ABSTRACT

| | |
|---|---|
| Title of Thesis: | ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN IDENTITY WITH PRACTICES IN MATE SELECTION: FAMILIAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE INTENTION TO MARRY |
| | Rafee Al-Mansur, Master of Science, 2018 |
| Thesis Directed By: | Professor Leigh Leslie, Department of Family Science |

Muslim Americans may experience conflict between societal norms and the values of their religion with respect to mate selection. Whereas American norms prioritize autonomy and love, Muslim societies prioritize family and chastity. This study assessed the extent to which Muslim and American identities impact (1) desire to involve family in mate selection and (2) willingness to enter romantic relationships without considering marriage. Researchers partnered with a Muslim matrimonial and dating mobile app to survey U.S. users, resulting in 962 responses. Muslim identity and American identity were both found to be significantly correlated to mate selection practices. Results suggest most Muslim Americans are caught between models: they are transitioning away from traditional mate selection practices which rely on parents to find partners, a major shift in the last 30 years. However, they are also not willing to adopt American practices which do not consider marriage, such as casual dating.

ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN IDENTITY
WITH PRACTICES IN MATE SELECTION: FAMILIAL INVOLVEMENT AND
THE INTENTION TO MARRY


by


Rafee Al-Mansur


Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
2018


Advisory Committee:
 Professor Leigh Leslie, Chair
 Professor Patricia Barros
 Professor Mona Mittal

# Acknowledgements

The nature of life is such that you do not realize the influence people have had on the trajectory of your life until you look back on it. With that, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to several people who have been instrumental in allowing for this research to happen. I would like to thank Dr. Andrew Cherlin, my undergraduate advisor who nurtured my interest in both sociology in general, and the family in particular. I am also grateful to Dr. Leigh Leslie for not only chairing my committee, but also inspiring our initial class project on Muslim American mate selection in her Gender and Ethnicity class. I owe thanks to Humaira Mubeen, the founder of Ishqr, for allowing us to carry out this class project to develop the initial insights that grew into this present study. My fellow classmate, Elham Khazaee-Torshizi, has been there to help develop these ideas, both in the class project and in this research study. A heartfelt thank you goes to Shahzad Younas, founder of Muzmatch, for partnering with us to send our survey to all of their U.S. users. May Muzmatch be a force of good that helps Muslims overcome the challenges of mate selection found in this study. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the late Dr. Ilyas Ba-Yunus, whose foresight carried him to investigate this important subject of Muslim American mate selection decades before this study, allowing us to compare our findings. Of course, there are few people more instrumental than my mother and father, Hafsa and Mohiuddin Mansur, who supported me throughout my endeavors. And finally, the source of my gratitude is to God, who brought all these wonderful people into my life and allowed for everything to happen as it did.

# Table of Contents

# List of Tables

# List of Figures

# Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem

The process by which Americans engage in romantic relationships has changed significantly throughout the course of modern history. From the beginning of our nation and through the Industrial Revolution, courtship was the common practice for union formation. However, as emphasis on chaperoning young couples waned by the early 1900s, dating came to emerge as the norm (Ingoldsby, 2006). While dating is still a common practice today, other forms of intimate relationships have since emerged and become widely accepted and practiced, such as cohabitation and what is commonly referred to today as hooking up (Cherlin, 2010).

This evolution of mate selection in the Western world has been influenced by a variety of social and economic factors, and has also been paralleled by many ideological shifts in society. Many of these shifts can be attributed to a growing emphasis on individualism, and the redefinition of how it is understood and pursued in one's life. This has had specific implications on mate selection as Americans face the challenge of balancing ideals of individual autonomy with the desire to establish and sustain meaningful relationships with others (Bellah et al., 1996; Cherlin, 2009; Hollander, 2011). For example, two ideological shifts that have occurred are the degree of familial involvement in mate selection, and the relative consideration given to marriage when first engaging in a relationship.

As mate selection has evolved through its different forms, there has been an overall decrease in parental and societal involvement in the process of finding a partner. For instance, courtship was characterized by parental chaperoning of partners, whereas the rules and expectations of dating are regulated more so by one's peers than parents (Whyte, 1992). This is symbolic of a greater trend in which there has been a decline of traditional society in which life was more guided by social norms and customs. Scholars contend that this is connected to a declining participation in civil society and a growing value on discovering oneself independent of, and often with less responsibility to, family and traditional community (Bellah, Madsen, Sulliva, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Putnam, 2000). These growing ideals of individualism brought with them the notion that individuals, and not their parents or others, are most fit to make a choice of who to marry (Ingoldsby, 2006).

Similarly, the commitment to pursuing marriage has diminished in importance when starting a relationship. Whereas courtship was once done to find a mature partner looking for family life, the primary focus of dating after the 1920s has been on personal pleasure (Cherlin, 2010; Sanstrock, 1990; Wallard, 1937). More recent forms of intimate relations, such as hooking up, are even more explicitly noncommittal, making it all the more difficult for serious relationships to develop (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001). There are several reasons for a greater acceptance of noncommittal partnering. Among them is the ideal that one should prioritize his or her own needs and aspirations, and should not commit to a partner until they are confident that their own identity and self-fulfillment will be achievable with that person (Cherlin, 2009; Hollander, 2011).

However, while these patterns of familial involvement and commitment may apply for the general population, there is limited research on the partner selection practices of subgroups within the American population. It may be that certain subgroups have values and norms that conflict with these mate selection patterns, such as religious minorities that place emphasis on upholding certain teachings and customs of their faith. For example, Mormons emphasize that single men should not date for the sole pleasure of dating without seeking a lifelong partner, that single women should not become so independent and self-reliant that they view marriage as unnecessary, and that they also should not put off marriage for the sake of attaining degrees or a career (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007).

Overall, however, there are very limited studies on partner selection practices and attitudes of religious groups. Like Mormons, Muslims in the U.S. are another religious group that may experience a conflict between societal norms and the values of their religion when it comes to partner selection practices. As Muslim Americans continue to become a part of the social fabric of the U.S., they experience the norms and culture of American society while at the same time attempting to preserve their own Islamic ideals and principles. In this process, there may be conflicts between norms of American society and Islamic values, specifically with obligations to family and restrictions around gender relations. These conflicting perspectives may become especially pronounced when Muslim Americans attempt to find romantic partners.

It is important to understand where Muslim Americans fall with regards to different values of mate selection, as well as the predictors that may influence these values and practices. As mate selection is grounded in norms and expectations,

identity and religiosity may be key predictors of mate selection practices for Muslim Americans. The strength of one's identities, in this case both Muslim identity and American identity, may be related to the degree to which one follows the norms and expectations of the associated cultures. This can also be said of the level of one's religiosity and the extent to which they follow Islamic guidelines. While such trends have been noted in qualitative interviews and focus groups (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Zaidi, Couture-Carron, Maticka-Tyndale, & Arif, 2014; Al-Johar, 2005), there are no quantitative studies available indicating the strength or significance of this relationship. Additionally, other variables such as gender and age have also been qualitatively reported to influence mate selection practices (Dasgupta, 1998; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Haqqani, 2013, Ba-Yunus, 1991). Thus, these are all important variables to consider in understanding mate selection values and practices of Muslims in the U.S.

## *Purpose*

Elements Islamic ideology and traditional practices are not compatible with how mate selection has evolved in the U.S., specifically regarding the diminished role given to family in mate selection and the increase in non-marital focused heterosexual relationships. The present study investigates the extent to which Muslim Americans: 1) involve family in the decision-making process about marriage, and 2) are willing to date without the intention of marriage. Further, the study examines the effects of Muslim identity and American identity on these mate selection processes. Lastly, it also assesses if any of these relationships are moderated by one's age or gender.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

The available research literature on Muslim Americans and romantic partner selection is scarce.  Nonetheless, many of these existing studies have noted changes occurring in the attitudes and practices of the mate selection process for Muslims in North America (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Netting, 2006; Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002; Al-Johar, 2005). In order to better understand their findings, however, it is worthwhile to first expound on the differences in the norms and values of mate selection between those of Western societies and those of the more traditional and collectivistic Muslim societies. Understanding these differences only as they are today would offer a limited perspective, however. Rather, by reviewing how mate selection evolved throughout the U.S.'s history, we can better understand the dynamics that are at play and how they may be influencing mate selection for Muslim Americans today.

## *Evolution of Mate Selection in the United States*

### Courtship

In the book *Courtship*, Cate and Lloyd (1992) detail how the importance of various factors in the mate selection process have changed over time. Nevertheless, throughout American history, the value of individualism has played a steady and significant role in the decision-making process. Even in colonial times, many scholars

have noted that the U.S. has always had some elements of a participant-led system in which the individuals themselves had a say in their choice of mate, as opposed to a system based on arranged marriages (Gadlin, 1977; Murstein, 1974; Rothman, 1984; Whyte, 1992). In American tradition, though parental consent was still needed for marriage, youth would take the initiative to get to know one another and make the decision to marry (Whyte, 1992).

Some scholars attribute this reduced role of parents in early American history to the realities faced by colonists coming from Europe. They argue that emigration served to weaken kinship ties with their European relatives, and especially in the migration of single individuals or nuclear families (Coontz, 1988). This is further corroborated by census data showing that extended families were never prominent in colonial America (Tibbits, 1965). In addition to this, demands of colonial life were so great that the active labor of girls and a growing population was needed for the survival of the community (Murstein, 1976). This created a society that strongly encouraged marriage and also allowed for more integration and relaxed interactions of the sexes, which differed from the relative segregation of the sexes in Europe (Murstein, 1974).

This is not to say that parents were completely absent from the mate selection process. Parental consent was still necessary for marriage to happen, and this was often based on the son's ability to provide for a wife and family, as well as other factors such as a family's social standing (Gadlin, 1977; Rothman, 1984). Another form of control from parents was deciding on the timing of the marriage by withholding inheritance of land or the release of a son's labor (Glenn & Coleman,

1988; Greven, 1970). In addition to the above, parents also played a role in chaperoning the activity of youth to a greater or lesser extent.

Although there are some differences of opinion as to how extensively parents chaperoned interactions between sexes, it is agreed that one of the hallmarks of the courtship era was that most activities included a significant degree of adult and community supervision (Cate & Lloyd, 1992; Whyte, 1992; Cherlin, 2010). It was common for boys and girls to interact throughout a variety of settings, such as school, church socials, fairs, local dances, or other activities with family, siblings, or friends. Though there were some occasions to be alone, such as on walks home, most activities were in group settings, as opposed to being paired off with a partner (Whyte, 1992). If a relationship went beyond what is platonic, then a courting process would take place. This was referred to as "calling" and involved females inviting male suitors to their home (Whyte, 1992). It was not uncommon for females to have several suitors at one time. However, this model involved parental supervision and was relatively constrained, and made it clear that the objective of these encounters was for marriage and not purely for enjoyment (Whyte, 1992). These encounters would continue until a female would progress to "keeping company" in which she would only see one suitor in particular, who would visit her on a regular basis. At this stage, it was not uncommon for parents to afford the pair some privacy. Controlling sexual desires and maintaining chastity until marriage was still expected, though not always achieved for some courting couples (Cate & Lloyd, 1992). Though with slight variations over time, this process of courtship was the primary model for mate selection for nearly two centuries until dating culture would emerge to replace it.

Dating

By the 1920s, dating had nearly completely replaced the model of courtship that existed before it, and was distinct from courting in several regards (Cate & Lloyd, 1992). Whereas courtship was chaperoned, had rules and restrictions, and was done with the intent of marriage in mind, dating involved the pairing of couples in activities that were not supervised by parents, and with enjoyment as the primary goal rather than marriage (Murstein, 1974; Cherlin, 2010; Whyte, 1992). Moreover, the rules of dating were shaped by peers rather than adults (Modell, 1983; Whyte, 1992; Cherlin, 2010). Parents had little control over who their children dated or what they did on dates, and while some activities took place in public settings where adults may be present, dates often took place in settings where the youth dominated, such as private parties and dance halls (Whyte, 1992; Cherlin, 2010; Lynd & Lynd, 1927, 1937; Rothman, 1984).

Another major difference in the rules of dating was the shift in power from females to males. Courtship took place in the girl's home and was carried out by her invitation, thus giving her more control. In dating, however, the man would ask out the woman, and was responsible for transportation and finances. The woman, in turn, was expected to provide the pleasure of her company, and was often pressured to offer romantic and physical intimacy. Though she was in control to withhold her affection or intimacy, this pressure and the lack of parental oversight placed women in a weaker position than in the courtship model (Whyte, 1992; Bailey, 1988).

What triggered such a dramatic change in the process of mate selection? A number of social and economic factors are thought to have contributed to this shift.

Among them are migrations from rural areas to cities, the rise of industrial capitalism, higher standards of living, and the lengthening of adolescence (Cherlin, 2010). The industrial revolution allowed people to move to cities and work in factories. As people migrated to cities, there became more opportunities to meet people and in settings outside of the home. Motion pictures became popular, and the invention of the automobile not only allowed for young men to take women to places further away from home, but it also provided a private place for physical intimacy (Bailey, 1988; Whyte, 1992).

Increasing standards of living played a large role in promoting this transition towards dating for recreation as opposed to courting for marriage. Whereas in the past many young adults would begin working and helping their families with their wages in their early teen years, it no longer became necessary for many youth to work for the family and gave them more time for leisure. Youth autonomy also rose as standards rose, as they had more spending money for recreational activities, and eventually came to own their own cars rather than have to borrow the family car (Cherlin, 2010; Whyte, 1992).

Increasing standards of living had another profound effect on life. Prior to the 1900s, labor from children was necessary for many families, and many youths did not go to high school, and were viewed as adults at an earlier age (Cherlin, 2010). However, as the need for child labor waned, it gave way to the emergence of adolescence and a new notion that children needed time to develop their personalities and capabilities free from the pressures of the adult world (Kett, 2003). For the first time, a majority of teenagers became enrolled in high school in the early 20th century,

and college enrollments would surge in the years following World War II. This protected period in high school and college gave adolescents and young adults the ability to both create and participate in their own subculture, and one free from parental involvement (Cherlin, 2010).

This subculture brought with it its own norms and expectations. For example, Willard Waller, one of the early critics of dating culture, used the phrase "rating and dating complex" to describe the culture of dating multiple people as a way for gaining status and popularity in college (Waller, 1937). Dating also brought with it more liberalized norms around sexual behavior (Bailey, 1988). The 1920s is described as a time of sexual and social revolution, characterized by more frank interactions between men and women, sex being the dominant theme of movies and literature, and the code of behavior for women being liberalized (Lynd & Lynd, 1929; Cate & Lloyd, 1992). While being a virgin was still desirable, the sharp increase in premarital sexual intercourse among teenagers showed that dating was ineffective at limiting sexual activity, and being a virgin at marriage was no longer a requirement by the end of the first half of the 20th century (Cherlin, 2010; Rothman, 1984).

While the emergence of adolescence served to reduce parental involvement in the partner selection process, increasing emphasis on educational attainment throughout the second half of the 20th century resulted in the postponing of marriage and thus partner selection became less related to finding a spouse. In the first half of the 20th century, dating was still somewhat connected to the idea of marriage. Dating couples that "became steady" (i.e. a serious romance) would transition into courting, and these "steady" relationships were seen as a stage between casual dating and a

10

commitment to marry (Modell, 1983). However, as the age of marriage continued to rise in the second half of the 20ᵗʰ century, dating become more removed from serious attempts to find a spouse and was less closely connected to marriage (Cherlin, 2010).

One of the perspectives around the function of dating with regards to marriage is called the marketplace learning viewpoint. The assumption here is that having dating experience with multiple partners and then getting to know one or more serious prospects over a longer period of time would result in a stronger likelihood for marital success (Whyte, 1992). The thought was that romantic experiences would increase awareness of one's own feelings and help people come to know what qualities in a marital partner would make them happy (Whyte, 1992).

Whyte (1992) carried out a study in 1984 testing this hypothesis. He interviewed 459 women and asked them various questions about their dating and premarital experiences, as well as their marital success. His conclusions were a surprise, showing that none of the elements of dating were related to marital success. This includes dating variety, length of dating, length of courtship or engagement, or degree of premarital intimacy with either the future husband or others.

"Hooking Up"

While dating still takes place now, a new form of intimate partner formation began to emerge starting in the 1980s and growing more common in the 2000s. Adolescents and young adults began socializing in larger, mixed-sex groups (Modell, 1989), and often reported pairing off in the form of a "hook up," or a sexual encounter with no expectation of further involvement (Stepp, 2007; Bogle, 2008; Cherlin,

11

2010). Unlike dating, romantic attraction is not necessary, or often even desired. Just as the level of long-term commitment decreased from courtship to dating, so too has it decreased from dating to the hook up culture that is increasingly more common today.

Some have attributed proximity dating applications such as Tinder to propagating hookup culture, with some referring to it as bringing on the "dating apocalypse" (Sales, 2015). Still other scholars argue that while many do use these applications purely for sexual encounters, others use them to seek romantic relationships or to obtain social approval (Timmermans & Caluwe, 2017). It should also be noted that some studies have found no substantial changes in sexual behavior among college students today as compared to previous decades (Monto & Carey, 2014). However, though hookup culture may not be as pervasive as portrayed by the media, many would agree that there is widespread acceptance of this form of intimate partner formation. Whereas some view this new culture to be sexually liberating and pleasurable, others view it to be troubling and exploitative, with individuals reporting feeling confused about the level of romantic interest and commitment in their relationships (Cherlin, 2010; Glenn & Marquardt, 2001).

In conclusion, several social and economic factors have influenced the development of mate selection practices in the U.S. Though there has always been a degree of autonomy in finding a romantic partner, parental regulation of the process still played a significant role until the 20th century. This role then gradually began to decline with developments in urbanization, increased standards of living, and the emergence of youth subculture. Moreover, postponing marriage in lieu of education

served to further weaken the relationship between finding a romantic partner and the goal of getting married. Thus, what emerged were romantic partnerships that evolved independent of parental regulations and for the sake of enjoyment and companionship rather than marriage. The influence of these factors is important to keep in mind as we explore how traditional forms of mate selection are being challenged for Muslims residing in the U.S.

## Competing Narratives of Mate Selection for Muslim Americans

### Marriage in Traditional Muslim Societies

Romantic partner selection in the U.S. has become what it is today through a long history of various social, economic, and ideological forces. In traditional Muslim societies, however, the patterns of mate selection is much less based on individualism and more defined by custom and tradition. There, rather than marrying based on love between two individuals, marriage is seen as a family and community affair that should be arranged by the individuals' families (Hamon & Ingoldsby, 2003). In this system, emphasis is given to other factors relating to the integration of the families, such as family background, social reputation, cultural upbringing, economic position, the general character of the individual, and the value of the dowry (Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002). Whereas Western norms of partner selection value autonomy and the pursuit of love between individuals as the highest goal, the interests and needs of the two individuals are considered secondary to the needs of their families in traditional Muslim society (Medora, 2003; Dion & Dion, 1996).

Moreover, the entire mate selection process is initiated and decided by parents

and kin, with the duty of the individuals simply to give their final consent (Ba-Yunus,

1991). This model differs dramatically from norms in American society, both as they

are today and as they were in the past as arranged marriages were never the norm in

the U.S. But for traditional Muslim societies, spouses-to-be often meet only once or a

few times, and sometimes even not at all, prior to their marriage (Al-Johar, 2005).

Romance and love are not given consideration, and are in fact discouraged and

prevented as they are seen to be a threat to chastity, and consequently, the family's

honor (Dion & Dion, 1996; Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002). Additionally, there is a general

segregation of the unrelated males and females in traditional Muslim societies,

thereby making it difficult for males and females to have premarital social and sexual

proximity (Ba-Yunus, 1991). Rather, love is expected to develop between spouses

over time after marriage in the context of shared responsibility and experience in the

family (Dion & Dion, 1996).

Thus, two staples of mate selection in the U.S. are removed from the mate

selection model of traditional Muslim societies: individual choice and romantic love.

Instead, mate selection prioritizes the needs of the family, as well as a high

commitment to marriage prior to the development of love and romance. This raises

the question, "Do Muslim Americans also value these traditional forms of romantic

partner selection? And if so, will they be able to maintain these ideals in the face of

social, economic, and ideological forces that encourage a perspective of mate

selection that is grounded in expressive individualism and post-modernity?" Laying

the groundwork for answering these questions is at the heart of this proposed study.

14

Before reviewing the literature addressing the current partner selection practices of

Muslims in the U.S., we will first draw some parallels between the mate selection

trends in the general American society with the realities of Muslim Americans.

Competing Paradigms for Muslims in the U.S.

In reviewing forces that have shaped mate selection in the U.S., it is important

to note that Muslims Americans are exposed to many of the same challenges. For

example, similar to the colonists that first landed in America, Muslim American

immigrants are also to a greater or lesser extent cut off from their kin that remain

behind in their country of origin. Even those that do settle in the U.S.  may not be

geographically nearby (Qureshi, 1991). These realities of immigration likely serve to

weaken the role of extended family in one's life compared to their country of origin.

Other challenges are also facing Muslim Americans, especially those that

have been raised in the U.S. since childhood. Particularly for those that go to public

schools rather than Islamic schools, they grow up in a youth subculture that is out of

the reach of their parents, as was the case for youth during the emergence of

adolescence when dating began to grow popular. Here Muslim Americans are

exposed to a culture that promotes seeking romantic relationships for the sake of

enjoyment. Moreover, ideals of individualism and what is important in a meaningful

relationship are constantly being portrayed through mass and social media, be it

television, news, movies, Facebook, Instagram, novels, self-help books, or magazines

(Hollander, 2011). And finally, Muslim Americans are also faced with the myriad of

lifestyle choices that they must make as they advance through life, from what type of

education and career to pursue, to when to start a family and what needs and qualities to consider when seeking a romantic partner. The aforementioned are just some of the realities that Muslims in the U.S. are exposed to in today's era. The common thread between them is that they either reduce the role of familial involvement in the partner selection process or discourage considerations of a commitment to marriage when engaging in relationships with the opposite sex.

At the same time that they are exposed to these trends in the general American society, Muslim Americans as a religious subgroup may possess certain characteristics that resist these trends and instead promote more collectivistic and traditional patterns of mate selection. For example, for some Muslims in the U.S., community life through religious participation is still significant. Ba-Yunus (1991) makes the point that Muslims seem to cherish community life, and that though they may not generally live in close physical proximity, they often are near a mosque which is indicative of a sizable and active Muslim community. These communities often offer a number of activities, particularly on the weekends. And for students on large college campuses and also some high schools, there are often active chapters of the Muslim Students Association which also serves a communal institution for social participation. Religious institutions such as these can thus provide a two-fold function. On the one hand, they provide activities that serve to promote a Muslim identity and can decrease feelings of social isolation which would encourage individuals to seek romantic relationships. On the other hand, they provide Islamic educational programs that could shield individuals from adopting ideologies that may run contrary to on Islamic principles and doctrines (Ba-Yunus, 1975).

There are a number of Islamic tenets that are at odds with some of the norms of the mate selection process in the U.S. For example, not only is premarital sex forbidden in Islam, but it is also prohibited for an unrelated male and female to be alone in seclusion with one another. Though one could theoretically still partake in romantic relationships and dating in public settings without breaking this rule, the ethos of this doctrine and other Islamic values place an emphasis on the notion that relationships with the opposite gender should be tied to the institution of marriage. Nevertheless, ethos and ideology are susceptible to change over time.

Islamic doctrines and values also place greater emphasis on parental oversight in the mate selection process. For example, in most cases, it is required that females have a guardian, called a *wali* in Arabic, that give consent to their marriage in order for it to be Islamically valid. Although men do not officially need a wali to consent to their marriage, parents are given an exceptionally high status in Islam. In fact, disobedience to parents is considered one of the major sins in Islam, and thus would act as a deterrent to choosing a romantic partner against a parent's desires.

However, parents themselves are also susceptible to ideological shifts and may one day choose to relinquish their control over their children's choice of partner if they believe it is their children's independent right. In one study of perceived social influence on cross-cultural and interfaith dating and marriage, Yahya and Boag (2014) interviewed 55 college students from a diverse set of backgrounds, both ethnically and religiously. They found that though these adult children felt pressure from their parents to marry within their culture and faith, over 80% of participants said they did not plan to interfere in their own children's partner selection. However,

though there were Muslims in the sample, the study did not mention what percentage

of Muslims held this view, and the responses from Muslims indicated that cultural

and religious differences can lead to difficulties, especially with interfaith

relationships. Furthermore, though all participants, including Muslims, stated that

ultimately they would accept whatever partner their children chose, the Muslims in

the study were "extremely confident that their children would *not* choose a cross-

cultural or interfaith relationship because of the way that they intend to raise them,"

(Yahya & Boag, 2014, p. 769).

*Previous Studies on Muslim American Mate Selection Practices*

As was previously mentioned, there are limited studies that have investigated

attitudes and practices of mate selection in the Muslim American community. In fact,

between 1991 to 2011, only 35 publications were found that were relevant to family

and marriage for North American Muslims (Amer & Bagasra, 2013). Moreover, these

studies have a number of limitations in the insights that they provide. For one, much

of the literature is outdated, which is an issue because it does not take long for

sociological trends in populations to change. Of the few articles addressing the topic

of mate selection among Muslim Americans, the majority of them are qualitative

studies based on interviews and focus groups (Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002; Zaidi,

Couture-Carron, Maticka-Tyndale, & Arif, 2014; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Al-

Johar, 2005, Haqqani, 2013). This lack of large-scale survey data makes it difficult to

make generalizations for this population. One large-scale study was found which

focused on preferences when selecting a partner (Badahdah & Tiemann, 2005), and only one empirical study was found that sought to survey Muslim Americans' perceptions and behaviors around the process of mate selection itself (Ba-Yunus, 1991). However, even though they have limited generalizability, the interviews and focus groups conducted in qualitative studies still provide a window into trends and experiences that are likely to be occurring for many Muslims in the U.S.

Potential Conflicts Between Immigrants and Their Children

Reviewing these studies, one finds there are often conflicts between immigrant parents and their children around different aspects of partner selection (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Netting, 2006; Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002; Zaidi, Couture-Carron, Maticka-Tyndale, & Arif, 2014; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Swanson, 1996; Al-Johar, 2005). These differences were reported in both studies of Muslims in America, as well as studies of general immigrants in America that included Muslims in the sample. The differences often revolved around both the choice of partner, as well as the specific practices for mate selection, such as dating. For example, Nesteruk and Gramescu (2012) conducted 35 in-depth interviews with second-generation youth from diverse cultures investigating dating and mate selection. Though non-Muslims were also in the study, responses from Muslim participants were noted. They found that with respect to the choice of partner, immigrant parents often placed a restriction on endogamous marriages that maintain one's ethnicity, culture, and religion. For immigrants from Muslim societies, while all of the above categories for endogamy apply, there was often a greater emphasis on

19

marrying partners with the same religious background compared to other immigrant

groups (Nesteruk & Gramaescu, 2012). This emphasis on endogamy is because

interracial, interethnic, or interfaith marriages are often seen as a threat to family

solidarity, cultural values, and ethnic ties (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Zaidi &

Shuraydi, 2002; Qureshi, 1991). Such restrictions on endogamy, however, can often

result in conflict between generations as second generation young adults tend to be

more open to exogamous dating and marriage (Netting, 2006; Nesteruk & Gramescu,

2012; Yahya & Boag, 2014).

However, it is also common for children of immigrants to express a strong

desire to pass on their culture, traditions, values, customs, and language to their

children. This is a finding that was also noted by Netting (2006) in interviews of 27

Indo-Canadian youth focusing on their perceptions of love and arranged marriage.

Both Nesteruk and Gramescu (2012) and Netting (2006) noted that children of

immigrants placed an emphasis on family values, education, hard work, and respect

for elders, and were reported for immigrant groups in general, but also referenced

Muslim immigrants in particular. Some immigrant children even expressed

appreciation for their parents' endogamous preferences and themselves showed

preference, or even a requirement, for similar ethnic and religious backgrounds in a

partner (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Netting, 2006). Some second-generation young

adults also reported that as they matured over the years, their views on endogamy

changed as they gained a better understanding of their parents' preferences for

cultural and similarity in mate selection (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012).

20

It is also worth mentioning here that though some children of immigrants may agree with their parents' preferences, they have also likely been influenced by the socialization of their parents. The social norms and expectations of parents are passed down to children from an early age, such as the roles of men and women and their responsibilities to the family (Qureshi, 1991). This very same process of socialization applies to the preference of endogamy. Muslim respondents in Yahya and Baig's (2014) interviews stated that they avoided cross-cultural and interfaith relationships because of not only a perceived cultural clash, but also from anticipated rejection of the partner from their parents. Thus, parents exert an influence on their children with regards to children's choice of mate, both directly and indirectly through socialization.

Interestingly enough, this is something that is not unique to Muslim or Eastern collectivistic societies. Though there are limited studies investigating the roles of networks on mate selection in the U.S. (Cate & Lloyd, 1992), scholars have noted that free-choice does not mean that one can marry anyone. Even in Western societies, there is social pressure to maintain endogamy and marry someone similar to oneself in various regards, such as religion, race or ethnic group, social class, and age (Ingoldsby, 2006). This type of indirect influence by parents was suggested by Leslie, Huston, and Johnson (1986) who stated that individuals may choose to deepen their involvement only with partners who they anticipate will be approved by parents. Indeed, this is a similar response that was heard by Muslims in Yahya and Baig's (2014) study on the influence of social pressure on cross-cultural and interfaith dating and marriage.

Thus, Muslim immigrants indeed exert influence on the choice of partner for their children. This is expected as this generation grew up in a culture in which arranged marriages are the norm. However, studies have also found that their children increasingly have their own requirements on the qualities that they want in their partner that is outside of the traditional expectations of Muslim cultures. For example, Nesteruk and Gramescu (2012) found that all second-generation young adults placed an importance on having partners that are "Americanized" and acculturated in the American lifestyle and egalitarian relationships. Moreover, this is a need that pertains to the individual getting married, as opposed to the needs of the family, and shows that many young adults have their own individual preferences in their choice of partner.

While studies show potential differences between Muslim parents and their children with regard to the choice of partner, there are also potential areas of conflict around that mate selection process itself. In particular, Muslim immigrant parents often have a difficult time adjusting to and accepting popular Western activities, such as dating, going to dances, and intermingling with the opposite sex (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012). Although most immigrant families from other cultural backgrounds were found to be open to dating, Muslim families that were either highly religious or held very traditional views were found to forbid dating, and this often leads to conflict with children due to their disagreements over expectations for appropriate behavior (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012). In such cases, some young adults would even resort to hiding their relationships from their parents (Netting, 2006; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). However, individuals who were religious

did tend to agree with their parents that dating is unacceptable (Zaidi et al., 2014; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012).

Nevertheless, though many Muslims did not agree with dating, a study of Pakistani Muslim American females found that a majority of them spoke of either modifying or replacing the arranged marriage system with one that permits more freedom of choice and interaction between individuals (Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002). A majority of them also spoke of love to be a necessary precondition to marriage. This is a significant departure from the paradigm in which their parents were raised, and is reflected in the perception that their parents hold different definitions of romantic love and would not be able to understand. As a result, in some cases, Muslim Pakistani females engaged in an arranged marriage, listing reasons such as parental obligation, not being able to find a partner on their own, and exceptional circumstances. In other cases, females felt confident to voice their opinions and were even willing to rebel against their parents (Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002).

The degree of differences and conflict between generations can result in a variety of mate selection models and practices. For example, Al-Johar (2005) noted three distinct models of mate selection after interviewing Muslim immigrants, their children, and their spouses to get a better sense of their mate selection process. The first is arranged marriages, in which the process is primarily carried out by parents of the spouses. The second model is called self-initiated Islamic marriages, in which the individuals themselves will meet and choose their future spouse, and then tell their parents about the acquaintance and follow Islamic requirements of chaperoned meetings until the marriage. The third model is called self-achieved marriages, and

these consist of individuals choosing their own spouses entirely on their own personal desires. Here, Muslims described meeting with their future spouse on their own and dating openly before marriage, and they also did not consult with family or meet in a chaperoned setting prior to engagement. This last model is unique from the other two models in that little to no regard was given to preferences of the family or relatives. In short, a parallel can be seen between these three models and traditional models of arranged marriage, courtship, and dating. Thus, we see that there is a spectrum along which Muslim Americans find themselves with regard to how they approach the mate selection process. On one end is high familial involvement and a high early commitment to marriage, while on the other is low familial involvement and low commitment to marriage at the onset of relationships with the opposite sex.

Factors Influencing Muslim American Mate Selection Practices

There may be a number of factors influencing mate selection practices. For example, Al-Johar (2006) conducted 27 qualitative interviews in Houston, Texas with Sunni Muslim immigrants, children of immigrants, and their spouses from a variety of national origins. In her study, she sought to understand Muslims born or raised in the U.S. and how their mate selection is affected by the strength to which they identify with the cultural aspects of their immigrant parents. According to Al-Johar (2005), three models of mate selection were found to be associated with different types of identity. Arranged marriages, self-initiated marriages, and self-achieved marriages were each respectively associated with the strength of one's ethnic, Islamic, or American identities. Individuals with high ethnic ties to their country of

24

origin were found to be most comfortable with an arranged marriage, while those who took pride in their Islamic identity and practice over their ethnic or American identity were more likely to pursue self-initiated marriages. And lastly, those with self-achieved marriages were found to have stronger American identity than with their country of origin. Al-Johar's analysis of identity in this study seems to be more anecdotal, as she does not use a specific measure to assess for identity. Instead she relied on themes that emerged during her interviews with participants. Nonetheless, she provides valuable insight regarding the relationship between identity and mate selection practices.

In addition to identity, there may be other factors associated with Muslim American mate selection as well. For example, Zaidi et al. (2014) conducted interviews with 56 unmarried, second-generation South Asian Canadians between the ages of 18 and 25, which included both Muslims, Hindus, and Christians. In their study, they sought to understand how the intersection of identity, religion, and gender impacted both perceptions and experiences with intimate cross-gender relationships. They found that Muslims' openness to dating and views on intimate relationships varied by one's degree of religiosity. Most religious Muslims held the view that dating relationships should not occur as it can lead to premarital sex. Some among this group did mention that dating could be acceptable if supervised and if it were at a mature age. Moderately religious Muslims in general showed a greater acceptance towards dating than religious Muslims, with some variation in the responses. Additionally, some in this group still showed resistance to premarital sex. And finally, "Not Religious" Muslims showed the most flexibility and acceptance towards

both dating and premarital sex. But again, being a qualitative study, one cannot make sweeping generalizations.

In addition to identity and religiosity, significant differences were found in both attitudes and experiences in mate selection according to gender. Many respondents in these studies reported that there were few attempts to control sons, but that daughter's behaviors were more strictly controlled by parents and the immigrant community (Dasgupta, 1998; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012). Additionally, women in particular felt high pressure to adopt the traditional expectations of families and immigrant communities while also balancing the norms and culture of the dominant American society (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Netting, 2006). Much of this stems from traditional beliefs that women are responsible for upholding the family's religious and cultural values (Qureshi, 1991). The presence of this gender double standard likely has an influence on attitudes and practices of mate selection, and this proposed study will also assess for any significant differences based on gender.

Finally, scholars have also reported discrepancies in familial involvement based on age. Haqqani (2013) reports that more authority and choice over mate selection is given to older Muslims, and this is for both men and women. Younger Muslims tend to have more parental involvement. Haqqani (2013) states this may be due to the fact that as people grow older and options for potential mates decrease, parents become open to non-conventional modes of finding partners and decrease their regulation over the process. Additionally, financial and economic independence

could be another factor that gives older Muslims more control over their mate selection process (Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002).

As mentioned, almost all studies investigating mate selection experiences and attitudes of Muslims in North America have been qualitative. While these studies provide insightful findings, their small sample size makes it difficult to make generalizations about the Muslim American population as a whole. There is one survey, however, that sought to investigate Muslim American mate selection. This study by Ba-Yunus (1991) conducted a survey of 245 male and female Muslims who were born to immigrants in the U.S. and Canada. With help from Muslim Student Associations, the sample was drawn from four college campuses in the U.S. and one in Canada. Two of the main issues he sought to explore were premarital heterosexual contact and parental role in marriage.

With regards to the former, Ba-Yunus asked participants about the frequency of dating, to which 56.3 percent responded "Never" and an additional 10.0 percent said "Hardly Ever", and together make up about two-thirds of the sample. This shows that a majority did not participate in dating. However, what is interesting is the discrepancy between males and females. Only 37.5% of males said they never dated, while 80.0% of females reported the same. Combining this category with "Hardly Ever" brings females up to 90% while males are still below 50%. This shows that there was indeed a significant difference in the practices of males and females. This study also found that among the 1/3 of Muslim Americans that go on dates at least once in a while, nearly 60% of them did so because they either intend to marry the person they are dating, or are already engaged to that person. Thus, even for those

that do date, dating for most Muslims had a connection to marriage, which is different from the expectations of dating for today's general American population. Lastly, this study also surveyed parental authority in the mate selection process and found that 77% of individuals had a strong parental influence in mate selection, stating that ultimately the parents played a bigger role in choosing their spouse than themselves. This also drastically differs from the mate selection practices of the general American population. Overall this study provides valuable insights that will aid in making meaning of the findings from this proposed study, particularly with how trends may have changed for the Muslim American population since the publication of Ba-Yunus' study in 1991.

*Objectives and Hypotheses*

There are two primary objectives of this proposed study. The first objective is to measure the extent to which Muslim Americans: 1) involve family in decision-making about marriage, and 2) are willing to engage in cross-gender relationships without the consideration of marriage. While these questions have been examined in previous studies, this will be the first quantitative investigation of these questions since Ba-Yunus' (1991) study from over 25 years ago.

The second objective of this study is to examine the effects of American identity, Muslim identity, and religiosity on these two mate selection practices. We hypothesize that the stronger the American identity: (1) the less familial involvement in mate selection and (2) the more willingness to engage in cross-gender relationships

28

without the intention of marriage. We anticipate the opposite effect for Muslim identity. We hypothesize that the stronger the Muslim identity: (3) the more familial involvement in mate selection and (4) the less willingness to engage in cross-gender relationships without the intention of marriage. This same effect is anticipated for religiosity. We hypothesize that the higher the religiosity: (5) the more familial involvement in mate selection and (6) the less willingness to engage in cross-gender relationships without the intention of marriage.

In addition to the above two objectives, we will also be exploring two additional research questions: To what extent do age and gender moderate the relationships between identity or religiosity and mate selection practices for Muslim Americans?

# Chapter 3: Methods

## *Sample and Procedures*

### Sample

The sample consisted of Muslims in the U.S. on a mobile marriage and dating

application for Muslims known as Muzmatch. Approximately 80,000 verified U.S.

users of Muzmatch were sent an electronic notification from Muzmatch announcing

the anonymous survey and inviting them to participate. A link was provided for those

interested to access and complete the survey. Participants were current users of the

site, and had to identify themselves as Muslim and be currently residing in the U.S.

The minimum age of respondents was 18 years old. There was no maximum age

limit.

### Procedures

Participants were asked to complete an online survey that sought to

understand the partner selection process for Muslims in the U.S. The survey itself

takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Researchers shared a link to the online

survey with Muzmatch administrators, who then sent an announcement with the link

to users that met the selection criteria for the study. Recipients had four weeks to

complete the survey and were sent weekly follow-up reminders from the initial

notification.

The survey itself did not collect any identifying information beyond general demographic information. In this way, any information collected could not be used to identify survey responses to specific individuals. All data was only accessible to members of the research team, and administrators from Muzmatch did and will not have access to this data.

This survey consists of 53 items across six sections. The first section is the demographic section. The 2nd and 6th sections assess degrees to which the individual has internalized a Muslim and an American identity, respectively, using the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity – Teen (MIBI-T; Sellers, et al., 1998). The 3rd section assesses religious faith and practices, using the Multi-Religion Identity Measure (Abu-Rayya, 2009). The 4th section will assess the degree of family involvement and intention to marry using the scales developed by the present researchers. Finally, a 5th section assesses preferences of characteristics when choosing romantic partners using the mate selection survey developed by Hill (1945) and that has been widely used in the United States over the last 70 years (Buss, 1989; Hill, 1945; Hoyt and Hudson, 1981; Hudson and Henze, 1969; McGinnis, 1958). This last section was not utilized in the current study.

*Measurement of Variables*

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this study is one's practices in mate selection. Namely, the variables include: 1) familial involvement in the decision-making

process about marriage, and 2) willingness to engage in cross-gender relationships without the intention of marriage. Two separate scales were created to assess these variables.

      ***Familial Involvement.*** This scale sought to measure the degree to which parents and extended family play a role in the mate selection process of an individual. It contains four questions. One question pertains to the extended family and if their opinion matters in their choice of partner. The remaining three items inquired about parental involvement in the mate selection process and relate to an individual's comfort talking to their parents about romantic interests, the importance of parents' approval of choice of mate, and the reliance on parents for finding a partner. These items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*absolutely*). The total possible score is 20, with a high score indicating very high familial involvement in the mate selection process.

      There has only been one survey that was found to assess familial involvement in the mate selection process, and that was in the study conducted by Ba-Yunus (1991) mentioned earlier. However, this survey only looked at the parental authority in the extent of their influence of the choice of partner. Though this is an important metric, participants were only asked one question. We believe familial involvement is multi-faceted, and that we can get a more nuanced approximation of this concept by asking multiple questions.

      ***Intention of Marriage in Opposite Gender Relationships.*** There are three questions in this scale, and they were all designed to assess how much thought is given to the idea of marriage when entering into either romantic or close relationships

with the opposite gender. One item focused on gender relations in general by asking if one is willing to become close friends with someone of the opposite gender that they do not foresee marrying. The other two questions assessed how important both intent of marriage and possibility of marriage are when entering romantic relationships. These are also measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at* all) to 5 (absolutely), with a total possible scale score of 15. Additionally, two of the questions are reverse-scored. With this scoring method, a high score on this scale would indicate that one would enter into a close relationship with the opposite gender only if they intended to marry that person. Also, it should be noted that there were no surveys or scales found in the literature that assessed the consideration given to marriage when deciding to enter a relationship.

Moderator and Control Variables

***Demographic Variables.*** The first portion of the survey assessed for demographic variables. These include gender, age, religious sect, immigrant generation, racial or ethnic group, and level of education (see Appendix A for survey questionnaire). Religious sect asked of the two predominant sects of Islam, Sunni and Shia, which make up over 95% of the global Muslim population (Pew Research Center, 2009). However, an option of "Other" was available for participants that may identify with a different sect. Immigrant generation referred to the participants generational position relative to the last generation that was born outside of the U.S. This was measured up to the 4th generation and was assessed using a multiple-choice selection with descriptions of each generation for clarification. Multiple choice was

also used to select one or more racial or ethnic groups that Muslim Americans may identify with, along with an "other" option for any unlisted categories. Level of education was also measured as a multiple-choice selection.

*Muslim and American Identity.* Two modified versions of the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-Teen* (MIBI-T) instrument (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008) were used to assess for both Muslim and American identity. Although "Muslim" and "American" are not considered racial identities, the scales in this instrument are well-designed to assess for the strength of identities, and also assess for constructs of interest in this study. Additionally, though this scale is a modified version of the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) designed for teens, it is a much more condensed measure, with seven sub-scales each measuring a different construct with just three questions each. As this study will be using this measure twice (i.e. for Muslim identity and American identity), in addition to assessing for several other constructs in the administered survey, maintaining brevity is important so help insure completion of the instrument. For these reasons, two specific subscales from the MIBI-T were chosen for the purposes of this study: (1) centrality and (2) private regard.

*Centrality* refers to the extent to which an individual normatively defines him or herself with regard to the identity being measured, which in this case is "Muslim" or "American". This concept is relatively stable across different situations, and represents a hierarchical ranking of one's different identities and how strongly they are associated with one's core definition of self (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). This subscale consists of three questions and, when combined with

the Spearman-Brown formula[1], was found to have a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.78 (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008).

*Regard* is conceptualized as "a person's affective and evaluative judgment of her or his race in terms of positive-negative valence" (Sellers, et al., 1998). Public regard is the extent to which individuals think others view their own race positively or negatively, whereas private regard is one's own positive or negative feelings towards others of the same race, as well as how they themselves feel about being that race. This latter concept, private regard, has been found to be a powerful construct in identity research (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). The scale measuring private regard was also found to be reliable with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.87[2] (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008). Thus to evaluate American and Muslim identities, modified subscales of centrality and private regard from the MIBI-T were used. These subscales were each used twice, once for each identity, and replaced the word "Black" from the original survey with "Muslim" and "American". Each subscale consists of three questions and items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Each subscale has a total possible score of 15. A high score in centrality indicates that the associated identity is very important in one's sense of self. A high score in private regard indicates that one has a very positive judgment or evaluation of the associated members of that identity, and

---

[1] As the MIBI-T is a concise version of the MIBI, the Spearman-Brown formula was used to measure what Cronbach alphas would have been if the subscales contained the same number of items that were used in the original MIBI. This is based on the principle that shorter scales with lower alphas may be as internally consistent as longer scales if interitem correlations are adequate (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991). Without the Spearman-Brown formula, the Cronbach's alpha score for centrality was 0.55.
[2] The Cronbach's alpha score for private regard without the Spearman-Brown formula was 0.76.

also feels very positive about being a member of that group. These scores were then combined to form a composite identity scale score with a maximum possible score of 30.

   ***Religiosity.*** Religiosity in this study was measured using the *Religious Faith and Practice* scale of the *Multi-Religion Identity Measure* (MRIM; Abu-Rayya, Abu-Rayya, & Khalil, 2009). This scale consists of five questions that look at elements of religious faith and practices that are common to most religions: God, prayer, and the place of worship. This scale was found to be reliable for both high school and college samples, with Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.86 and 0.92, respectively. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*absolutely*), with a total possible score of 25. A high score on this scale indicates both very positive feelings towards themes in religion, as well as a high level of participation in religious rituals. This scale would provide insight into an individual's religiosity, which would then be used to study its relationship with practices in mate selection.

## *Data Analysis*

### Reliability

   As we are developing new instrument, it is important to assess for reliability (i.e. the consistency of the measure). We proposed to assess for validity using Cronbach's alpha. This was used on scales of familial involvement in mate selection and of intention to marry when entering into relationships with the opposite gender.

Cronbach's alpha was also used to assess the validity of the identity and religiosity

scales to ensure they have internal consistency.

Descriptive Statistics

A number of descriptive statistics were used to better understand participants'

responses to familial involvement and consideration of marriage in opposite-gender

relationships. These include statistics such as mean, median, range, and standard

deviation.

Multiple Regression

To assess for the relationships between identity/religiosity and practices in

mate selection, we first tested for the independence of the independent variables to

determine if all three will be used in the analysis. We did this by checking for

correlations between predictors to decide if any predictors should be eliminated from

the analysis. For example, if Muslim identity and religiosity were found to be highly

correlated, then we would only use Muslim identity and would not use religiosity in

the analysis. Next, we used two multiple regression analyses to assess the strength of

the relationships between the independent variables (i.e. Muslim identity, American

identity, and religiosity) and each of the dependent variables (i.e. familial

involvement and intention to marry in opposite gender relationships).

Test for Moderation

We also proposed to conduct tests for moderation using hierarchical multiple

regression in order to determine if age and gender have a significant moderating

effect on the relationship between identity or religiosity and mate selection practices. Two hierarchical multiple regressions were used to test the moderating influence of gender and age on the relationship between identity or religiosity and (1) family involvement and (2) intention to marry when beginning a relationship. Hierarchical multiple regression involves running the regression model in four sequential steps and the change in the variance explained at each step is tabulated. These four steps include: (1) control variables, (2) control variables and independent variables, (3) control variables, independent variables and moderator variables, and (4) control variables, independent variables, moderator variables, and independent-by-moderator interaction variables. The control variables proposed for this analysis were education and years residing in the U.S.

# Chapter 4: Results

*Sample Description*

After removing cases with missing values in either Muslim Identity, American Identity, Familial Involvement or Intent to Marry, this study resulted in a final sample size of 962 survey responses. Of those reporting their age, 54.5% were male and 45.5% were female. And of those reporting their age in years, 52.9% were between 18-29, 33.3% were between 30-39, 7.9% were between 40-49, and 2.6% were age 50 or older. This was found to be a highly educated sample, with 75.1% reporting having a bachelor's degree or higher. With respect to generational status, 30.7% reported being first generation, 20.6% are considered 1.5 generation (i.e. they arrived in the U.S. at the age of 12 or younger), 37.5% are second generation, and 11.1% reported either third, fourth, or fifth generation. With respect to religious sect, 86.2% reported Sunni, 4.8% reported Shia, 7.2% percent reported no preference, and 1.8% reported other. And with respect to race and ethnicity, respondents reported being African (8.9%), African American (8.9%), Arab (21.8%), South Asian (42.0%), Central Asian (2.9%), East Asian (5.3%), Caucasian (6.2%), Hispanic (2.9%), and/or "Other" (11.3%). Participants were able to choose more than one race or ethnicity.

**Table 1. Demographic Variable Statistics**

|  |  | Mean | Range | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Gender[3] | 1.46 | 1 - 2 | 0.498 |
|  | Age[4] | 30.36 | 18 - 65(+) | 7.313 |
|  | Education[5] | 6.87 | 1 - 9 | 1.696 |
|  | Generation[6] | 1.82 | 1 - 5 | 0.919 |
|  | Religious Sect[7] | 1.25 | 1 – 4 | 0.660 |

*Preliminary Analysis*

Cronbach's alpha reliability analyses were run for all scales in this study. Muslim Identity and American Identity scales, which are both modified versions of the MIBI-T, had Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.786 and 0.869, respectively. Religiosity, as measured by the MRIM, received a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.707. Each of these are sufficiently high. The two scales developed for this study, Familial Involvement and Intent to Marry, however did not score as high. Familial involvement received a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.513 using all four questions from the scale. Intent to Marry received an even lower alpha score of 0.233 when using all three questions. However, it was found that dropping a particular question from the Intent to Marry scale (i.e. "I am only willing to enter a romantic relationship with

---

[3] 1 = Male; 2 = Female
[4] Age is coded in years
[5] 1 = Some high school; 2 = High school; 3 = GED; 4 = Some college; 5 = Trade/technical/vocational training; 6 = Associate degree; 7 = Bachelor's degree; 8 = Master's degree; 9 = Doctorate degree
[6] 1 - 4 = Generational number; 1.5 generation = arrival in the U.S. at the age of 12 or younger; 5 = "I don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information"
[7] 1 = Sunni; 2 = Shia; 3 = No Preference; 4 = Other

someone I intend to marry") raised the Cronbach's alpha score to 0.579. Thus, only the remaining two questions were used for the Intent to Marry scale.

Due to the possibility of a degree of similarity between Muslim identity and religiosity, bivariate correlations were conducted to determine whether both variables should be used in the analysis. Bivariate correlations revealed a strong relationship between Muslim identity and religiosity ($r(930) = .557$, $p < .001$). Due to this high level of correlation between these two predictors, we chose to eliminate religiosity from the remaining analyses and focused on Muslim identity instead. Additionally, bivariate correlations across the different scales showed that familial involvement and intent to marry had no association to each other ($r(960) = .019$, $p = .552$).

*Primary Analysis*

The first objective of this study was to measure the extent to which Muslim Americans: 1) involve family in decision-making about marriage, and 2) are willing to engage in cross-gender relationships without the consideration of marriage. Descriptive statistics for each of the scales tested in this study are in Table 2, along with distribution charts in Figures 1-4 below.

## Table 2. Scale Distributions

|  | Muslim Identity | American Identity | Familial Involvement | Intent to Marry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N       Valid | 962 | 962 | 962 | 962 |
| Mean | 24.80 | 22.38 | 9.83 | 7.64 |
| Median | 26 | 23 | 10 | 8 |
| Std. Deviation | 4.300 | 5.355 | 2.915 | 2.003 |
| Minimum | 6 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Maximum | 30 | 30 | 20 | 10 |

## Figure 1. Muslim Identity Scale Distribution
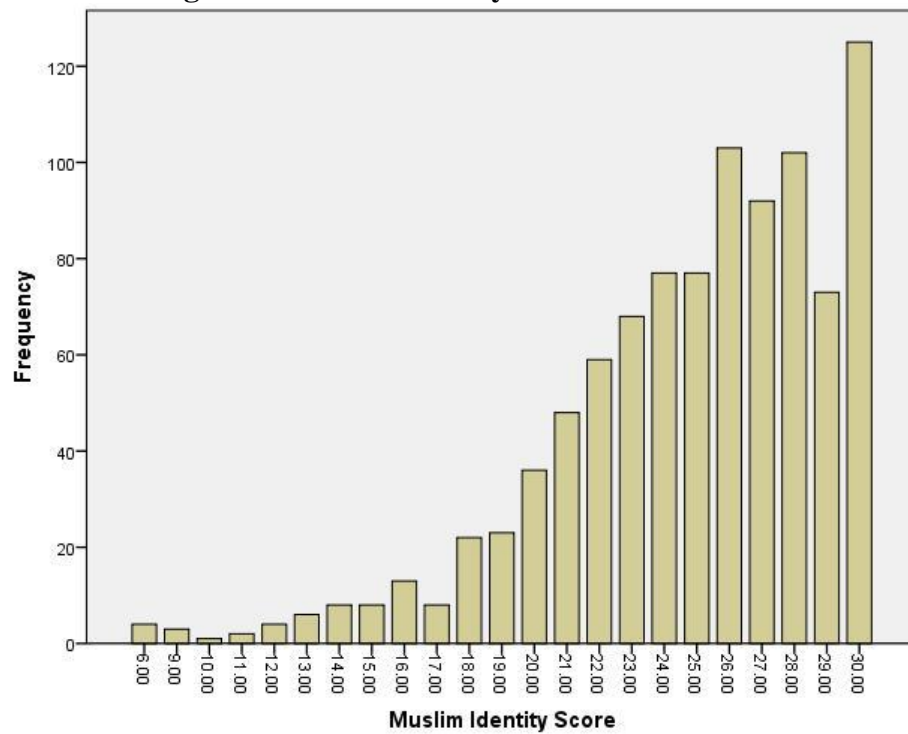
**Figure 2. American Identity Scale Distribution**
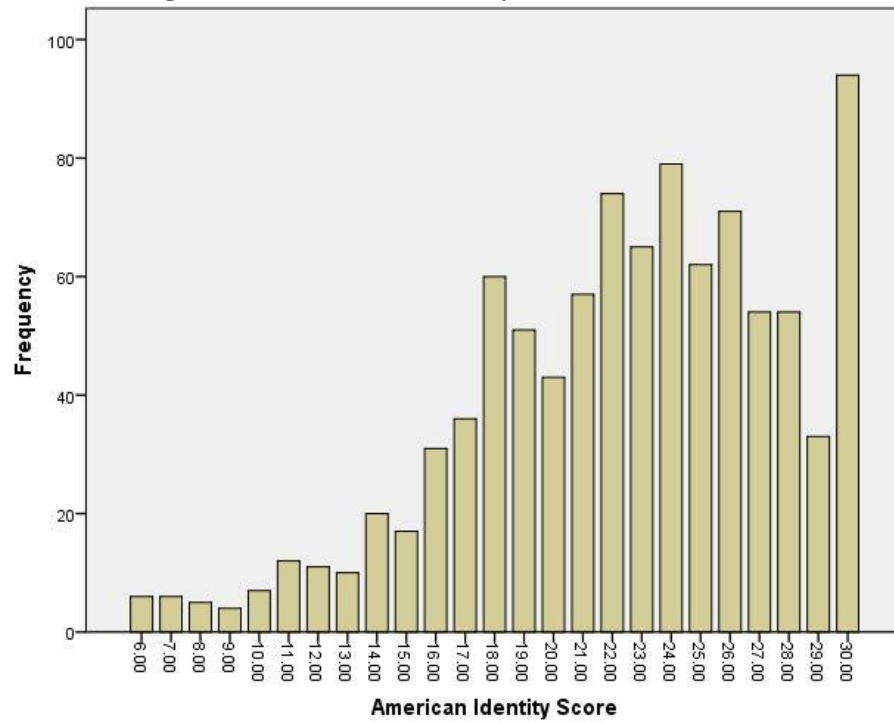


**Figure 3. Familial Involvement Scale Distribution**



43
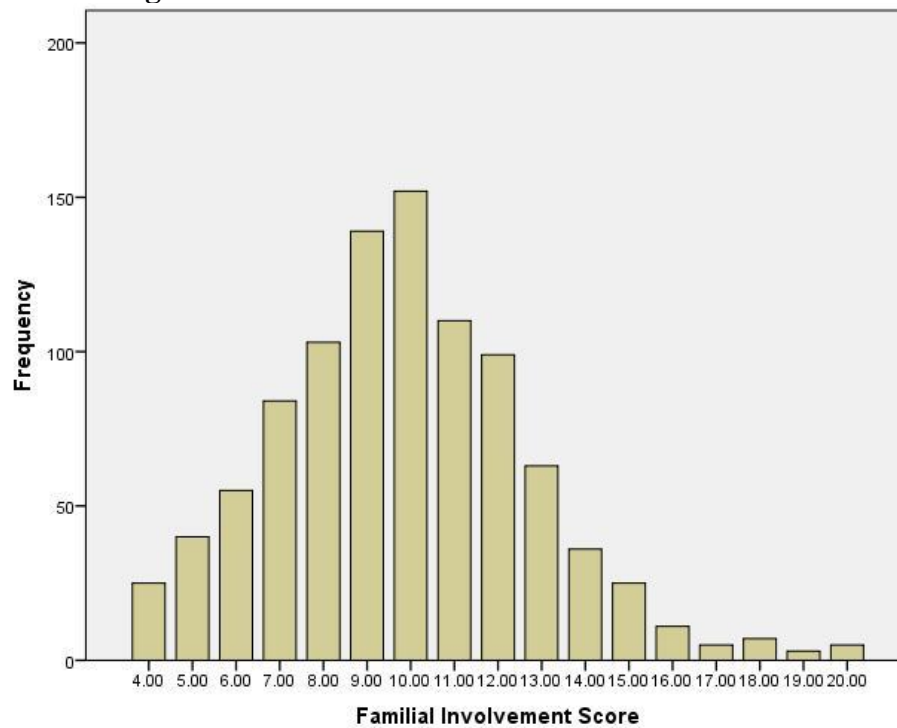
**Figure 4. Intent to Marry Scale Distribution**
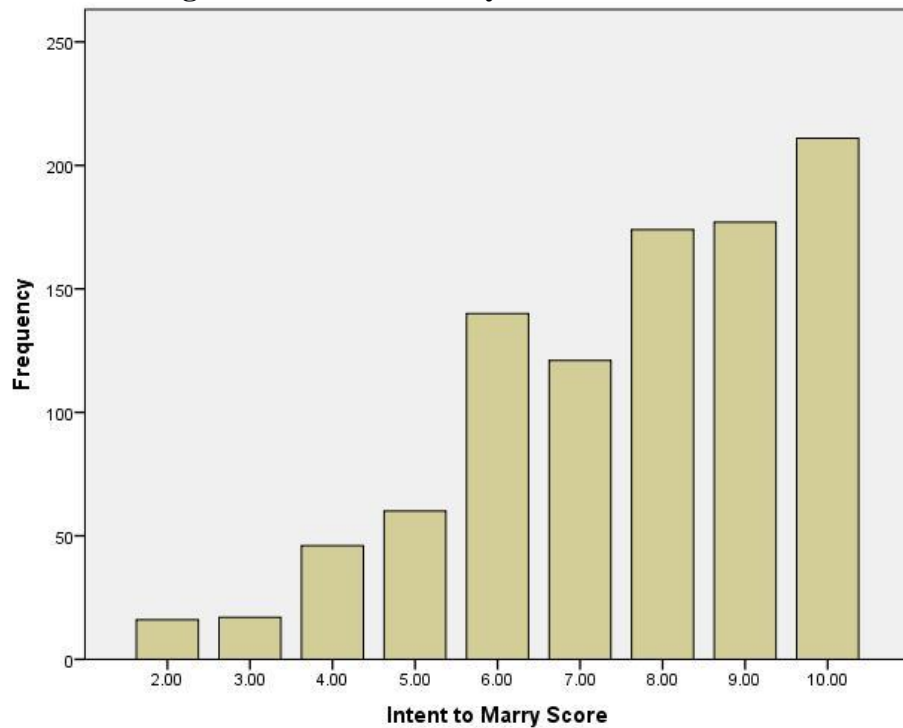


Beyond looking at the general distribution of scores for Muslims preferred involvement of family in marital decision-making and willingness to be in relationships without considering marriage, a deeper understanding may be gained by looking at response distribution on individual items (see Tables 2 & 3). Descriptive statistics indicate that parental approval of choice of marriage partner is highly important, with a majority (52.5%) indicating it is either "absolutely" or "strongly" important. Interestingly however, on average, respondents are only moderately comfortable speaking to their parents about romantic interests with 46.1% saying they are "not at all" or only "slightly" comfortable. Additionally, a large majority (75.5%) report that they either "not at all" or only "slightly" rely on parents to find a suitable partner. In other words, while parental approval remains significant in marital

decision-making for most Muslims, the majority have moved away from direct involvement by parents in the process.

Turning to willingness to be involved in non-marriage bound relationships, it appears that marriage is a very strong consideration in cross-gender relationships. Individuals are only moderately comfortable entering a close friendship with someone of the opposite gender that they do not intend to marry, with 43.9% saying they are "not at all" or "slightly" comfortable versus 31.7% saying they are "strongly" or "absolutely" comfortable. This figure drops considerably for romantic relationships, with 84.5% indicating they are either "not at all" or "slightly" comfortable entering a relationship with someone they do not intend to marry.

**Table 3. Familial Involvement**

|  | Not at all | Slightly | Moderately | Strongly | Absolutely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My parents' approval of my choice of marriage partner is important to me. | 6.9% | 15.3% | 25.4% | 33.1% | 19.4% |
| I feel comfortable talking to my parents about my romantic interests. | 23.0% | 23.1% | 29.2% | 12.2% | 12.6% |
| I mostly rely on my parents to find me a suitable marriage partner. | 50.4% | 25.1% | 18.6% | 4.2% | 1.8% |
| My extended family's opinion matters in my choice of marriage partner. | 49.9% | 23.6% | 17.2% | 5.7% | 3.6% |

**Table 4. Intent to Marry**

|  | Not at all | Slightly | Moderately | Strongly | Absolutely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am willing to become close friends with a person of the opposite gender that I don't intend to marry. | 23.1% | 20.8% | 24.4% | 13.7% | 18.0% |
| I am willing to enter into a romantic relationship with someone that I don't intend to marry. | 69.5% | 14.7% | 10.8% | 2.9% | 2.1% |

To address the second objective of this study, separate regression analyses were run to examine the relative contribution of Muslim and American identity to familial involvement and intent to marry. Our hypotheses for the second objective are the following:

1. The stronger one's Muslim identity, (a) the higher the familial involvement in mate selection and (b) the higher the importance given to the intention for marriage in cross-gender relationships.

2. Conversely, the stronger one's American identity, (a) the lower the familial involvement in mate selection and (b) the lower the importance given to the intention for marriage in cross-gender relationships.

Results indicated that regression models are significant for both familial involvement (F(2, 959) = 43.638, $p < .001$) and intent to marry (F(2, 959) = 36.490, $p < .001$). Both hypotheses with respect to Muslim identity were supported, with an increase in Muslim identity predicting an increase in familial involvement ($\beta = .257$, $t = 8.278$, p < .001) and an increase in intent to marry ($\beta = .247$, $t = 7.908$, p < .001). However, with respect to American identity, the first hypothesis was proven incorrect. It was hypothesized that increase in American identity would predict a decrease in familial involvement. Instead, increase in American identity predicted an increase in familial involvement ($\beta = 1.07$, $t = 3.455$, $p = .001$). The second hypothesis was supported, with American identity predicting a decrease in intent to marry ($\beta = -.126$, $t = -4.027$, p < .001).

**Table 5. Multiple Regression – Familial Involvement**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
| 1 | (Constant) | 4.196 | .619 | | 6.776 | .000 |
| | Muslim Identity | .174 | .021 | .257 | 8.278 | .000 |
| | American Identity | .058 | .017 | .107 | 3.455 | .001 |

**Table 6. Multiple Regression – Intent to Marry**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
| 1 | (Constant) | 5.837 | .428 | | 13.627 | .000 |
| | Muslim Identity | .115 | .015 | .247 | 7.908 | .000 |
| | American Identity | -.047 | .012 | -.126 | -4.027 | .000 |

The third objective of this study was to do an exploratory analysis for moderating effects of age and gender on the above-mentioned relationships. This test for moderation was achieved using hierarchical multiple regressions. Two hierarchical multiple regressions were run: one with familial involvement as the dependent variable, and the other with intent to marry as the dependent variable. Education and years residing in the U.S. were the control variables entered in step 1 of the hierarchical regression. Both Muslim identity and American identity were entered in step 2, and then age and gender were entered in step 3. Finally, in step 4, four interaction variables to test for moderation were created and included. This was done by multiplying age with Muslim identity, age with American identity, gender with Muslim identity, and gender with American identity.

While the overall model was significant (F(10, 848) = 13.532, $p < .001$), an examination of the variables, however, indicated that neither age nor gender were significant predictors of the relationship between Muslim identity and familial involvement, or between American identity and familial involvement. One of the

control variables in step 1, years in the U.S., was found to be significantly related to familial involvement, with greater time in the U.S. predicting less family involvement ($\beta = -.180$, $t = -5.333$, p $< .001$). However, this relationship was no longer significant in step 3 after accounting for age and gender ($\beta = -.067$, $t = -1.500$, p $= .134$). Age, however, was found to be a significant predictor of family involvement, with higher age associated with lower familial involvement ($\beta = -.177$, $t = -3.982$, p $< .001$). Muslim identity ($\beta = .246$, $t = 7.647$, p $< .001$) and American identity ($\beta = .133$, $t = 4.095$, p $< .001$) also both remained significant predictors of familial involvement in step 3, which accounted for age, gender, years in the U.S., and education.

Similar to familial involvement, while the overall model was significant ($F(10, 848) = 9.704$, $p < 001$), no significant interaction effects were found in the second hierarchical multiple regression with respect to intent to marry. This indicated that neither age nor gender are moderators of the relationship between Muslim identity and intent to marry, or between American identity and intent to marry. In step 1, neither of the control variables (i.e. education and years in the U.S.) were found to be significant predictors of intent to marry. Muslim identity ($\beta = .241$, $t = 7.324$, p $< .001$) and American identity ($\beta = -.121$, $t = -3.665$, p $< .001$) did remain significant predictors of intent to marry at step 3. Additionally, both age ($\beta = .099$, $t = 2.165$, p $= .031$) and gender ($\beta = .154$, $t = 4.626$, p $< .001$) are significant predictors of intent to marry in step 3, with an increase in age corresponding to increase in intent to marry, and being female corresponding to a higher value on intent to marry. These variables also were not significant in the full model once the interaction terms were added.

**Table 7. Hierarchical Multiple Regression – Familial Involvement**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
| 1 | (Constant) | 10.449 | .423 | | 24.693 | .000 |
| | Education | .036 | .057 | .021 | .626 | .532 |
| | Years in the US | -.058 | .011 | -.180 | -5.333 | .000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 4.427 | .787 | | 5.628 | .000 |
| | Education | .063 | .055 | .037 | 1.143 | .253 |
| | Years in the US | -.060 | .010 | -.186 | -5.700 | .000 |
| | Muslim Identity | .171 | .022 | .248 | 7.629 | .000 |
| | American Identity | .072 | .018 | .133 | 4.062 | .000 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 5.726 | .930 | | 6.159 | .000 |
| | Education | .065 | .055 | .038 | 1.189 | .235 |
| | Years in the US | -.022 | .014 | -.067 | -1.500 | .134 |
| | Muslim Identity | .170 | .022 | .246 | 7.647 | .000 |
| | American Identity | .072 | .018 | .133 | 4.095 | .000 |
| | Age | -.070 | .017 | -.177 | -3.982 | .000 |
| | Gender | .194 | .189 | .034 | 1.026 | .305 |
| 4 | (Constant) | .349 | 3.480 | | .100 | .920 |
| | Education | .068 | .055 | .040 | 1.229 | .219 |
| | Years in the US | -.020 | .014 | -.061 | -1.362 | .174 |
| | Muslim Identity | .292 | .113 | .424 | 2.595 | .010 |
| | American Identity | .175 | .092 | .322 | 1.902 | .057 |
| | Age | .078 | .088 | .199 | .888 | .375 |
| | Gender | .727 | 1.328 | .126 | .548 | .584 |
| | Muslim Identity X Age | -.004 | .003 | -.302 | -1.361 | .174 |

50

| | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| American Identity X Age | -.001 | .044 | -.003 | -.012 | .991 |
| Muslim Identity X Gender | -.002 | .002 | -.190 | -.980 | .327 |
| American Identity X Gender | -.023 | .035 | -.111 | -.668 | .504 |

### Table 8. Hierarchical Multiple Regression – Intent to Marry

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
| 1 | (Constant) | 7.477 | .295 | | 25.386 | .000 |
| | Education | .002 | .040 | .001 | .042 | .966 |
| | Years in the US | .011 | .008 | .051 | 1.485 | .138 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 5.356 | .552 | | 9.703 | .000 |
| | Education | .045 | .039 | .039 | 1.160 | .246 |
| | Years in the US | .017 | .007 | .078 | 2.336 | .020 |
| | Muslim Identity | .114 | .016 | .242 | 7.268 | .000 |
| | American Identity | -.049 | .012 | -.132 | -3.949 | .000 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 3.930 | .651 | | 6.038 | .000 |
| | Education | .032 | .038 | .027 | .828 | .408 |
| | Years in the US | -.001 | .010 | -.004 | -.083 | .934 |
| | Muslim Identity | .114 | .016 | .241 | 7.324 | .000 |
| | American Identity | -.045 | .012 | -.121 | -3.665 | .000 |
| | Age | .026 | .012 | .099 | 2.165 | .031 |
| | Gender | .611 | .132 | .154 | 4.626 | .000 |
| 4 | (Constant) | 4.700 | 2.434 | | 1.931 | .054 |
| | Education | .025 | .039 | .021 | .634 | .526 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years in the US | -.001 | .010 | -.003 | -.055 | .956 |
| Muslim Identity | .074 | .079 | .156 | .936 | .350 |
| American Identity | -.030 | .064 | -.081 | -.468 | .640 |
| Age | .016 | .061 | .058 | .256 | .798 |
| Gender | .420 | .928 | .106 | .452 | .651 |
| Muslim Identity X Age | .002 | .002 | .255 | 1.127 | .260 |
| American Identity X Age | -.021 | .031 | -.148 | -.675 | .500 |
| Muslim Identity X Gender | -.002 | .002 | -.256 | -1.299 | .194 |
| American Identity X Gender | .032 | .025 | .224 | 1.320 | .187 |

*Secondary Analysis*

After completing the proposed analyses for this study, it was decided to conduct an additional secondary analysis investigating the combined effect of both Muslim identity and American identity on familial involvement and intent to marry in mate selection. Previous regression analyses revealed significant relationships between each individual identity and both familial involvement and intent to marry. However, these did not look at the combined effect of both identities on one's position with respect to these mate selection variables.

To explore this question, respondents were categorized into one of four groups depending on the strength of both their Muslim and American identity. The four categories were: (1) high Muslim identity and high American identity (n = 322), (2)

high Muslim identity and low American identity (n = 250), (3) low Muslim identity and high American identity (n = 190), and (4) low Muslim identity and low American identity (n = 200). Categories were determined by whether a respondent fell above or below the mean on each identity variable. Once all respondents were assigned to a group, two ANOVA analyses were conducted to assess for significant differences between groups with respect to (1) Familial Involvement and (2) Intent to Marry. Finally, after ANOVA analyses were conducted, a follow-up Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (Tukey's HSD) post-hoc test was run. While an ANOVA test will state if there is a significant difference in means between groups, it does not state which specific groups are significantly different from one another. Tukey's HSD can do this by making specific comparisons between groups.

Results of ANOVA indicated significant group differences for both Familial Involvement ($F(3,958) = 28.343$, $p < .001$) and Intent to Marry ($F(3,958) = 23.211$, $p < .001$). When analyzed further with Tukey's HSD, it was found that all relationships between groups were significantly different, with the exception of one – Low Muslim/Low American and Low Muslim/High American. The differences between these two groups were not significant for both Familial Involvement and Intent to Marry. The one trait that both of these groups have in common is having a low Muslim identity.

**Table 9. Tukey's HSD Test – Differences in Means Between Groups**

| Dependent Variable | (I) Group | (J) Group | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Familial Involvement | (1) High Muslim & High American | 2 | .71061* | .23583 | .014 |
| | | 3 | 1.77208* | .25594 | .000 |
| | | 4 | 2.02761* | .25188 | .000 |
| | (2) High Muslim & Low American | 1 | -.71061* | .23583 | .014 |
| | | 3 | 1.06147* | .26927 | .001 |
| | | 4 | 1.31700* | .26541 | .000 |
| | (3) Low Muslim & High American | 1 | -1.77208* | .25594 | .000 |
| | | 2 | -1.06147* | .26927 | .001 |
| | | 4 | .25553 | .28343 | .804 |
| | (4) Low Muslim & Low American | 1 | -2.02761* | .25188 | .000 |
| | | 2 | -1.31700* | .26541 | .000 |
| | | 3 | -.25553 | .28343 | .804 |
| Intent to Marry | (1) High Muslim & High American | 2 | -.55029* | .16324 | .004 |
| | | 3 | .85414* | .17716 | .000 |
| | | 4 | .58071* | .17435 | .005 |
| | (2) High Muslim & Low American | 1 | .55029* | .16324 | .004 |
| | | 3 | 1.40442* | .18638 | .000 |
| | | 4 | 1.13100* | .18372 | .000 |
| | (3) Low Muslim & High American | 1 | -.85414* | .17716 | .000 |
| | | 2 | -1.40442* | .18638 | .000 |
| | | 4 | -.27342 | .19619 | .504 |
| | (4) Low Muslim & Low American | 1 | -.58071* | .17435 | .005 |
| | | 2 | -1.13100* | .18372 | .000 |
| | | 3 | .27342 | .19619 | .504 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The fact that all differences between groups were significant except between groups three and four indicates that if one has a low Muslim identity, then their level

American identity does not have much bearing on familial involvement or intention for marriage in mate selection. Looking at the specific means for Familial Involvement, the High Muslim/High American group has the highest average, while Low Muslim/Low American has the lowest. With respect to Intent to Marry, the High Muslim/Low American group has the highest average, and Low Muslim/High American has the lowest average.

**Table 10. Group Means for Familial Involvement**

|  | Low Muslim | High Muslim |
|---|---|---|
| **Low American** | 8.76 | 10.07 |
| **High American** | 9.01 | 10.78 |

**Table 11. Group Means for Intent to Marry**

|  | Low Muslim | High Muslim |
|---|---|---|
| **Low American** | 7.21 | 8.34 |
| **High American** | 6.93 | 7.79 |

# Chapter 5: Discussion

The aim of this study was to understand both the state of Muslim American mate selection as it stands today, as well as what predictors may influence it. Whereas American mate selection norms prioritize individual autonomy and development of love, traditional Muslim societies prioritize needs of the family and consider marriage a prerequisite to cross-gender relationships. As a result, Muslims in the U.S. may face conflict between societal norms and the values of their religion with respect to mate selection. Previous studies have hinted at some of the attitudes Muslims in America hold, along with potential predictors. However, these studies have all been qualitative with the exception of one which was conducted over 25 years ago.

This study sought to test some the findings of these previous studies by conducting a large-scale quantitative survey, which collected a total of 962 responses. The primary objective was to assess the extent to which Muslims in the U.S.: (1) wish to involve family in the mate selection process, and (2) consider intention for marriage an important prerequisite for cross-gender relationships. Further, it was hypothesized that Muslim identity would be positively associated with familial involvement and consideration of marriage in cross-gender relationships. The opposite relationship was predicted for American identity, in that it would be negatively associated with both familial involvement and consideration for marriage in cross-gender relationships. Finally, an exploratory analysis was conducted to assess for any moderating effects of gender and age on these relationships.

Desired family involvement was found to have the lowest relative mean with respect to the range of scores of all the measured scales, with an average score of 9.83 in a range of scores from 4 to 20. Intent to marry, on the other hand, was distributed more to the right indicating relatively high importance of intent for marriage before becoming involved in a relationship. This scale had a mean of 7.64 in a range of scores from 2 to 10. Results from the identity measures also showed that most respondents are relatively strong in both Muslim identity (mean = 24.8; range = 6-30) and American identity (mean = 22.4; range = 6-30).

Results confirmed our hypothesis of a significant positive relationship between Muslim identity and both desired familial involvement and an intention to marry being part of any cross-gender relationship. However, hypotheses with respect to American identity were only partially correct. While American identity was indeed negatively associated with intent to marry needing to precede a relationship as predicted, it was positively correlated with the desire for family members to be involved in the mate selection process, contrary to our original hypothesis.

It was found that neither age nor gender were significant moderators of any of the aforementioned relationships. However, in doing these analyses, independent main effects were found for both age and gender, such that older respondents expressed a weaker desire for family members to be involved in the mate selection process and believed an intention to marry was more important before becoming involved in a relationship. Additionally, intention to marry before becoming involved in relationships was more important to females than males.

Finally, a secondary analysis was conducted to explore whether the combination of both Muslim and America identity predicted desired family involvement in the mate selection process and the importance of intention to marry in cross gender relationships. Each of the relationships between the four groups was found to have significant differences in mean with the exception of one. Those with low Muslim/high American identity did not have a significant difference from those in the low Muslim/low American identity group. This was true for both familial involvement and intent to marry, and indicates that level of American identity does not make much difference if one has a low level of Muslim identity. American identity matters in mate selection processes only when one also has a strong Muslim identity.

*Limitations*

Prior to a detailed discussion of the findings, it is worthwhile to first mention two main limitations of the present study. The first is that this sample may not be a true representation of the general Muslim American population. Because this sample was recruited from a mobile dating app, the results would only be from individuals that felt comfortable using non-traditional mechanisms for finding a romantic partner. This may also explain why a large part of our sample scored highly on both Muslim identity and American identity – a strong American identity explained by their willingness to use a dating app, and strong Muslim identity in that the app specifically targeted at Muslims. However, it should be noted that a study by Pew found 89% of Muslims saying they are both proud to be Muslim and proud to be American (Pew

Research Center, 2017). Nevertheless, this present study would not capture those who solely rely on more traditional methods of finding a spouse, such as through marriages arranged by parents or set by personal and family connections. Additionally, another factor that may influence the generalizability of this study is that this was a highly educated sample with three-quarters of participants holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Though it should be mentioned that a 2010 survey had found Muslims in the U.S. to be the third most highly educated religious group in the U.S., after Hindus and Jews (Pew Research Center, 2016). However, the respondents in this study even surpassed the Pew study findings of Muslims in the U.S. (aged 25 or older) reporting some form of higher education (84% to 54%).

The second limitation of this study was the robustness of the measures that were developed for familial involvement and intent to marry. Cronbach's alphas revealed that the scales were not as rich as desired. While familial involvement was acceptable, intent to marry was not until one question was dropped, likely due to nuances in the wording of the question. While the remaining questions still inquired directly about the importance of marriage in cross-gender relationships, it resulted in a scale that is based on only two questions.

*Discussion of Findings*

Familial Involvement and Intent to Marry

Results from this survey show that parental approval in one's choice of romantic partner remains important to Muslims living in the United States in 2018.

Yet, this is the only statement in the Familial Involvement Scale that a majority of respondents "absolutely" or "strongly" agree with. The response distribution of the remaining three statements lean more towards disagreement than agreement. For example, most disagree with the statement that extended family opinion matters in their choice of partner. Moreover, while parental approval is important, only 25 percent of subjects reported being "strongly" or "absolutely" comfortable talking to their parents about their romantic interests. Nearly half reported being "not at all" or "slightly" comfortable with this. It may be that this lack of communication is due to uncertainty over expectations in the mate selection process.

Possibly of most significance is that reliance on parents for mate selection is very low. In responses to the statement, "I mostly rely on my parents to find me a partner," half of respondents stated "not at all" and another quarter stated "slightly". This stands in sharp contrast to findings by Ba-Yunus in his 1991 survey of 245 second generation Muslims in the U.S. and Canada. At the time, 77 percent of subjects said their parents played the primary role in choosing their future spouse. This says that in what has been just over a quarter century, relying on parents or other family members for assistance in finding a spouse has drastically shifted.

While no quantitative studies have been conducted on this topic since Ba-Yunus' (1991) initial work, these data parallel the findings of Zaidi and Shuraydi's (2002) qualitative study of Pakistani Muslim American females. Their study found that most spoke of either modifying or replacing the arranged marriage system with one that permits more freedom of choice and interaction between individuals. This suggests that these shifts were likely already well underway at the turn of the century,

and are now substantiated quantitatively almost two decades later. The question remains, however, as to what this new system looks like now that individuals are no longer relying on parents to find their spouse. While women in Zaidi and Shuraydi's (2002) qualitative study wanted more freedom and respondents from the present study showed low family involvement, they also still were not willing to explore relationships if there was no assumption of marriage.

Therefore, according to the results from this study, it does not seem likely that casual dating or hooking-up would be a part of this new system for most Muslim Americans. Seventy percent of subjects said they are "not at all" willing to enter a romantic relationship with someone that they do not intend to marry, and this number jumps up to 84 percent when adding in those that only responded "slightly" to the same statement. Thus, the intention for marriage is still a strong consideration for the vast majority when deciding to enter into a relationship.

Ba-Yunus' did not inquire about intent for marriage in his 1991 study, but he did ask about frequency of dating. Dating and intent to marry are different concepts so they cannot be directly compared. Nonetheless, it may be insightful to note that in Ba-Yunus' study, 18 percent cited at least some level of openness to dating for reasons apart from marriage. In the present study, when also considering those that responded "slightly", 31 percent cited at least some willingness to enter a romantic relationship with someone that they do not intend to marry. This may suggest a gradual decrease in the importance of marriage when entering romantic relationships, though intent to marry still remains a strong factor for the majority of respondents 27 years later.

61

It is also interesting to note is that even when it comes to platonic relationships, a large minority (43.9%) reported unwillingness or a strong reluctance to form close friendships with people of the opposite gender that they do not intend to marry. This suggests that many Muslims in the U.S. believe in some degree of separation between genders when it comes to interactions and relations. It would be interesting to discover if these figures change over the coming years and decades. Although gender segregation is significant for this population, Zaidi and Shuraydi's (2002) study reported women wanted more interaction between genders. If consideration of marriage in romantic relationships is declining, then this trend would likely first be reflected in close friendships.

Identity as Predictors

The extent to which one strongly identifies as a Muslim and as an American were both found to be significant predictors of familial involvement. This suggests that familial involvement is thought of as an important value of being Muslim. However, what is interesting is that American identity was also positively correlated with familial involvement, meaning that for Muslims in the U.S., being American is not associated with removing parents from the equation.

As both identities were positively related to familial involvement, it may be that having a strong sense of identity in general is associated to greater familial involvement in mate selection. Though self-esteem was not measured, perhaps identity reflects one's comfort with oneself and sense of security in the groups to which one belongs, which in turn allows one to be comfortable involving their family

62

in the mate selection process. However, though Muslim identity and American identity are both positively correlated with familial involvement, and that most respondents scored highly on both identities, familial involvement in mate selection has still drastically declined in recent decades. This indicates that there are other factors beyond identity that are contributing to the shifts in mate selection practices and attitudes of Muslims in the U.S.

With respect to intent to marry, Muslim identity was found to be positively associated with intent to marry, while American identity was negatively associated. This suggests that being Muslim is associated to placing importance on marriage in cross-gender relationships, while being American is associated to allowing for more relaxed interactions and relationships with the opposite gender. The significance of each of these relationships, including those with familial involvement, proves that the strength of one's identities is associated to the norms and values that one adopts in the process of finding a romantic partner.

The interesting question then becomes, where does this leave those who have both high Muslim and high American identity in that they may ascribe to competing cultural values around mate selection? This is particularly relevant as nearly 9 in 10 Muslims are proud to be both Muslim and American (Pew Research Center, 2017). These data seem to suggest that while having this dual identity may not cause any intrapersonal conflict with regards to the involvement of family, it may be problematic as individuals go about trying to meet and interact with potential spouses. On the one hand, Islamic identity would promote a focus on marriage in cross-gender relationships. On the other hand, strong American identity would encourage more

relaxed cross-gender interactions and relationships. And so, individuals strong in both

identities would experience a tension between these two competing sets of values.

The current state of mate selection among this high Muslim- high American identity

group will be discussed later in the thesis following the review of the findings.

Age and Gender

Findings from the moderation analysis indicate that age and gender do not

influence the strength of these relationships. This was an exploratory analysis meant

to investigate the role that age and gender could play, and it is not entirely surprising

that they do not influence the relationship between identity and mate selection

practices. However, there were significant findings with respect to the direct

relationship age and gender have on some mate selection practices. For example, a

similar finding between Ba-Yunus' (1991) study and the present study is that both

studies found females to be more traditional in mate selection practices than males. In

Ba-Yunus' study, females were significantly less likely to engage in dating, and in the

present study, females were significantly more likely to consider intention for

marriage when entering romantic relationships than were males. And indeed, previous

qualitative studies reported immigrant women felt high pressure to adopt the

traditional expectations of families and their culture, which was true for Muslim and

Non-Muslim communities alike (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Netting, 2006).

With respect to age, it was found that a desire for family involvement in mate

selection was lower for older respondents. This is not surprising, as Haqqani (2013)

had reported that more control over mate selection is given to older Muslims, which

64

he states may be due to the fact that as people grow older and options for potential mates decrease, parents decrease their regulation over the process. Moreover, the importance of the possibility for marriage in cross-gender relationships is stronger for older respondents. This is understandable, as older individuals would be more likely to consider marriage a priority. Additionally, it is possible that intent to marry is higher with age due to older individuals holding more traditional values and beliefs around mate selection.

### *State of Muslim Mate Selection in the U.S.*

To date, this is one of the largest empirical studies conducted on the Muslims family in the United States. Limitations of this study should be kept in mind, particularly that only individuals that feel comfortable using non-traditional methods of finding a partner, such as through a dating app, were surveyed. Nevertheless, this survey seems to suggest substantial shifts in Muslim American attitudes in mate selection since the last empirical study conducted in 1991.

As recent as 30 years ago, arranged marriages were the norm for South Asian Muslims in North America (Qureshi, 1991). Today, Muslims in America expect more freedom of choice and autonomy in the process of finding a spouse. However, relationship formation for this population requires a focus on marriage, which is not a typical feature of casual dating for the American population at large. Based on our findings, it seems that Muslim Americans would engage in some form of courtship to accommodate these needs. Traditional courtship is a model of mate selection that

65

allows more freedom for individuals to get to know each other compared to arranged marriage, but is still chaperoned by family and retains a focus on getting married. However, the degree of parental oversight in the process, a hallmark of courtship, still remains in question as nearly half of Muslims in this study reported discomfort talking to their parents about their romantic interests.

It seems that Muslims in the U.S. do not want to rely on parents to find their future spouse, but also cannot turn to practices in the general American population as an alternative. As a result, these Muslims must form their own model of mate selection, and many are reporting challenges in finding opportunities to meet potential partners. Such challenges in getting married is a growing topic of concern in the Muslim American community[8] and of interest to the population at large. For example, efforts of marriage-age Muslims in the U.S. to find alternative models of getting married has been the focus of recent articles in news outlets such as The Washington Post (Hauslohner, 2018). Online dating and matrimonial sites for Muslims, and now mobile apps like Muzmatch (the platform used to recruit participants for this study), are developments that emerged to meet this growing need. Other mediums include professional matchmaking services and matrimonial banquets where single Muslims quickly meet other singles in a supervised setting, which was described as "a Halal form of speed-dating" by one participant (Hauslohner, 2018). However, even with these new alternatives, many are still reporting difficulties in finding a spouse for

---

[8] Dr. Mona Amer, in a presentation at the 2018 Muslim Mental Health Conference in Washington, DC, stated that after a community dialogue, it was discovered that marriage in the Muslim community was the most popular social issue that community members wanted to be addressed.

marriage. Thus, it seems there are still unsolved issues in the current model that need to be addressed to meets the needs of the Muslim American population. Whether the Muslims in this study are representative of the majority or are a specific subset, there is clearly a need for a form of mate selection that accommodates the values and needs of many Muslims in the West.

*Recommendations for Future Research and for Muslim Families and Communities*

Further research is needed to continue exploring the changing attitudes and practices of this population. Apart from mate selection practices, there may also be shifts in preferred traits in one's choice of spouse. Understanding what these are and how they are different from the past would also shed light on changing attitudes and ideals in mate selection.

Additionally, it would be of interest to see how these and other trends vary across different countries. Are the trends noted in this study isolated to the U.S. and possibly other Western countries, or do they also stand true for other parts of the world? It may be the case that dramatic shifts in mate selection are occurring throughout different parts of the world that relied on more traditional approaches. There is also a need for ongoing qualitative research studies that explore the dynamics of mate selection, both in attitudes and actual practices. Such studies would ideally shed light on not only what practices are being employed by Muslims, but also the challenges and opportunities that come with different methods and strategies.

Though there may be those that are comfortable with either arranged marriages or casual dating, there is clearly a substantial population of Muslims that would not be comfortable with either of these approaches. Considering these findings, it is clear that the Muslim American community needs to work to create a courting tradition that is compatible with the realities and expectations of being a Muslim in the U.S. As the standard model of mate selection is in a transition, it is expected that there would be some uncertainty over expectations, as the rules and methods are changing and have not been clearly established. Thus, it is important to increase the dialogue around marriage and how it should be approached and achieved. We recommend that this occur within both families and community organizations, and that they make this conversation a comfortable topic for people to participate in. Doing this will make it easier for individuals to navigate the mate selection process, thus making expectations clear around what needs to be done and how challenges can be overcome. In due time, this would allow them to establish a model of mate selection that is mindful of their uniquely Muslim-American values.

# Appendices

**Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire**

*Demographic Questions*

Age:                          Gender: (Male/Female)

Religious Sect: Sunni/Shia/No preference/Other _____

Highest Level of Education: (Drop Down)
      [Some high school; High school; GED; Some college;
      Trade/technical/vocational training; Associate degree; Bachelor's degree;
      Master's degree; Doctorate degree]

Which of the following options best describes you? Drop Down
      [African; African American; Arab; South Asian; East Asian; Caucasian;
      Hispanic; Other _____]

Indicate the generation that best applies to you:
      a) 1st generation = I was born in another country
      b) 2nd generation = I was born in the U.S., one or both parents were born in
      another country
      c) 3rd generation = I was born in the U.S., both parents were born in the U.S.,
      and at least one of my grandparents was born in another country
      d) 4th generation = I was born in the U.S., both parents were born in the U.S.,
      and all grandparents were also born in the U.S.
      e) I don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information

If you were born in another country, please indicate how many years have you lived
in the U.S.: _____

*Familial Involvement and Intention to Marry at Onset of Relationship*

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

| | Not at all 1 | Slightly 2 | Moderately 3 | Strongly 4 | Absolutely 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel comfortable talking to my parents about my romantic interests | | | | | |
| At least some of my extended family would be aware if I were to enter into a romantic relationship | | | | | |
| I mostly rely on my parents to find me a suitable partner | | | | | |
| My parents' approval of my choice of partner is important to me | | | | | |
| I am willing to become close friends with a person of the opposite gender that I don't intend to marry | | | | | |
| I am willing to enter into a romantic relationship with someone that I don't intend to marry | | | | | |
| I would only enter into a romantic relationship if marriage is a realistic outcome | | | | | |

*Measure of Muslim Identity*

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Neutral 3 | Somewhat agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel close to other Muslims | | | | | |
| 2. I have a strong sense of belonging to other Muslims | | | | | |
| 3. If I were to describe myself to someone, one of the first things that I would say is that I am Muslim | | | | | |
| 4. I am happy that I am Muslim | | | | | |
| 5. I am proud to be Muslim | | | | | |
| 6. I feel good about Muslims | | | | | |

*Measure of Religiosity*

These questions are about your religion and how you feel about it or react to it.
Indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
Use the numbers given below to indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with
each statement

|  | Not at all 1 | Slightly 2 | Moderately 3 | Strongly 4 | Absolutely 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The place of worship of my religion is important to me |  |  |  |  |  |
| I believe prayer is an inspiring practice |  |  |  |  |  |
| God is not real to me |  |  |  |  |  |
| I do not participate in rituals of my religion |  |  |  |  |  |
| My belief in God is important to me |  |  |  |  |  |

*Measure of American Identity*

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel close to other Americans | | | | | |
| 2. I have a strong sense of belonging to other Americans | | | | | |
| 3. If I were to describe myself to someone, one of the first things that I would say is that I am American | | | | | |
| 4. I am happy that I am American | | | | | |
| 5. I am proud to be American | | | | | |
| 6. I feel good about Americans | | | | | |

# Bibliography

Abu-Rayya, H.M., Abu-Rayya, M.H., & Khalil, M. (2009). The Multi-Religion Identity Measure: A new scale for use with diverse religions. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health, 4*(2), 124-138.

Al-Johar, D. (2005). Muslim marriages in America: Reflecting new identities. *The Muslim World, 95*(4), 557-574.

Amer, M.M., & Bagasra, A. (2013). Psychological research with Muslim Americans in the age of Islamophobia. *American Psychologist, 68*(3), 134-144.

Bailey, B. L. (1988). *From front porch to back seat: Courtship in twentieth century America.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Badahdah, A.M., & Tiemann, K.A. (2005). Mate selection criteria among Muslims living in America. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 26*(5), 432-440.

Ba-Yunus, I. (1975). *Muslims in North America: Problems and prospects.* Plainfield, IN: American Trust Publications.

Ba-Yunus, I. (1991). Muslims in North America: Mate selection as an indicator of change. In E. H. Waugh, S. M. Abu-Laban, & R. B. Qureshi (Eds.), *Muslim families in North America* (pp. 232-249). Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press.

Bellah, R., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). *Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in America.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2001). *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Bogle, K. (2008). *Hooking up: Sex, dating, and relationships on campus.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Buss, D.M. (1989) Sex differences in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypotheses tested in 37 cultures. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 12*, 1-49.

Cate, R. M., Lloyd, S. A. (1992). *Courtship.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cherlin, A. (2009). *The marriage-go-round: The state of marriage and the family in America today.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Cherlin, A. (2010). *Public and private families: An introduction* (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Coontz, S. (1988). *The social origins of private life: A history of American families 1600-1900.* New York, NY: Verso.

Dion, K. & Dion, K. (1996). Cultural perspectives on romantic love. *Personal Relationships* (3), 5-17.

Durkheim, E. (1933). *The division of labour in society* (G. Simpson, Trans.). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Friedan, B. (1963). *The feminine mystique.* New York: Norton.

Gadlin, H. (1977). Private lives and public order: A critical view of the history of intimate relations in the United States. In G. Levinger & H. Raush (Eds.),

*Close relationships: Perspectives on the meaning of intimacy* (pp. 33-72).

Amherst: University of Massacheusetts Press.

Glenn, N. D., & Coleman, M. (1988). *Family relations: A reader.* Belmont, CA:

Wadsworth.

Glenn, N., & Marquardt, E. (2001). Hooking up, hanging out, and hoping for Mr.

Right: College women on dating and mating today. *Institute for American*

*Values*.

Greven, P. (1970). *Four generations: Population, land, and family in Colonial*

*Andover, Massachusetts*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Hamon, R. R., & Ingoldsby, B. B. (2003). *Mate selection across cultures.* Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Haqqani, S. (2013). *Gendered expectations, personal choice, and social compatibility*

*in Western Muslim marriages.* Unpublished master's thesis, The University of

Texas, Austin, Texas.

Hauslohner, A. (2018, February 14). Muslim, millennial, and single: A generation

struggles to find love. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/muslim-millennial-and-single-a-generation-struggles-to-find-love/2018/02/14/0e81763a-085a-11e8-b48c-b07fea957bd5_story.html?utm_term=.6810dd0ab79e](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/muslim-millennial-and-single-a-generation-struggles-to-find-love/2018/02/14/0e81763a-085a-11e8-b48c-b07fea957bd5_story.html?utm_term=.6810dd0ab79e)

Hendrix, H. (1988). *Getting the love you want: A guide for couples.* New York:

Henry Holt & Co.

Hill, R. (1945). Campus values in mate selection. *Journal of Home Economics, 37*,

554-558.

Hollander, P. (2011). *Extravagant expectations: New ways to find romantic love in America.* Lanham, MD: Ivan R. Dee.

Hoyt, L.L. & Hudson, J.W. (1981). Personal characteristics important in mate preference among college students. *Social Behavior and Personality, 1*, 93-96.

Hudson, J.W. & Henze, L.F. (1969). Campus values in mate selection: a replication. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 31*, 772-775.

Ingoldsby, B.B. (2006). Mate selection and marriage. In B.B. Ingoldsby & S.D. Smith (Eds.), *Families in global and multicultural perspective* (2nd ed., pp.133-146). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kett, J. F. (2003). Reflections on the of adolescence in America. *The History of the Family, 8*(3), 355-373.

Lynd, R. S., & Lynd H. M. (1929). *Middletown: A study in contemporary American culture.* New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Company.

Lynd, R. S., & Lynd H. M. (1937). *Middletown in transition: A study in cultural conflicts.* New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Company.

Lyotard, J., (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington and B. Massumi, Trans.). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Malpas, S. (2005). *The postmodern.* New York, NY: Routledge.

McGinnis, R. (1958). Campus values in mate selection: a repeat study. *Social Forces, 36*, 368-373.

Medora, N. P. (2003). Mate selection in contemporary India: Love marriages versus

    arranged marriages. In R. R. Hamon & B. B. Ingoldsby, *Mate selection across*

    *cultures* (pp. 209-320). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Modell, J. (1983). Dating becomes the way of American youth. In D. Levine, L. P.

    Moch, L. A. Tilly, J. Modell, & E. Pleck (Eds.), *Essays on the family and*

    *historical change* (pp. 169-175). College Station, TX: Texas A & M

    University Press.

Modell, J. (1989). *Into one's own: from youth to adulthood in the united states 1920-*

    *1975.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Monto, M. A. & Carey, A. G. (2014). A new standard of sexual behavior? Are claims

    associated with the "hookup culture" supported by General Social Survey

    data? *The Journal of Sex Research, 51*(6), 605-615.

Murstein, B. I. (1974). *Love, sex and marriage through the ages.* New York, NY:

    Springer.

Murstein, B. I. (1976). *Who will marry whom?* New York, NY: Springer.

Nesteruk, O., & Gramescu, A. (2012). Dating and mate selection among young adults

    from immigrant families. *Marriage & Family Review, 48*(1), 40-58.

Netting, N. S. (2006). Two-lives, one partner: Indo-Canadian youth between love and

    arranged marriages. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 37*(1), 129-146.

Pew Research Center (2009). *Mapping the global Muslin population: A report on the*

    *size and distribution of the world's Muslim population.* Washington, DC: Pew

    Research Center. Retrieved from:

http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/

Pew Research Center (2016). *Religion and education around the world.* Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: http://www.pewforum.org/2016/12/13/religion-and-education-around-the-world/

Pew Research Center (2017). *U.S. Muslims concerned about their place in society, but continue to believe in the American dream.* Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/findings-from-pew-research-centers-2017-survey-of-us-muslims/

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

Qureshi, R. B. (1991). Marriage strategies among Muslims from South Asia. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, 10*(3).

Rosenfeld, M. J. (2007). *The age of independence: Interracial unions, same-sex unions, and the changing American family.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rosenthal, R. L., & Rosnow, R. (1991). If you're looking at the cell means, you're not looking at only the interaction (unless all main effects are zero). *Psychological Bulletin, 110*, 574-576.

Rothman, E. K. (1984). *Hands and hearts: A history of courtship in America*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Sales, N. J. (2015, September). *Tinder and the dawn of the "dating apocalypse".*

      *Vanity Fair.* Retrieved from:

      https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2015/08/tinder-hook-up-culture-end-of-

      dating

Santrock, J. W. (1990). *Adolescence* (4th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown.

Scottham, K. M., Sellers, R. M., & Nguyen, H. X. (2008). A measure of racial

      identity in African American adolescents: The development of the

      Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity – Teen. *Cultural Diversity and*

      *Ethnic Minority Psychology, 14*(4), 297-306.

Sellers, R.M., Smith, M.A., Shelton, J.N., Rowley, S.A.J., & Chavous T.M. (1998).

      The Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity: A reconceptualization of

      African American racial identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review,*

      *2*, 18–39.

Stepp, L. S. (2007). *Unhooked: How young women pursue sex, delay love, and lose at*

      *both.* New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

Swanson, C. (1996). Ethnicity, conflict, and role conflict. In B. C. Aswad & B. Bilge

      (Eds.), *Family and gender among American Muslims: Issues facing Middle*

      *Eastern immigrants and their descendants.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple

      University Press.

Talbani, A., & Hasanali, P. (2000). Adolescent females between tradition and

      modernity: Gender role socialization in South Asian immigrant culture.

      *Journal of Adolescence, 23*(5), 615-627.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 2007. *Eternal Marriage Student Manual*. Salt Lake City, UT: Author.

Tibbits, C. (1965). The older family member in American society. In H. Jacobs (Ed.), *The older person in the family: Challenges and conflicts* (pp. 1-11). Iowa City, IA: The Institute of Gerontology.

Timmermans, E. & Caluwe, E. D. (2017). Development and validation of the Tinder Motives Scale (TMS). *Computers in Human Behavior, 70*(1), 341-350.

Waller, W. (1937). The rating and dating complex. *American Sociological Review, 2*, 727-734.

Whyte, M. (1992). Choosing mates – the American way. *Society, 29*(3), 71-77.

Yahya, S. & Boag, S. (2014). "My family would crucify me!": The perceived influence of social pressure on cross-cultural and interfaith dating and marriage. *Sexuality & Culture*, *18*(4), 759-772.

Zaidi, A. U., Couture-Carron, A., Maticka-Tyndale, E., & Arif, M. (2014). Ethnic identity, religion, and gender: An exploration of intersecting identities creating diverse perceptions and experiences with intimate cross-gender relationships amongst South Asian youth in Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies, 46*(2), 27-54.

Zaidi, A. U., & Shuraydi, M. (2002). Perceptions of arranged marriages by youth Pakistani Muslim women living in a Western society. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 33*(4), 495-514.