationality.

Theoretical Summary: How to Construct a Sense of Nationality?

There are two different theory pools referenced in this study to detail issues of nationality: a rhetorical one and a non-rhetorical one. The former provides a heuristic and material representation for commentary; while the latter considers epistemologies of nationality. The literature review demonstrated the limited consideration of language practices in defining the very presence of national construction and identity. Often times, non-rhetorical theorists focused on other concepts, such as politics, religion, and economy, to provide commentary on a modern concept that has impacted our contemporary world. I connect these two spaces because the findings heavily correlate a subjective representation of nationality. From a rhetorical perspective, the concepts historical used to frame nationality are heavily influenced by rhetoric. This project begins to consider this nexus by using the rhetorical lens first for analysis.

Rhetorical Findings

M. Lane Bruner created a heuristic that questioned the conceptual design of nationality through a sense of rhetoric. The very identification of a person with a nationality, he argues, is negotiated through language (3). A person's speech can allow for individualization of nationality that allows for someone to pick up multiple allegiances. While we might not have a legal right that allows us to have passports or even maintain a right to work in different locations, people can craft narratives of identification that brand a personalized sense of national identity. In this way, Bruner begins conceptualizing nationality as an invention that is singular because people use their experiences to frame it (3). Because of everyone's unique history, their experiences may be drawn from any time in their life to create this narrative.

Bruner highlights a cyclical feature of time for the rhetoric of nationality to form (92). Bruner allows for nationality to be formed drawing upon any experiences the rhetor has. There is not any delineation between past or present. Just because an event happened at an earlier time in a person's life does not mean that it cannot be integral in her formation of a present national identity. Past and present converge to create a national identity. Memories, formed at any time, become the fertile ground to shape a national identity.

An important feature of nationality that develops from the fluid sense of time is the availability of its malleability or change. Identifying under any sense of national affiliation is a contextual moment based on time. While the experiences called upon to explain a person's nationality is not cordoned to a time frame, the articulation of a national identity is absolutely set to a time. Because a person's experiences grow, their classification of national identity may also change. National and global politics can impact how one declares her identity.

Bruner's final point about the rhetorical impact of national identity comes from an understanding that numerous criteria impact its formation. It is a hard concept to detail because experiences and philosophies may change how one defines nationality. For example, a spectrum of varieties about people, languages, places, education, war, religion, impact affiliations. Bruner's conceptualization of nationality is important because he remixes the theories formed by earlier scholars but within a rhetorical framework. The very essence of varieties provoking a sense of nationality identity stems from scholars like Smith, Anderson, and Gellner who focused on a sense of history and culture to explain why we have a contemporary sense of nationality. These scholars, from non-rhetoric disciplines, draw on examples from populations expressing religion, politics, and culture that eventually drew to create a group identity connecting people to their sovereign countries.

While Bruner's theory on the rhetoric of nationality proved a better net to capture a sense of nationality, it is Wayne Booth's rhetoric of assent that constructs a praxis to identify nationality on a singular basis. Booth's rhetoric of assent focuses on the idea of people believing in a statement. The belief in a sense of nationality is a subjective moment, itself. It is not about participants believing in other person's sense of nationality, but justifying their own sense of affiliation with a nation. Because the very construction of a nation is fluid and dynamic, one must take note when people stop to identify with the nation. Furthermore, the dogmas that are also part of Booth's theory focuses on features that cannot be disproven. Participants use this measure to create thematic connections between their lives and symbols. Because they articulated their own stories, there was no limit, such as one developed through the use of questionnaires, to detail how one believed in their subjective sense of nationality.

Booth created a rhetorical relationship privileging ethos (authorial credibility) and pathos (emotional response) over the logos (logical development) in an argument. I would posit this similarly true in the rhetoric of nationality as defined in this project. In this case, participants created their ethos through identifying their connections to spaces; a pathos based on their reactions of a personal experience; and a logos illustrated by the stories that corroborated their sense of nationality. All three of these qualities were developed by the participant, but the construction of their ethos and pathos were specifically powerful because they were discussing their sense of nationality in “real-time” with me. They used their own rhetorical moves and organization to explain their identities. Sometimes the pictures did fit and sometimes they did not. For example, Fatimah described her ideal identity in words, while her pictures were lived experiences; and Sarah found her words described her individual identity, while her pictures visualized a greater sense of national identity. The medium of rhetorical arguments plays into the invention of assent that happens. But both pieces were integral to understand their framed complexities behind identifying with a sense of nationality.

Theories of Nationality

Unlike Bruner’s approach to identify nationality as a contextualized, singular expression, other social scientists have crafted sense of nationality that are focused through group dynamics. Taking a more holistic sense of nationality, there are notable characteristics that have been previously used to develop a national identity for populations

- Smith details the world history that focuses nationality as a Western construct. While there are plenty of non-Western constructions of nationality, Smith argues that those relationships were established under different criteria, like ethnicity and religion. Identification was not based on nationality.

- Gellner establishes a working definition of nationality based on political affiliation without the ethnic impact that Smith found. His construction of this definition was traced through the historical development of education. He constructs two distinct time frames in (Western) world history, agrarian and industrial, that have two different styles of education patterns within a population. During the former period, there was a lesser emphasis on national identity because the political characteristics of places were based on feudal organizations. The development of an industrialized economy and political system allowed for a sense of national identity. Nationality was systematized by educational systems.
- Anderson creates a sense of an imagined community of nationalists who form through a shared sense of cultural artifacts. Based on printed literacy, such as books and religious works, people began uniting under an assumed connection. The group dynamic of nationality is formed through written words. Even though people will never meet all the constituents of their nation, the spread of written works, like newspapers and the internet, allows for a shared experience of what is happening in the space. Anderson's sense of nationality leads to an emotional construct of shared identity, space, and language to form a national identity.
- Deutsch argues that nationality should be studied through quantitative measures. By creating a numerical scale of criteria, Deutsch argues that features of a nation can be measured to understand what features impact a sense of identity. For example, surveying how much people approve of government action could lead to an understanding of nationalism.

- Kristeva argues that women cannot be identified under a sense of nationality. As Othered members in their nation, women hold a marginalized space with no autonomy or self-representation. In response, Kristeva argues for a cosmopolitan identity for women. Since nations do not offer representation, an urban space filled with diverse groups, arts, politics, and thoughts offers recognition of a female identity.

These arguments are compelling, but not based in language practices. Bruner's work, however, offers a conceptual heuristic to understand how nationality is catalyzed. Moreover, the rhetorical style of nationality seems to follow Booth's modern construction of rhetoric that is based on assent and dogmas.

Findings

Within the five cases presented, two cases identified as only American (Sarah and Malak), one as American and Palestinian (Fatimah Ahmad), and two as Iranian (Simin and Roxy). All five of the participants were living in the American Southeast when they joined the study and took their photographs. But each of the women presented a case unlike any other. While they shared pictures of their lives, they created singular representations that focused on themes like people, religion, and gender articulated with their own style of language.

Terms of Identification

Participants used a variety of identifiers to explain their connection to their nation. For some it was, "identity," or "nationality," but terms like "from the South" (Fatimah Ahmad), and "Eastern" (Malak), and "back home" (Simin) also were used. Even though I had introduced the word, "nationality" from the very inception of the project, participants quickly adopted their own style to explain the identity they were expressing. They constructed identifiers to present a sense of ethos that were built on their experiences. Sometimes features, such as gender or religion,

were actually the feature with which participants identified. It was important to allow participants a chance to detail their rhetorical style of identification to understand their subjective views on identification. After listening to their stories and seeing their pictures, I highlighted the terms they used the most to be headers in their chapters. The organization of information came from their rhetorical style.

People

All the participants correlated their sense of nationality with groups of people that they knew. They created a group dynamic with the people in their lives. It is not to say that they limited their associations, but that they found explicit connection with people they knew. These people were foundational in detailing their sense of national identity. Moms, friends, aunts, husbands or fiancés, and sisters came up in our conversations. Participants were quick to associate their emotional relationships with these people. They built their sense of communities off of their relationships. Moreover, they were always positive relationships. These relationships served to highlight issues of pathos because of the emotional connections to people, or logos because these people played a role in construction of the identity.

Fatimah Ahmad regularly included pictures of friends and family in her photograph collection. They were a central component to her sense of identity. She referenced people in her pictures as emotional ties to her community, thus crafting a sense of nationality. Fatimah shared a picture from a football tailgating event where numerous women are sitting around in conversation. The picture presented numerous ideas that were of importance—food, football, weather, and team spirit—the highlighted theme was about community engagement. The Muslim Student Association organized the event, but it was open to anyone interested in sitting down in the area. Fatimah included the picture in her collection because it represented a range of women

in her Muslim community and the service to the community. These were emotional appeals that were important to her pathos as an American citizen, but also as a Muslim.

Additionally, Sarah included a picture with her mom from her childhood dressed up in traditional German dresses. Sarah connected with family to highlight her ethos, or authoritative claim, as a German-American. She referenced numerous times, spanning her lifetime, with references to not just German, but German-American experiences. This representation connects with Anderson's design of an imagined community, where rhetors pretend there is a unifying bond between all members, though not all members actually know each other. In this case, Sarah both inherited and personal crafted her own nationality connected her to a German background.

In contrast to these two examples, however, Simin's discussion of her husband who abandoned her brought a feeling of anxiety and hurt to her narrative on her identity. Unlike the other positive relationships mentioned in her interview, he is nowhere to be found in her photography collection, and from the way Simin discussed her relationship, it was just a fluke that he came up. The selectivity of comments to identify nationality aligns with Deutsch's taxonomy to identify characteristics of nationality.

Religion

All participants self-identified as Muslims, but they had very different ways of practicing their religious identity. Some participants, like Fatimah and Malak, used heavily religious commentary to scaffold their life through a Muslim lens. Fatimah regularly included language to praise God in her commentary: “/alhamulilah/,” “/mashallah/,” and “/inshallah/.” Focusing her observations through her religious identification, she constructed a national identity based on goodwill and character. Malak connected the greater part of nationality with her sense of religion. But her religious identification was unique among a larger Muslim population. She

choose to wear colorful /hijab/ and/abayah/ in a Muslim country because that was a cultural notion being marketed as a religious one. She felt empowered knowing this distinction and was vocal about not conforming.

In contrast, Simin and Roxy used religion as a cultural marker, or an explanation for cultural practices, but without a philosophical connection. The result was either an identity first formed through religion to lead to other identifiers, such as nationality, or a very removed sense of Islam from their nationality. This latter group readily created a space that separates any religious leanings from a connection with their country. Simin used the terminology of being a Muslim, but it was an inherited condition from her parents. Roxy created a style of religion to create a connection to God, but did not use any Islamic tenants.

Out of the theorists, Gellner presented a very interesting take on religion and its relationship with nationality as an identifier for populations: with the inception of industry, people distanced themselves from identifying through religion to pick up a national identity, which was secular. In this cases presented, however, many participants preferred their Islamic identity to a national one. There is no doubt that these people still utilized and abided by national legal and cultural standards, but they were more articulate in presenting their religious identity as a representative marker. For example, Malak's wardrobe discussion was situated through her sense of Islam, all the while her place in society is marked by her use of an American citizenship. She could pass in foreign countries as an American because of her passport and English fluency, which would then explain her clothing styles to those people she met abroad. This also illustrates the need to look at visual rhetorics, which could be otherwise seen as contextual issues.

Gender

Participants mentioned their gender affiliation as a passing marker. They discussed their clothing styles or relationships with other people as a result of their gender. But their gender was not a part of their formulation of a sense of nationality. Nationality was a genderless identifier. Kristeva argued that women must remove themselves from a national identity that mitigates their identity. But Sarah felt that a national identity was a neutral quality. There was no special way to be an American woman. But she also discussed the role of gender in her comments about the mosque in her community. She included a picture of the women's prayer hall from her local mosque. In the picture, one can see a project screen, which allows for the women to follow the men to pray in tandem. Because the screen was not functioning, the community faced a dilemma of gendered preference towards men. It seemed like a personal challenge to Sarah to correct that problem.

Images

The images presented were surprisingly simple. Photographs were not composed in layered features to highlight multiple features of nationality. Most of the pictures were taken by the participants; while only a few exceptions, like from Sarah who included a few pictures taken from the internet. The pictures were personal compositions to reflect nationality. The stories connected to the pictures were always layered with features that highlighted an individual representation of nationality.

The pictures, however, were usually focused on a single item that evoked multiple stories. For example, Roxy took numerous pictures at a restaurant because it held numerous metonymies for Iranian representation. Her collection was only eight pictures, but four of them

were from this one space. Much like a Wikipedia page, she covered large topics like geography, art, food, and religion.

Fatimah went through her phone's image gallery to pick specific pictures to which she felt related. Nationality is a subjective feeling, like Deutsch and Smith present in their own ways. The former argues that the subjectivity can be captured through quantitative reasoning; while the latter argues that the subjectivity is nationalism, which is only individualized. Instead, nationality is better observed qualitatively because of the unique responses, and there is extensive exchange between individuals and the groups with whom they identify. Rhetorical analysis, such as that provided by Bruner and Booth, shows that this methodology can capture these issues. As such it was through these stories that a dynamic personality emerged to create a story of nationality that surpassed the theoretical framing scholars have previously presented. The pictures need to be considered when framing a national identity because they create a contextual stasis that grounds the rhetor's comments. Since nationality may be altered by the rhetor, the collections put a timeliness to their commentary.

Implications for Future Research and Practitioners

This project listens to rhetorical styles of nationality of Muslim women in the U.S., a previously undocumented concept. I came across this topic because of the gap in the literature and in general practice. We are casual about connecting beliefs with our sense of nationality, so that our nationality—especially in America—seems to continue to grow in layers of what one “should” do or be as an American. In contrast, this project has opened up a critical space to reevaluate how we craft a conceptual vessel called “nationality,” but also to reevaluate how that vessel is filled. With our society quickly changing because of closer relationships between

various sovereign states and international relationships, a greater need has been exposed to understand what it means to affiliate with a nation.

Future Studies

While the presented study is limited by its specific cases, advances in this research niche needs to consider a larger sample size, methods, and researcher's identification. This study presented five independent cases by self-identified Muslim women in the American Southeast. Further studies, however, should create more nuanced styles of representation to include participants. While I believe the vast spectrum of religious identity supported the empirical basis for the findings, the extreme differences between the women's sense of religious identity made the interviews difficult to conduct. My interview protocol was initially constructed under the assumption that the participants were actively involved in their Islamic practices. I ended up meeting women who identified as Muslim, but did not practice it. I had to revise my protocol to focus less on a national identity formed through an Islamic lens. It was a mistake in assuming participants would have a foundation in Islam. Nevertheless, I would encourage future researchers to consider the religious impact of participants to better create comparable findings about identity and its rhetorical construction.

Additionally, future studies might consider a multi-lingual platform for those involved in the research. I experienced some code-switching between English and Arabic with some participants. It was easy to manage since that is a normal practice for me. I was left without that comfort with my Iranian participants because I did not speak Farsi. Keeping the conversations typically focused in English allowed the cultural and sociolinguistic practices to be averaged. But society is complex and dynamic. Having multilingual participants and researchers could lead to

interesting negotiations of code-switching and code-merging to construct fluid identities of nationality.

My last recommendation would include some averaging of the technology used by participants. A study with advanced or professional photographers could lead to a fascinating visual display of nationality. While we have complicated the English language style of nationality, the rhetorical style could involve in more advanced and nuanced mediums. Having participants with a trained compositional process in photography or other communicative modes responds better to the 21st century style of multi-modal communication and rhetoric.

Recommendations for Practitioners

The communities I visited were often very supportive of a Muslim researcher doing Muslim inquiry. I hope that this project encourages other Muslim women to gain a background in qualitative research to help provide answers about our community for the scholarly public. Muslim women's communities have been approached by etic researchers, but there is an absolute need for emic researchers to help articulate the practices, styles, and rhetoric of our community. Without this representation, our stories can be told incorrectly or, worse yet, ignored. I urge future researchers to consider their connection to the Muslim community to collect their stories. More researchers means more voices are heard, and the impulse to stereotype (hopefully) lessens.

Closing Thoughts

Looking through my research notes collected over the past three years, I find marginal notes about events that have shaped the Muslim identity in America in polar ways: wins and losses; pride and shame; local and global. The place of Muslims in America can verge towards a tenuous identity at times. Often times, it is tenuous because other people feel a sense of distrust

towards Muslims and their assent to the American way of life. The distrust towards Muslims, I hope, should not be the focus. Instead, let us begin to problematize what definitions of “American” are within these reports. Listening to claims that other people are not part of a nation is problematic. Stories of self-identification, however, are dynamic, complex, and a lot more interesting. We should ask to hear those stories; we should listen to those stories.

Works Cited

- Abdurraquib, Samaa. "Hijab Scenes: Muslim Women, Migration, and Hijab in Immigrant Muslim Literature." *MELUS* 31.4 (Winter 2006): 55-70. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Feb. 2012.
- Abu-Ali, Azhar, and Carol Reisen. "Gender Role Identity Among Adolescent Muslim Girls Living in the U.S." *Current Psychology: Developmental, Learning, Personality, Social* 18.2 (1999): 185-192. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 25 May. 2012.
- Ahmad, Fatimah. Personal Interview. 3 Dec. 2013
- Ajrouch, Kristine J. "Place, Age, and Culture: Community Living and Ethnic Identity among Lebanese American Adolescents." *Small Group Research* 31.4 (2000): 447-69. *PsycINFO*. Web. 1 May 2012.
- . "Gender, Race, and Symbolic Boundaries: Contested Spaces of Identity among Arab American Adolescents." *Sociological Perspectives* 47.4 (2004): 371-91. *PsycINFO*. Web. 1 May 2012.
- Ali, Saba Rasheed, Amina Mahmood, Joy Moel, Carolyn Hudson, and Leslie Leathers. "A Qualitative Investigation of Muslim and Christian Women's Views of Religion and Feminism in Their Lives." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 14.1 (2008): 38-46. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 28 Nov. 2012.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. e-Book.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Against National Culture." *English in Africa* 23.1 (1996): 11-27. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 July 2012.
- Awad, Germaine H. "The Impact of Acculturation and Religious Identification on Perceived Discrimination for Arab/Middle Eastern Americans." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 16.1 (2010): 59-67. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 13 Apr. 2012.

AZLyrics.com. *Boyca Avenue Lyrics "Dare to Believe"*. 2015. Website. 2014 йил 22-Dec.

Bhabha, Homi. "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative , and the Margins of the Modern Nation."

Nation and Narration. ed. Homi Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.

---. "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative , and the Margins of the Modern Nation." *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. e-Book.

Booth, Wayne. *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame UP, 1974. Print.

boyceavenue. "Boyce Avenue - Dare To Believe (Official Music Video) on iTunes & Spotify" Online Video Clip. YouTube.com 6 Nov. 2011. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.

Bruner, M. Lane. *Strategies of Remembrance: The Rhetorical Dimensions of National Identity Construction*. USA: U. South Carolina, 2002. Print.

Cameron, Deborah. *Working with Spoken Discourse*. London: Sage, 2001. Print.

Castro-Klarén, Sara. Rev. of *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, by Walter D. Mignolo. *MLN* Mar. 2013: 467-70. *Project Muse*. Web. 5 Aug. 2015.
Chon, Margaret, and Donna Arzi. "Walking While Muslim." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 68.2 (2005): 215-254. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 Jan. 2013.

Deutsch, Karl. *Nationalism and Social Communication: an Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*. United States: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1953. Print.

Dubin, Steven. *Displays of Power: Memory and Amnesia in the American Museum*. New York: New York U, 1999. Print.

Gee, James Paul. *How to Do Discourse Analysis: A Toolkit*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. 2nd ed. Intro by John Breuilly. Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 2006. Print.

---. *Muslim Society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1981. Print.

Gilroy, Paul. *Black Britain: A Photographic History*. Intro by Stuart Hall. London: Saqi, 2007. Print.

Harper, Douglas. "An Argument for Visual Sociology." *Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. edited by Jon Prosser. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press, 1998. Print.

Hewstone, Miles, Mir Islam, and Charles Judd. "Models of Crossed Categorization and Intergroup Relations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64.5 (1993): 779-93. PsycARTICLES. Web. 28 Nov. 2012.

Hutchinson, John and Anthony Smith, editors. *Nationalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford UP, 1994. Print.

I Speak Myself: American Women on Being Muslim. eds. Maria Ebrahimji and Zahra Suratwala. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 2011. eBook.

Jamal, Amaney. "Civil Liberties and the Otherization of Arab and Muslim Americans." *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*. ed. Amaney Jamal and Nadine Naber. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 2008. Print.

Jørgensen, Marianne and Louise Phillips. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2002. Print.

Khatib, Lina. *Image Politics in the Middle East: The Role of Visual in Political Struggle*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013. Print.

Killian, Caitlin. "The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair." *Gender and Society*. 17.4 (Aug 2003): 567-90. JSTOR. 13 Feb. 2012.

- King, Lisa. "Speaking Sovereignty and Communicating Change: Rhetorical Sovereignty and the Inaugural Exhibits at the NMAI." *American Indian Quarterly* 35.1 (Wint. 2011): 75-103. Print.
- Kirsch, Gesa, and Liz Rohan. Introduction. *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*. Eds. Gesa Kirsch and Liz Rohan. United States of America: Southern Illinois U P, 2008. 1-9. Print.
- Korb, Scott. "American Islam." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 18 Mar. 2012. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Nations without Nationalism*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. Print
- Lyons, Scott Richard. *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent*. Minneapolis, MN: U. Minnesota P., 2010. Ebook.
- Malak. Personal Interview. 17 Dec. 2014
- Mir, Shabana. "Not Too 'College-Like,' Not Too Normal: American Muslim Undergraduate Women's Gendered Discourses." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 40.3 (2009): 237-256. 29-34. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 25 May. 2012.
- Nash, June. "Towards Pluricultural States: Indigenous Movements Challenge Neoliberalism." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 1.1. (2006): 125-40. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 6 Aug. 2015.
- Park, Julie J. "When Race and Religion Collide: The Effect of Religion on Interracial Friendship during College." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 5.1 (2012): 8-21. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 28 Nov. 2012.

- Predelli, Line Nyhagen. "Interpreting Gender in Islam: A Case Study of Immigrant Muslim Women in Oslo, Norway." *Gender and Society* 18.4 (2004): 473-93. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Jan. 2012.
- Prosen, Amy. *Locating Visual-Material Rhetorics: The Map, the Mill, and the GPS*. Anderson, SC: Parlor P, 2012. Print.
- Roxy. Personal Interview. 4 Nov. 2013
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. USA: Vintage, 1978. Print.
- Sarah. Personal Interview. 21 Jan. 2014
- Simin. Personal Interview. 1 Nov. 2013
- Sirin, Selcuk, and Michelle Fine. *Muslim American Youth: Understanding Hyphenated Identities through Multiple Methods*. New York: New York UP, 2008. eBook.
- Strelan, Peter, and Angelica Lawani. "Muslim and Westerner Responses to Terrorism: The Influence of Group Identity on Attitudes Toward Forgiveness and Reconciliation." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 16.1 (2010): 59-79. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 28 May. 2012.
- Tehrani, John. *Whitewashed: America's Invisible Middle-Eastern Identity*. New York: New York UP, 2000. Print.
- The Steam Team. "Murfreesboro Mosque Hearing Ends in Heated Confrontation." *AlJazeera America*. AlJazeera. 26 Mar. 2015. Web. 30 June 2015.
- Thomson, Pat, ed. *Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People*. London: Routledge, 2008. Print.

van Oudenhoven, Jan, Boele de Raad, Carmen Carmona, Anne-Kathrin Helbig, and Meta van der Linden. "Are Virtues Shaped by National Cultures or Religion?" *Swiss Journal of Psychology* 71.1 (2012): 29-34. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 28 May. 2012.

Yin, Robert. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 4th ed. Los Angeles: Sage, 2009. Print.

Appendices

Appendix A. Questionnaire

“Entee Min Faine? [Where Are You From?]”:

Nationality Connections in the Muslim Women’s Community in the U.S. Southeast

By completing this questionnaire, you agree to take part of a research project by Bushra Malaibari on nationality stories and experiences of Muslim women in U.S. Southeast. Your perspective is important to illustrate diversity within the Muslim community. Participating in this study should not disadvantage you in any way as your true identity will never be shared with anyone. No one will ever know you were a part of the study, unless you tell them.

You can stop this process at any time, with no negative consequences.

1. Real name	
2. Phone number & e-mail Put (*) for preferred contact method	
3. Pseudonym	
4. How old are you?	18-22 27-30 36-40 46-50 I’m not 23-26 30-35 41-45 51+ telling
5. How do you respond to “Where are you from?” when asked by a Muslim woman?	
6. What is your nationality?	
7. Where were you born?	(City, State, Country)
8. Where were your parents born?	(City, State, Country)
9. Where were your grandparents born?	(City, State, Country)
10. Where do you live now?	(City, State, Country)

11. On a scale of 1 (least) -- 5 (most), how much do you like living here?	1 (least)	2	3	4	5 (most)
12. Which branch of Islam do you identify with?	Sunni Shi'ah	Sufi Nation of Islam	Other: _____		
13. Do you follow a specific School of Thought (<i>madh'hab</i>)?	Hanafi Maliki Shafi'i Zhiri	Hanbali Wahhabi Salafi Ja'fari	Ismailiyah Zaidi Ibadi	Don't know Don't follow one Other: _____	
14. When was the last time you casually got together with other Muslim women?	This week This month	Past 6 months Past 12 months	Don't remember Other: _____		
15. Apart from English, do you speak any other languages?	Arabic Others:	Urdu	French		
16. What can your mosque do to make your community appreciated?					
17. List five words/ ideas/sayings that describe you:	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.				

Appendix B. Photography Prompt

“Entee Min Faine? [Where Are You From?]”:

Nationality Connections in the Muslim Women’s Community in the U.S. Southeast.

Please take 8-20 pictures of things in your life that make you feel connected with your nation's culture. Share these pictures with me on DropBox.com or e-mail them as attachments to bmalaiba@utk.edu when you are done.

If you take pictures of people, please know that the image will be included in this project, but any of their identifying qualities will be obscured for privacy (face, tattoos, piercings, body modifications, birth marks, etc.)

If I do not receive your photos or you contact me in some other fashion (via e-mail, phone, or text message), then I will contact you within two weeks to see if you are still interested in participating in the study. At this point, you will be free to leave the study or spend more time completing your photo collection.

Your consent to participate in this study is implied by sharing your pictures with me to be used in my research. I will ask you to sign a formal release of the photos, at the time of the interview, for use in my final project. If at any time you are no longer interested in participating, please contact me and I will delete and discard any and all information you provided. You will face no censure or negative effects by removing yourself from the project.

Appendix C. Consent Form

You are invited to participate in an interview research project. The purpose of the study is to hear your nationality stories and experiences of being a Muslim woman in America. Your perspective is important to illustrate diversity within the Muslim community. Participating in this study should not disadvantage you in any way because I will protect your identity from being shared in any final reporting. Pictures or information that may identify you will be withheld.

As a potential participant, you will complete three different tasks:

1. Complete a short questionnaire
2. Compile a photo collection based on a prompt I give you using your own camera
3. Participate in a one-hour long, recorded interview

The scheduled time for these events will be arranged with the researcher at your convenience.

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

The data from the study will be kept confidential; only the researcher and her mentor will have access to the recordings and transcripts of your interviews. All audio files, transcripts, and photos will be destroyed after three years of the completion of the study, unless the researcher receives written permission to keep these documents for longer. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study. Your real name and any identifying marks that could be connected to you will never be released. You will be asked to choose your own pseudonym for reporting purposes.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Bushra Malaibari at bmalaiba@utk.edu or XXX.XXX.XXXX. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466.

By signing and dating below, you state that you are 18 years of age or older, and give your consent to participate in the study. Please sign one copy for the researcher's records, and one copy to keep for your own records.

CONSENT

I, _____, have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have received a copy of this form.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D. Interview Protocol

“Entee Min Faine? [Where Are You From?]”:

Nationality Connections in the Muslim Women’s Community in the U.S. Southeast.

1. Do you consent to participant in this interview on the photo collection you shared with me?
2. May I record this conversation to later create a written transcription for analysis?

Nationality in Pictures

- Write a word or phrase that explains each picture's characteristic of your nationality you are capturing
 - Where did you take these pictures?
 - Can you tell me a story about each picture that illustrates this characteristic happening in your life?
- How do your Islamic identity words, from the questionnaire, match up with your nationality pictures?
- How are these qualities important to you living in this country?
 - Is this quality important for all Muslim women living here?
- How did you decide what things you were going to photograph?
 - Any quality hard to capture into a picture?

Interpersonal Relationships

- Have you met Muslims from other national-heritages?
 - How did you know they were from the same country as you?
 - In what language do you speak to each other?
 - Where do you get together? What activities do you do together?
 - How do you communicate with them?
- Have you ever done some Islamic ritual activity that other Muslims were confused or upset about?

Presentation

- How would you group these pictures to explain to someone else?
- What order would you put the pictures in to share with someone else?
- Which one best represents you?
- Is there something else that needs to be photographed and included in this set?

Vita

Bushra Malaibari was born in Michigan, where her family still lives. She attended Eastern Michigan University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Literature and a Masters degree in Written Communication. She likes biking around Knoxville in the fall, but is excited at the chance to travel the world now that she finally finished writing this dissertation.