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Religious identity and sense of belonging among Rowan University Muslim students

Omar Aziz
Rowan University

**RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND SENSE OF BELONGING AMONG ROWAN
UNIVERSITY MUSLIM STUDENTS**

by
Omar Aziz

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Dedications

I want to dedicate this work to the Muslim community and students of Color who work hard every day to succeed in higher education.

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I want to express my appreciation to Dr. Burton Sisco for his help and commitment to getting me through this process despite all the setbacks and challenges I may have posed, and helping me turn it into an incredible opportunity to further my journey as a scholar. I would also like to Dr. Marybeth Walpole who pushed me academically throughout my coursework. I would like to thank Travis Douglas for helping bring me to Rowan University and being a professional mentor that has allowed me to complete this process because of his generosity. Finally, I want to send a lot of gratitude to the Office of Social Justice and Inclusion and the students of Rowan University who were instrumental in my growth and development as a leader.

Abstract

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The study sought to gain a better understanding of the religious development and sense of belonging of selected Rowan University Muslim-American students. A mixed-method approach was employed using David Bell's (2009) *Religious Identity Status Scale* along with an audio interview based on the concept mattering. A convenience sample of 18 students completed the survey and 8 students participated in the interview. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze all quantitative data employing descriptive statistics. The *Religious Identity Status Scale* assessed students based on four modes of identity--Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium, and Integration. Findings suggest a high level of Identity Integration followed by Identity Foreclosure, which showed that participants felt a strong level of confidence in their Muslim faith. The findings support previous studies (Bradford, 2008; Peek, 2005) that argue that Muslim identity becomes more salient and seen as a positive reaction to negative attention in the media and society. The data also support Fowler (1981) and Daloz-Parks (2000) studies of religious identity. The interviews showed that students felt a high level of marginalization and discrimination, with physical appearance of being Muslim a constant theme.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

On September 11, 2001 four coordinated attacks led to nearly 3,000 deaths and more than 6,000 injuries. The attacks were carried out by militant Islamic group Al-Qaeda and led the United States to declare a War on Terrorism that has resulted in the longest war in American history. At the forefront of the discussion on this war was the role of Islam and Muslims. A clash of civilizations narrative between the "West" and Islam began to emerge and Muslims began to be seen as a threat to this nation. Three weeks after the attacks an ABC News poll found that Americans had a more favorable view (47%) of Islam than unfavorable (48%). In what some would imagine to have been the height of unfavorability, a poll conducted 10 years later by the Brookings Institution (2011), showed that unfavorable ratings increased, with 61% holding unfavorable views of Islam. With the fear and misunderstanding of Islam and Muslims continuing to rise, generations of Muslim-Americans are growing up in a culture of uncertainty and looking to find their identity within this backdrop.

More recently, the 2016 Presidential Elections of the United States have suggested that the political rhetoric surrounding Muslims and Islam have led a to a rise in hate crimes (Foran, 2016). A report from California State University-San Bernardino's Center for Study of Hate and Extremism (2016) showed that anti-Muslim hate crimes have risen to its highest level since September 11, 2001. The author of the report told *The Atlantic* that there is reason to believe that there is a direct link between the rhetoric and these hate crimes (Foran, 2016). He also noted how George W. Bush's speech following

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the attacks on 9/11 resulted in a decrease of hate crimes towards Muslims, whereas Donald Trump calling for a ban on Muslims following the San Bernardino terror attack led to a rise (Foran, 2016). Despite the rhetoric, in November 2016, Donald Trump was elected President of the United States. These incidents and this rhetoric continue to follow students into their experiences within the classroom of higher education.

An increasing number of students from different backgrounds continue to enter college campuses and universities (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). With limited research focused around religious identity on college campuses, even fewer studies have looked into the Muslim student population (Aziz, 2010; Bradford 2009; Peek 2005). Despite student development theories that focus on religious communities, they lack an understanding of the Muslim student experience.

Fowler's (1981) and Daloz-Parks' (2000) faith development theories both offer research and understanding of spiritual development but lack a focus on religious minorities. In addition to the identity theories focused solely on religious development, Marcia (1980) expanded on the psychosocial work of Erikson (1963) to provide researchers tools to measure identity that can be applied to religion. Muslims are more likely than any other minority group to define themselves by religion (Bryant, 2006) despite their diversity within this religious group. Bryant (2006) also found that Muslim students were the most active minority religious group and most likely to discuss religion and have it be a central focus of their lives. Within the backdrop of 9/11 and a Donald Trump presidency, Muslim-American identity is evolving and changing as historical and political contexts shape the collective identity of this group (Sirin et al., 2008). With a growing Muslim population and an increase of research into faith development within

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higher education, it is important to understand the religious identity of current students and how Islamophobia, political rhetoric around Muslims and Islam impact their sense of belonging on campus.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the religious identity status among Muslim-American students in higher education. Additionally, sense of belonging was explored through an interview that looked at students' perceptions of campus climate and acceptance. Muslim students were also given the opportunity to provide their recommendations for improving their experience within an institution of higher education.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the research that exists on religious identity and Muslim Americans. The findings provide researchers and practitioners a better sense of what stage of religious identity development students are at in their institution and how to support them in their continued development. Additionally, it provides data to support programs and initiatives that help make students feel more accepted on campus and prevent or respond to discrimination that Muslim-Americans experience.

With an increase in the number of hate crimes and incidents relating to Muslim Americans, higher education faculty and administrators must gain a better understanding of this group to prevent further actions of intolerance, and to provide these students with an environment that will meet their unique needs. This will also contribute to the literature and research done on faith development in higher education. Most research on faith development has focused on a Christian perspective with Christian participants

(Small, 2011) and this study will add to the knowledge of American minority religious perspectives. Although there is little evidence to show that the retention of Muslim college students is an issue, the negative social impacts that come as a result of being part of a minority religious community may result in Muslims leaving college early (Dey, 2012). A majority of young adult Muslims have reported that it is difficult to be a Muslim in America (Pew Research Center, 2007) and this can easily show itself within the context of a college student experience. Scholarly work on identity issues for Muslim-American college students and Muslim Americans are limited and this study attempts to add to that base.

Assumptions and Limitations

The scope of this survey was limited to a convenience sample of self-identified Muslim students at Rowan University during the spring 2017 semester. Rowan University does not track religious affiliation and there is no way to determine the number of Muslim students on campus, so members of the Muslim Student Association were corresponded as the primary contact for Rowan's Muslim student population. The Muslim Student Association started during the spring semester of 2013. As a result, the number of Muslim students affiliated with the organization was small due to the lack of campus visibility and programming. In addition, some of the members of the Muslim Student Association were international students, coming from Muslim majority countries and were excluded from the research collected, because this study focused on the experiences of Muslim-Americans in higher education. The unique challenges that international students face due to language and cultural barriers were beyond the scope of this study.

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Operational Definitions

1. Islam: Meaning submission to God in Arabic. A monotheistic and Abrahamic religion.

2. Islamophobia: Fear or prejudice of Muslims and Islam.

3. MSA: Muslim Student Association.

4. Muslim: Someone who follows the religion of Islam.

5. Religious Identity: "The way a person relates to a transcendent being or force *and/or* to a sociocultural group predominantly characterized by a transcendent object" (Bell, 2009, p. 11)

6. Religious Identity Status: Based on Bell's (2009) Religious Identity Status Scale which determined four statuses: Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium, and Integration.

7. Rowan University: A selective public university serving a population of approximately 16,000 students located in a suburb of southern New Jersey.

8. Students: Individuals enrolled in Rowan university during the 2016/2017 academic year who took courses for credit. This included residential, commuter, and graduate students.

Research Questions

The study sought to address the following questions:

1. What do selected Muslim students at Rowan University report as their status of religious identity based on the four modes of identity–diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and integration?

2. What do selected Muslim students report about their experience at Rowan University?

3. What do selected Muslim students report about perceived discrimination on and off-campus?

4. In what ways has recent political rhetoric influenced the role of selected Muslim students view of Islam and the role it plays in their life?

5. What recommendations do selected Muslim students have for faculty and administrators to create a more inclusive campus?

Organization of Remaining Chapters

Chapter II provides a review of scholarly literature pertinent to this study. This section begins with an overview of the theories related to college student development: religious, racial, and ethnic identity. The chapter then discusses previous studies conducted on Muslim college students. Research on campus climate and discrimination are also addressed. Chapter II concludes with a history of Muslims and Islam in America as well as the effects of Islamophobia since the terrorist attacks September 11, 2001.

Chapter III describes the study methodology and procedures. The following details are included in this description: the context of the study, the population and sample selection and demographics, the data collection instruments, the data collection process, and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV presents the findings and results of this study. The focus of this chapter is to address the research questions posed in the introduction of this study. Statistical and narrative analysis are used to summarize the data in this section.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses the major findings of the study, with conclusions and recommendations for practice and further study.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Foundations of Identity Research

Identity is often described as how individuals view themselves within society. Research on identity goes back to Erik Erikson's (1959) foundational psychosocial work around this concept. Erikson looked at the entire lifespan of an individual and discussed the set of crises that come about through different stages of development. He discussed a total of eight stages, with five of them leading up to the age of 18 and three stages that followed. One must go through each crisis before moving on to the next stage according to Erikson.

Crisis occurs at each of Erikson's (1959) eight stages of development in lifespan. These crises allow individuals to develop and grow into a healthy identity and are often seen as a conflict between one's internal psychological needs and that of society (Erikson, 1963). Figure 2.1 illustrates the eight stages. This study focuses primarily on the stages of adolescence through adulthood: Ego Identity vs Role Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation, and Ego Integrity vs. Despair.

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Infancy (o to1 ½)
2	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Early Childhood (1 ½ to3)
3	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Play Age (3 to 5)
4	Industry vs. inferiority	Competency	School Age (5 to 12)
5	Ego identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	Adolescence (12 to 18)
6	Intimacy vs. isolation	Love	Young Adult (18 to 40)
7	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Adult hood(40 to 65)
8	Ego integrity vs. despair	Wisdom	Maturity (65+)

Figure 2.1. Erikson's Eight Stages of Development (McCleod, 2013)

Erikson's stages five through eight look at the identity development of adolescence. Erikson's fifth stage of Identity vs Role confusion looks at how teenagers become adults. In this stage teenagers are experiencing rapid physical changes and begin to negotiate previous identities with a viable social role (Bell, 2009). At this stage, there is a great deal of emphasis on how they are perceived by others rather than how they view themselves. Erikson's sixth stage of Intimacy vs Isolation begins as individuals start to become connected with individuals outside of one's own family. A person who chooses to avoid intimacy will end up in isolation so being successful at this stage allows someone to find companionship. The seventh stage is described as Generativity vs. Stagnation, where adults need to care for others younger than them. Even if a person does not have children they will seek out other forms of care such as mentorship or other forms of giving. Erikson's final stage of Integrity vs. Despair is a time of reflection for older adults. They see their life as being significant or look back with despair. Successful completion of this stage allows one to be content with the end of life.

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Marcia (1980) expanded on Erikson's theory of identity and focused primarily on the development of adolescence. His definition of identity forms the basis of understanding for most research on the subject:

> A self-structure an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history. The better developed this structure is, the more aware individuals appear to be of their own uniqueness and similarity to others and of their own strengths and weaknesses in making their way in the world. The less developed this structure is, the more confused individuals seem about their own distinctiveness from others and the more they have to rely on external sources to evaluate themselves. The identity structure is dynamic, not static. Elements are continually being added and discarded. Over a period of time, the entire gestalt may shift…The most crucial area for study is the underlying process: the patterning of more or less disparate parts into a flexible unity. (p. 159)

Marcia's (1980) theory posits that identity achievement comes in two parts. The first is a time of crisis where one's values and choices are being reevaluated and ends with a commitment made to those values and choices. Four modes of identity were established to study identity issues among late adolescents. *Identity Achievement* occurs in people who have gone through a period of decision-making and established a set of ideology for themselves. *Foreclosure* stage exists when someone is committed to an ideology or occupation but have been chosen by parents as opposed to themselves. The *Identity Diffusion* stage is when people do not have a set direction in their life, regardless of whether they went through a decision-making period. *Moratorium* looks at someone

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who is in a crisis and has not established any sort of commitment to their sense of identity. These are not to be seen as sequential statuses and individuals may be in each of these stages at different points in time.

College Student Identity

Alexander Astin's (1984) Theory of Involvement from the *Journal of College Student Personnel* analyzes how students change or develop throughout their collegiate experience. This theory outlines the positive relationship between student involvement and academic success. Research has shown that involvement takes on various forms but typically looks at the activity occurring outside of the classroom setting and has shown to play a significant factor in the success of college students. Involvement can take the form of extracurricular activities, engagement with professors, opportunities within the institution and much more. Astin (1984) argues that the outcomes of college students, come as a result of three core elements. First are the "inputs," or the student's past experiences, demographics, and background. The second element describes the environment, which encompasses all of the experiences the student has during their time in college. The third element is the outcomes; the characteristics, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and values that students hold after college. Their academic success through higher education comes as a result of these core elements.

Astin's theory also makes five assumptions about student involvement. First, there must be an investment of psychosocial and physical energy. Second, that involvement must be continuous, but the energy that is invested, differs amongst students. Third, a student's involvement can be qualitative or quantitative. Fourth, the gains seen from student involvement is proportional to the extent to which they were

involved. Finally, Astin assumes that academic performance is correlated with student involvement (1984). This theory provides students with a wide range of opportunities, whether academic or social, to be exposed or involved with new ideas. Astin (1984) provides a framework to help maximize student success. Understanding this theory of involvement has also led to a better understanding of why students may become unsuccessful in college.

Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (1988) observes the reasons college students withdraw and detach from a university. This withdrawal leads to students leaving college and adversely affecting their education. In Figure 2.2, Tinto's theory is explained by Mantz Yorke (2003) from Liverpool John Moores University. The model shows the five stages of departure that students may experience. It begins with the attributes with which students enter the university. It moves on to goals and commitments that are formed by students. Afterwards, students' experiences with the institution, both academic and social, shape the next stages of their movement as they feel either integrated into or withdrawn from the institution. Tinto demonstrates how the alienation resulting from a lack of integration eventually leads to the decision to depart from the institution.

Tinto's model of student departure (simplified)
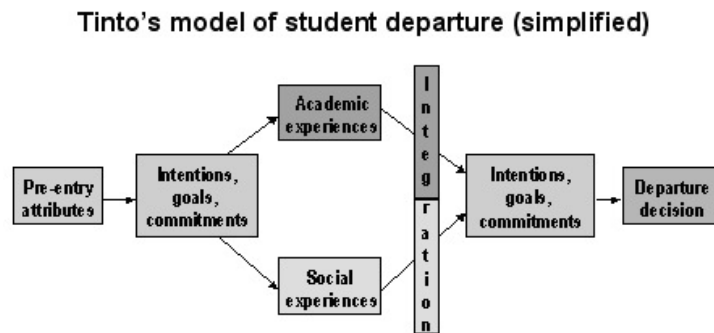
Figure 2.2. Tinto's Model of Student Departure (Yorke, 2013)

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However, while Astin's and Tinto's respective theories focus on retention, their work on identity and inclusion open important discussions about how to make universities safer, more welcoming spaces for Muslim students. Researching identity formation is crucial to making retention theories more relevant for this population. Understanding their identity development as Muslims in the United States will impact their academic experiences and chances for success.

Campus Climate

Hurtado and Carter (1997), argue that too much emphasis is placed upon the student to actively seek a sense of belonging in college rather than placing that responsibility upon the institution to create. They believe that Tinto's (1988) research does not value culturally supportive alternatives to college participation. Tierney (1992) also believes that theories on departure require minority students to abandon their home culture to integrate in a system that was built upon oppression. Hurtado and Carter (1997) propose that there is a responsibility between both the student and institution. These feelings of acceptance have come to be operationalized as a "sense of belonging." Johnson et al. (2007) compiled previous research on sense of belonging and examined the different aspects of belonging on college campuses that had the largest effect on students. Interactions with peers and faculty, co-curricular involvement, perceptions of campus racial climate, and living on campus all appeared to have positive effects on students' sense of belonging.

This study focuses primarily on the aspect of campus climate related to Muslim students at Rowan University. Studies have found that hostile or negative perception of racial climate resulted in negative relation to the institution. Although a religious

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minority, researchers are beginning to understand Muslims under the context of a racial category. Islamophobia is seen as a form of racism faced towards those perceived to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern descent (Garner & Selod, 2014). As this research continues to develop and Muslim identity is understood through the context of racial discrimination, it is important to look at religious, ethnic, and racial studies to have a better grasp of Muslim identity.

Religious and Ethnic Identity

Fowler (1981) describes six stages of faith that go from birth to adulthood. It begins with Primal Faith, which appears from the relationship with primary caretakers and exists prior to the development of language for the individual. Stage One describes Intuitive-Projective Faith, occurring around two years of age, and coincides with the emergence of language. As a result of the child's most formative stories and images, they begin to form their first concepts of God. Stage Two, or Mythic-Literal Faith, develops between ages six and seven when children begin to form their central beliefs based on the stories related by significant others. These narratives are accepted without reflection and taken literally, despite the child's ability to identify that there are perspectives and beliefs different from their own. At Stage Three, Synthetic-Conventional Faith, early adolescents begin to think and incorporate ideas from different sources, including peers, school, media, or a religious community. Individuals at this stage have a meaningful sense of faith, but are not reflecting on it critically. Individuative-Reflective Faith, Stage Four, starts when an individual begins to have clearer understanding and framing of his/her own definition of faith with a system of beliefs, values, and commitments. Stage Five, Conjunctive Faith, typically begins midlife or later, when there is a better

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understanding of life's complexities, stronger awareness of convictions, and individuals are more accepting of other faith traditions while still holding deep commitments to their own. Stage Six, Universalizing Faith, exists when a person is able to step outside of their own views and see the world through the lens of others different from themselves.

Following Fowler's (1981) work on faith formation, Sharon Daloz-Parks (2000) focuses more specifically on the role that higher education plays in the faith development of young adults. Daloz-Parks (2000) identifies five forms of knowing that occur within four periods of development. The authority-bound stage occurs in early adolescence. During this stage, a child simply puts their trust in authorities such as parents, religious leaders, or teachers. The next stage, unqualified relativism, happens as adolescents begin to realize that reality has different forms and there are other forms of knowing that exist. The probing commitment stage occurs during young adulthood when individuals have short-term commitments to explore their faith even further. Following the probing stage is the tested commitment stage: when these commitments become more secure. Lastly, during convictional commitment, there exists a deep commitment to one's own truth, alongside the simultaneous ability to recognize and appreciate the truth and opinions of others.

There also are also many important critiques of Fowler (1981) and Daloz-Parks (2000) work. Several authors have argued that the sample used to develop Fowler's theory (1981) was ethnically and religiously biased, with 97.8% of the sample being white and 45% and 36.5% of the sample being Protestant and Catholic respectively. They also found 3.6% of the sample identified with other faiths and it is unclear what portion of that 3.6% was represented by Muslims.

The salience of religion among Muslim students is an important factor and studies on this community must connect the role of ethnicity and race into the faith development of these students. The American Muslim community is diverse and broken down into numerous races and ethnicities. Pew Research (2011) found that 30% of Muslim Americans reported their race as white, 23% as black, 21% as Asian, 6% as Hispanic, and 19% as other or mixed race. For some of these individuals, race may be the most salient identity, while others may hold their race and ethnicity as a much larger influence on identity. Nagra's (2011) study looks at the identity formation of young Muslims in Canada and argues that reactive identities that result in strengthening ethnic identity can also apply to religious minority groups. One must understand the ethnic and racial identity factors that play a role in shaping a Muslim's religious identity. Race and ethnicity are inextricably intertwined and inform a Muslims understanding of personal faith. Ethnic identity refers to the culture, religion, geography, and language shared by a group of individuals, resulting in a strong collective bond. Ethnic identity theories help students understand the role that ethnicity plays in their lives, affecting their perspectives, and ultimately their decisions. Moreover, these students must reconcile their minority values with those of a White majority, while also enduring prejudice and discrimination (Torres-Rivera, Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, & Phan, 1999). Phinney (1990) describes ethnic identity development in three stages: Unexamined ethnic identity, where there is a lack of interest in one's identity, or one's identity is based upon the opinions of others; Ethnic identity search/moratorium, where students are made to encounter marginalization, producing a sense of awareness and minority consciousness; and Ethnic identity

achievement where students achieve a healthy multicultural identity and resolve any conflicts they may have had with ethnic and racial issues.

Racial and Cultural Identity Development

The Racial and Cultural Identity Development (RCID) model from Sue and Sue (2012) revises and builds upon the Atkinson, Morten, and Sue minority identity development model. The RCID is made up of five stages:

Conformity, in which individuals identify with white culture, internalize negative stereotypes, and have no desire to learn about their cultural heritage. In dissonance, individuals' experiences contradict their white worldview…Resistance and immersion involves conscious explorations of one's racial/ethnic identity. Individuals reject white culture and immerse themselves in learning as much as possible about themselves and their cultural group, leading to the formation of a new identity. In the introspection stage, individuals grapple with finding a balance between the dominant culture and their own cultural heritage and the role of both in shaping their identity. Those who continue this intensive exploration move to synergistic articulation and awareness in which they integrate their knowledge and experiences into a new identity where they accept themselves, appreciate contributions of other groups, and can balance their racial/ethnic identity with other aspects of their identity. (Evans et al., 2010)

Post 9/11, reactive identity may explain a large portion of the identity formation for Muslim American college students. Reactive identity results in an intensified ethnic identity as a response to discrimination and marginalization in the dominant society (Nagra, 2011). As this study attempts to look at religious status among Muslim college

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students, they must be understood in the context and political climate where religion becomes a method of mobilizing and finding agency within a context of perceived and actual discrimination faced by Muslim Americans.

Muslim Identity Studies

Lori Peek's (2005) study, "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity," has been referenced in multiple consequent studies on Muslim-Americans (Aziz, 2010; Bradford, 2009; Dey, 2011). The methodology included participant observation, focus groups, and individual interviews with Muslim university students in New York and Colorado. This study showed how social and historical contexts impact the development of religious identity, paying particular attention to the effect 9/11 had on participants. This event led to a higher salience of religion to these individuals' identity as compared to other forms of social identity.

Peek (2005) determined three stages of identity development for these students. First, an ascribed identity which describes the stage where religion does not play an important role in the students' identity and religion is not something that they reflect on. Religion tended to be something that students were born into and had therefore taken for granted. The second stage is religion as a chosen identity, when participants embraced their religious identity with self-reflection, and the support of their peers; this is the point at which religion's importance supersedes other identities such as ethnicity and nationality. The third stage, religion as declared identity, followed the crises induced by 9/11, when participants embraced Muslim identity to foster a positive self-image and to counter negative stereotypes and misconceptions. The events of 9/11 led to a crisis in

identity, producing a sense of defensive Muslim solidarity and producing what the authors call a reactive ethnicity (Bradford, 2009; Peek, 2005).

Most research on social identity focuses on ethnicity while little research uses religion as a salient or primary social identity (Bradford, 2008). Lori Peek (2005) also noted that most research has ignored the role that religion plays in the formation of identities for groups and individuals. Bradford (2008) gave some possible reasoning for the omission of religious identity research. First, he claims that there has been a general acceptance of the idea that ethnicity represents the most basic form of social identity among researchers. Likewise, he claims that there exists the idea that as society modernizes there will be a decline in religiosity.

Although this decline is happening, immigration increases and is a strong role in the influence of religion as a primary identity for some individuals. The role that immigration has played in American society made it a stronger focus for researchers. The Civil Rights Movement also brought more awareness and focus upon ethnicity as a primary marker of social identity. Religious and ethnic identities are inextricably linked. Religious institutions, customs, and practices can often be used to maintain one's ethnic identity (Bradford, 2008; Peek, 2005) Even though religion may have not played an important role for people in their country of origin, when they immigrate to a new country, those defining characteristics can be used for reestablishing some sort of connection to their homeland. For many immigrants, they were the religious majority in their home country. When they immigrated, they came to a country where they experienced being a religious minority. The experience of immigrating to a new country

can be the catalyst for people to turn to religious identity markers and make it a stronger point of who they are (Smith, 1978).

To understand Muslim student identity, one must look into the various categories of identity. Studying religious identity alone does not permit an understanding of the deeply complex issues facing Muslim students. While religion may be a common factor, other identities such as race or gender may be just as salient. Tajfel (1981) describes ethnic identity as the self-conceptualization that comes from a person's membership and attachment to a given social group. The attachment and sense of belonging that differentiates a person from the dominant group is indicative of the Muslim American community's experiences.

As Farouk Dey's (2011) qualitative study shows, the various identities that Muslims hold affect their continued development through college. Dey (2011) analyzed Muslim student participants through four dimension of identity: Religion, citizenship, culture, and gender. He found that these identities were influenced by contextual factors that are unique to Muslim-Americans: family, 9/11 backlash, Muslim-on-Muslim prejudice, peer support via Muslim Student Associations (MSAs) and university support. Dey's (2011) theory resulted in five stages of development: Reluctance, Identification, Immersion, Negotiation, and Integration. The five stages of development that Muslim college students go through begin with reluctance to being associated with Muslims, identifying with Muslims through a new friendship, immersion into the Muslim community and severing ties with non-Muslim friends, negotiation between their two identities, and normalizing their experience by successfully integrating their two identities (Dey, 2011). Figure 2.4 below shows Dey's five stages of development. In the

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end, Dey found that Muslim students at the stage of Integration are at the point of being able to sustain a healthy balance of understanding the Muslim and American identity.
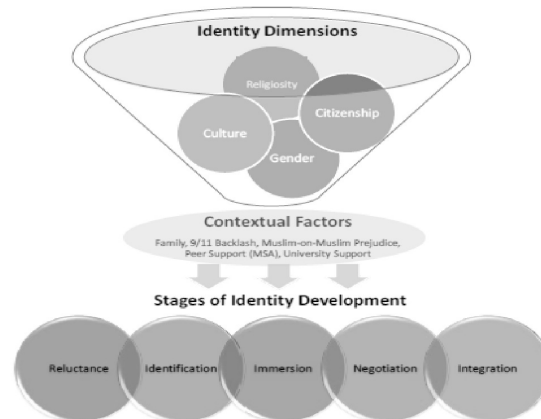
Figure 2.3. Muslim College Students' Stages of Development (Dey, 2011)

Much of the research on identity is based on the foundational work of Marcia's (1966) ego identity model (Aziz, 2010). According to Marcia, there are four statuses that determine whether an individual has explored identity or made a commitment to a singular one. The first stage is identity diffusion, when a person has not explored nor committed to any particular identity. The second stage is a foreclosed person who has made a commitment but without exploration, and is usually based upon parental values and traditions. Individuals in the third stage are in moratorium. While in this stage, they are in a process of exploration, but have yet to make any commitment. The final stage is an achieved identity. An achieved identity comes from a secure commitment to their identity after going through a process of exploration. Peek (2005) discusses how religion plays a strong role in this identity development, despite most of the research tending to downplay its importance (Aziz, 2010).

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Islam and Muslims in America

The history of Muslims in the United States dates back to the time of transatlantic slavery. Despite the lack of an accurate number, it is known that Muslim Africans were brought to the United States as slaves (Leonard, 2003). Following the slave trade, three waves of Muslim immigrants migrated to the United States (Aziz, 2010; Leonard, 2003). This group consisted of Arab immigrants from Syria, Jordan, Israel/Palestine, and Lebanon (Bradford, 2008). The second migration, occurring between World War II and 1965, resulted from conflicts and poverty in various Muslim homelands, and ultimately left a Muslim cultural imprint upon American society. They established the Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA) and the first Muslim Student Associations (MSA) on college campuses (Bradford, 2008). The most recent wave of immigrants began after 1965 and continues today. These Muslim immigrants hail from over 60 countries, with the largest numbers hailing from the Indian subcontinent, Iran, Afghanistan, and Africa (Haddad, Smith, & Esposito, 2003). Some immigrants came in pursuit of better educational and work opportunities, while others fled poverty or conflict.

However, not all Muslim Americans are recent immigrants. In fact, the largest number of native Muslims in the United States identify as African American (Pew Research Center, 2011). The experiences and history of this community is distinct from that of the Muslim immigrant communities. Most black Muslims attend predominantly black mosques and have a history tied with the civil rights movement of the United States (Bradford, 2008). This community saw the height of its cultural impact with the rise of Nation of Islam (NOI), which coupled with the Black Nationalist movement of the United States, formed an impactful group with a wide network of temples all throughout

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the country. The group later transformed into a more traditional Sunni orthodox interpretation of Islam followed by most of the immigrant Muslims of the United States (Bradford, 2008). African-American Muslims came to Islam based on a different context and have distinct needs from the immigrant Muslim population (Leonard, 2003). Studies on Muslim-American identity must acknowledge this vastly different narrative in order to account for the unique history of America's Black Muslims.

Islam is the world's fastest growing religion, said to surpass Judaism as the second-largest religion in the United States after Christianity (Haddad, Smith, & Esposito 2003). However, the actual number of Muslims currently living in the United States is very difficult to determine due to the lack of U.S. Census Bureau data. This has resulted in a wide range of population estimates, from 527,000 to 9 million (Bradford, 2008). The Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has estimated that there are between six and seven million Muslims in the United States (Bagby, Perl, Froehle, Dudley, & Roozen, 2001). Additionally, former President Barack Obama gave a speech at Cairo University in Egypt claiming that there were nearly seven million Muslims living within the United States (United States Department of State, 2009). Such discrepancies and difficulties in obtaining accurate figures make the case that more investigation and research needs to be done with this growing demographic (Bradford, 2008). With more research, the discrepancies in these numbers would decrease substantially. Unfortunately, it seems that the catalyst for increased academic research into this demographic was post-9/11 Islamophobia. To truly understand Muslim communities, however, there must be research and examination that go beyond the lens of simply looking to prevent future terrorists. Much of the research and attention on Muslim

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Americans focus on their radicalization and reveal a sense that Muslims are inherently more prone to extremism. In 2011, the United States Congress held the "Hearing on the Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that Community's Response," which was seen as an attempt to raise hysteria and contributes to a culture of Islamophobia in the US. Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca stated at the conference, "I would caution that to comment only on the extent of radicalization in the American Muslim Community may be viewed as singling out a particular section of our nation. This makes a false assumption that any particular religion or group is more prone to radicalization than others" (Freidman, 2011, p. 2). Studies that only focus on radicalization and extremism limit the understanding of the Muslim identity and experience.

It is important to understand Muslim identity within a context much like that of race and ethnicity. These social positionalities share similar characteristics within the formation of identity. Most research on social identity focuses on ethnicity while little research uses religion as a salient or primary social identity (Bradford, 2008). Peek (2005) also noted that most research has ignored the role that religion plays in the formation of identities for groups and individuals. Bradford (2008) gave some possible reasoning for the omission of religious identity research. First, he claims that there has been a general acceptance of the idea that ethnicity represents the most basic form of social identity among researchers. Likewise, he claims that there exists the idea that as society modernizes there will be a decline in religiosity. Although this theory has been mostly disproved, its influence on scholarly research should not be understated.

Effects of 9/11 and Islamophobia

The aftermath of 9/11 has taken a huge toll on Muslim American identity, self-esteem, and social status. The work of Frederick Barth (1998) shifted the research on ethnic identity from focusing on the common features that a group holds, onto focusing on the boundaries that distinguish them from others (Bradford, 2008). Nothing could have highlighted and distinguished the Muslim community more than the events of September 11, 2001. The attention that is placed upon the Muslim community and the religion of Islam since this event highlights its immense impact. That Tuesday morning, Al-Qaeda conducted the largest and deadliest act of terrorism in the United States. Four planes were hijacked and three thousand people died that day. Two of them struck and eventually took down the World Trade Center Towers in New York City, one plane hit the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and the last plane intended to hit the White House or U.S. Capitol, but ended up crashing into a rural area of Pennsylvania (Peek, 2005). These attacks destroyed economic and military symbols of the United States and resulted in widespread fear throughout the nation and the world (Peek, 2005). The perception of Muslims and Islam were changed forever.

The attacks of September 11th resulted in numerous economic, political, and social costs. A *New York Times* article by Carter and Cox (2011) compiled research from multiple studies and concluded that the overall cost came out to 3.3 trillion dollars 10 years after the incident. This total accounts for toll and physical damage, economics, homeland security and related costs, war funding and related costs, and future war/veterans' care (Carter & Cox, 2011). The authors make a point of noting that the costs to respond far outweigh the costs of damages that occurred from this event. A

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global "war on terror" was launched and manifested into wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Within the United States, policies aimed at combating the "war on terror" had serious consequences for Muslim Americans. Some ethnic and religious groups were in fear because members of their community were wrongly associated with the attacks (Peek, 2005). Many Muslim Americans felt that they were the target of suspicion from the government. Although there was much national unity and patriotism, there was also a need to scapegoat and bring those responsible to justice (Peek, 2005). As a result, it is believed that *The Patriot Act* was written specifically with Muslim Americans mind.

According to a 2011 report by the Center for American Progress entitled "Fear Inc." there is a $57 million network that perpetuates and promotes Islamophobia within the United States. They provide funding to think-tanks and information that is used to produce books, videos, reports, and websites that produce this hatred and fear of Muslims. According to a Gallup (2009) poll, about one half of nationally representative samples of Mormons, Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, and Jews believe that Americans in general are prejudiced toward Muslim Americans. Additionally, Muslims are more than twice as likely to have experienced racial or religious discrimination in the past year compared to Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. The 48% of Muslims who say they have experienced this discrimination is similar to Hispanic-Americans (48%) and African Americans (45%) who say they have experienced discrimination.

Recent terrorist attacks and political rhetoric has led to a rise in discrimination upon the Muslim-American community. After gunmen who identified as being Muslim killed 129 people in Paris, France Muslim-Americans a mosque in Texas was defiled

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with feces and torn pages of the Quran, Verbal and social media threats were made towards mosques in Florida, and a Christian taxi driver was attacked by a passenger who thought he was Muslim (Milligan, 2015). In San Bernardino, CA a Muslim husband and wife carried out a shooting that left 14 dead and led to another wave of fear among Muslim Americans (Sullivan, Izadi, & Bailey, 2015). Republican presidential candidate and now President Donald Trump, has called for increased surveillance of Muslims and requiring Muslims to register with the government. Arsalan Iftikhar, a human rights lawyer and author says "Islamophobia is the accepted form of racism in America" (Foran, 2016, p. 1). The article also goes on to share the story of Terry Comier who owns an Islamic clothing shop in Anaheim, CA found a Quran with more than 30 bullet holes and a note that said "you're not welcome here" just after the San Bernardino attacks (Foran, 2016). The political rhetoric has created a level of acceptance towards Islamophobia and moved it from the "fringes to the mainstream" (Foran, 2016).

Summary of Literature Review

There is a long history of Muslims in the United States of America but after September 11, 2001, they came under increased surveillance and scrutiny. The American public began to have negative views of this religious group that has only appeared to increase with the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in 2016. Hate crimes and anti-Muslim rhetoric are on the rise for this community (Foran, 2016).

As these students enter institutions of higher education, student development theories that help practitioners to understand diverse populations lacks research of the Muslim experience. Although being Muslim is a religious identity, these students are best understood through a combination of religious, ethnic, and racial identity theories. Nagra

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(2011) argues that identity formation of young Muslim in Canada result in an increasing ethnic identity that can also apply to religious minority groups. Muslim identity studies show that the experience of a terror event has led to higher salience of religious identity for Muslim-Americans (Aziz, 2010; Peek, 2005). Theories on faith development help us understand how religiosity develops from birth to adulthood. As individuals grow into adulthood they begin to develop their own understanding of religion and are not as influenced by those perceived to be religious authorities (Daloz-Parks, 2000; Fowler, 1981).

Understanding faith, religious, ethnic, and racial identity development help with understanding the Muslim-American student. Using these different theories help with providing support and services that will benefit Muslim students. This study is guided by the following questions: What do Muslim students report as their status of religious identity? What do these students report about their experience at Rowan University? What do they report about perceived discrimination? How has recent political rhetoric impacted their view of Islam? Finally, what are the services that can be provided for students to create a more inclusive campus?

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted during the 2017 spring semester at Rowan University. Rowan was originally founded as a normal school in 1923 and went from a teachers college, to a state university, and eventually gained university status in 1997. In 2015, Rowan enrolled 16,155 students with 13,169 of these students being undergraduates. There are over 100 student organizations, 18 Division III athletics programs, 45 intramural sport activities, and 26 Greek Life organizations for students to join. Approximately 4,000 students live within eight residence halls, five apartment complexes, and one international house. Rowan's average class size is approximately 20 students. The university has nationally ranked engineering and business programs and two medical schools (Rowan, 2016).

Population and Sample Selection

The target population of this study was all undergraduate and graduate Muslim students enrolled at Rowan University during the 2016-2017 school year. It is generally accepted that the Muslim population of the United States is a little less than one percent of the US population (Pew Research, 2011). The United States Census does not ask individuals to identify their religious identity, therefore making an exact calculation difficult to obtain. Similarly, on a college campus, it is difficult to know exactly how many Muslim students are enrolled.

There are several limitations to the present study. First, a convenience sample of Muslim-American members of Rowan University's Muslim Student Association were

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selected for this study. As a result, the findings of this study cannot be generalized beyond this sample. The survey also had a sampling bias of individuals that were comfortable speaking on their religious views. Rowan University's Muslim Student Association consists of approximately 35 active members and all the members were attempted to be surveyed for this study.

Instrumentation

A mixed-method approach of a quantitative survey along with a qualitative participant interview was used for this study. Religious identity status was measured using the *Religious Identity Status* (RISt) *Scale* (Appendix E) developed by Bell (2009). In addition, a semi-structured interview (Appendix D) was conducted with participants to measure sense of belonging.

The *Religious Identity Status* (RISt) *Scale* (Bell, 2009) is based on Erik Erikson's work on ego and identity development. James Marcia later operationalized Erikson's work with four types of identity formation: Identity Diffusion, Identity Foreclosed, Identity Moratorium, and Identity Integration. The scale consists of 28 questions with 5 items per religious identity status and 2 items per global identity status. Global identity status takes into account overall identity and not just religious. Bell (2009) adapted Adams (1999) *Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status II* (EOMEIS-II) to measure religiosity. Respondents check their level of agreement on a six-point scale: Strongly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Moderately Agree, and Strongly Agree.

To determine reliability of the survey, the Likert scale items for each of the four types of identity formation: Identity Diffusion, Identity Foreclosure, Identity Moratorium,

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and Identity Integration were measured. Chronbach alpha coefficients above .70 are considered reliable. The Likert scale items inquiring about Diffusion yielded a score of .791. The Likert scale items inquiring about Foreclosure yielded a score of .796. The Likert scale items inquiring about Moratorium yielded a score of .843. The Likert scale items inquiring about Integration yielded a score of .777.

The qualitative interview is a list of questions based on multiple studies. Tovar, Simon, & Lee's *College Mattering Scale*, Pew Research Center's (2011) study on Muslim-Americans, and Hurtado and Carter's (1997) study of campus racial climate on Latino college students. The questions aimed to give an opportunity for Muslim students to share their experiences of being a student at Rowan University and their recommendations for improvement. The first five questions were related to demographics and remaining questions relate to students' sense of belonging and recommendations. All questions are under the backdrop of a period in U.S. history when Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslim-Americans have been at an all-time high.

A pilot test was given to students in the Fall semester of 2016, to Muslim students at Rowan University who agreed to take the survey for its readability and validity. None of the students mentioned a problem with the survey questions and it took them approximately 10 minutes to complete. Approval from the Institutional Review Board of Rowan University (Appendix F) was also sought to provide more validity for the survey. Approval was granted January 25, 2017.

Data Collection

All outreach for this study was done through the Muslim Student Association. An e-mail was sent out to invite students to participate (Appendix A). The survey was

administered during multiple general body meetings of the organization. The average turnout for the general meetings were 5-8 people. At the meeting students were also given a Follow-Up Interview Interest Form (Appendix C) where they could indicate their interest in participating in the audio interview. In addition to attending this meeting, individual members were contacted through the email list to be asked to participate in the study. Each member was given a paper copy of the survey. I also met the participants at a time of their convenience to conduct the interviews.

Data Analysis

Data from the quantitative measure of Religious Identity were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Mean, frequency, and standard deviation examined utilizing frequency tables in SPSS. Interviews were recorded using a password protected cellular phone. The interviews were then transcribed for analysis using Sisco's (1981) (Appendix G) rules and procedures for logical analysis as a guide for content analysis. The data were examined for logical themes and a frequency of descriptors for each of them. In addition, quotes were used to highlight participants' thoughts and perceptions (Sisco, 1981). Through this content analysis, the research questions relating to the qualitative study could be addressed for a better understanding of sense of belonging and religious identity among Muslim students.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Quantitative Sample

The subjects in this study were those who identified as Muslim and enrolled as a full or part-time student at Rowan University during the 2017 spring semester. Students were identified and found through the Muslim Student Association (MSA) at Rowan University, which serves as the only Muslim student organization. The MSA president and advisor had identified more than 50 students as active members. To find a more accurate number, the MSA e-mail list and Facebook group page were analyzed along with observations of meetings, elections, and events. This number was then reduced to 35 after analyzing the e-mail list and attending multiple events. Upon analyzing the mailing list, many were no longer current students, and there was no way to determine if people were Muslim based on name alone, since many individuals who sign up for mailing lists may not identify as Muslim. After attending multiple meetings through the spring semester and events I observed there was no more than 10 Muslim students present throughout the spring semester. Thirty-five members was seen as a more accurate representation of the MSA membership. Surveys were given out during meetings, events, and during interview sessions. As students were interviewed, they were asked for recommendations of other Muslim students who were interested in participating.

A total of 18 total surveys of 35 MSA members were completed during the 2017 Rowan University spring semester. Demographic information were collected on those who participated in the surveys (Table 4.1). Ten of the students were female (55.6%) and eight of them male (44.4%). A total of 12 students were between the age of 20-22

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(66.7%); five of them were between the age of 18-19 (27.8%); and one student was over the age of 23 (5.6%). The data show five different ethnicities were identified. Of those five ethnicities, eight were South Asian (44.4%); five were Arab (27.8%), two were African-American/Black/Caribbean (11.1%), two identified as Asian (11.1%), and one student being White (5.6%). According to the data, 17 of the students (94%) were born into the religion of Islam and one student (5.6%) converted to Islam. Eight of the students lived in on-campus residence halls (44.4%); two were in on-campus apartments (11.1%); seven were living with family (38.9%), and one student (5.6%) lived independently off-campus. Seven students were seniors (38.9%); five were freshmen (27.8%); three were sophomores (16.7%); and three were juniors (16.7%). Students also wrote in their grade point average as well. The collected data show 12 students had a GPA between 3.0 - 3.5 (66.7%); three students had a GPA between 2.5 – 2.9 (16.7%); two students had a GPA between 3.6 – 4.0 (11.1%); and one student had a GPA between 2.0 – 2.4 (5.6%).

Table 4.1

Demographic Information (N=18)

	f	*%*
Gender:		
Female	10	55.6
Male	8	44.4
Total	18	100
Age:		
20-22	12	66.7
18-19	5	27.8
23-25	1	5.6
Total	18	100
Family Income:		
10,000 – 50,000	10	56.6
51,000 – 100,000	4	22.2
101,000 and above	4	22.2
Total	18	100
Race/Ethnicity		
South Asian	8	44.4
Arab	5	27.8
African-American/Black/Caribbean	2	11.1
Asian	2	11.1
White	1	5.6
Total	18	100
Religious Background		
I was born into Islam	17	94.4
I am a convert to Islam	1	5.6
Total	18	100
Residence		
Residence Hall	8	44.4
Living with family member/guardian	7	38.9
Student Housing Apartments	2	11.1
Independent Off-campus Housing	1	5.6
Total	18	100

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Table 4.1 (continued)

	f	%
Class Ranking		
Senior	7	38.9
Freshman	5	27.8
Sophomore	3	16.7
Junior	3	16.7
Total	18	100
Grade Point Average		
3.0 - 3.5	12	66.7
2.5 – 2.9	3	16.7
3.6 – 4.0	2	11.1
2.0 – 2.4	1	5.5
Total	18	100

Analysis of the Quantitative Data

Research question 1. What do selected Muslim students at Rowan University report as their status of religious identity based on the four modes of identity–diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and integration?

Table 4.2 contains the results of five items related to Identity Diffusion based on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. Mean scores were analyzed to find the level of agreement. Majority of students selected "Strongly Disagree," "Moderately Disagree," or "Slightly Disagree" with each of the five statements. The highest ranked item, "I have a few religious beliefs, but I am not committed to any religious tradition and am not concerned about finding one," had a mean score of 2.56 with 50% of students indicating

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they "Strongly Disagree" with the statement. The lowest ranked item, "When it comes to religion I just haven't found anything that appeals to me and I don't really feel the need to look," had a mean score of 1.67 and 61% of subjects indicating they "Strongly Disagree" with the statement.

Table 4.2

Diffusion (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree=1, Moderately Disagree=2, Slightly Disagree=3, Slightly Agree=4, Moderately Agree=5, Strongly Agree=6)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I have a few religious beliefs, but I am not committed to any religious tradition and am not concerned about finding one. *M*=2.56, *SD*=1.8	9	50	1	5.6	2	11.1	3	16.7	1	5.6	2	11.1
I've never thought about whether religion is important to me or not. *M*=2.33, *SD*=1.14	4	22.2	8	44.4	3	16.7	2	11.1	1	5.6	0	0
I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other. *M*=2.11, *SD*=1.08	6	33.3	7	38.9	6	33.3	3	16.7	-	-	-	0

Table 4.2 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I don't see religion as important to who I am, and I'm not concerned with religion. M=1.94, SD=1.31	10	55.6	3	16.7	2	11.1	2	11.1	3	16.7	0	0
When it comes to religion I just haven't found anything that appeals to me and I don't really feel the need to look. M=1.67, SD=1.09	11	61.1	4	22.2	2	11.1	0	0	1	5.6	0	0

Table 4.3 contains the results of two items related to Global Identity Diffusion based on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. The statements "There's no single 'life style' which appeals to me more than another" had a total of 61.1% of respondents "Moderately Agreeing" or "Slightly Agreeing." "I have never really thought about 'who I am,'" had a total of 72.2% of respondents either "Strongly Disagreeing" or "Moderately Disagreeing" with the statement.

Table 4.3

Global Identity Diffusion (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree=1, Moderately Disagree=2, Slightly Disagree=3, Slightly Agree=4,
Moderately Agree=5, Strongly Agree=6)

	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
Statement	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another. *M*=2.11, *SD*=1.08	2	11.1	2	11.1	3	16.7	5	27.8	6	33.3	-	-
I have never really thought about "who I am." *M*=2.00, *SD*=1.19	8	44.4	5	27.8	3	16.7	1	5.6	1	5.6	-	-

Table 4.4 contains the results of five items related to Identity Foreclosure assessed on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. Mean scores were analyzed to find the level of agreement. "I like my church/religious community, and I have never considered changing denomination or faiths" had the highest mean score of 5.17 and 55.6% of subjects indicating they "Strongly Agree" with the statement. If it's right for my family it must be right for me," had the lowest mean score of 3.06 with 33.3% of respondents indicating they "Slightly Disagree."

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Table 4.4

Foreclosure (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree=1, Moderately Disagree=2, Slightly Disagree=3, Slightly Agree=4, Moderately Agree=5, Strongly Agree=6)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
I like my church/religious community, and I have never considered changing denomination or faiths. *M*=5.17, *SD*=1.04	-	-	-	-	1	5.6	5	27.8	2	11.1	10	55.6
My faith is very important to me, and I have never really doubted it. *M*=4.67, *SD*=1.19	1	5.6	1	5.6	-	-	3	16.7	10	55.6	3	16.7
I am committed to my religious beliefs and never really had any period of questioning my faith. *M*=4.17, *SD*=1.54	1	5.6	2	11.1	2	11.1	6	33.3	2	11.1	5	27.8
I attend the same church/faith community (or same kind of mosque) that my family has always attended, and I've never really questioned why. *M*=3.61, *SD*=1.94	4	22.2	3	16.7	1	5.6	1	5.6	6	33.3	3	16.7

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Table 4.4 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my family it must be right for me. *M*=3.06, *SD*=1.43	3	16.7	3	16.7	6	33.3	3	16.7	2	11.1	1	5.6

Table 4.5 contains the results of two statements related to Global Identity

Foreclosure assessed on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey

items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly

Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. The mean scores

and frequency distributions were analyzed to find level of agreement. The highest

percentage of subjects (27.8%) indicated they "Slightly Agree" with the statement, "I

know 'who I am' and I have never had to worry about it much." The highest percentage

of subjects (38.9%) indicated they "Slightly Disagree" with the statement, "My parents'

views on life were good enough for me, I don't need anything else."

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Table 4.5

Global Identity Foreclosure (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree=1, Moderately Disagree=2, Slightly Disagree=3, Slightly Agree=4,
Moderately Agree=5, Strongly Agree=6)

	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
Statement	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%
I know "who I am" and I have never had to worry about it much. *M*=3.89, *SD*=1.28	-	-	3	16.7	4	22.2	5	27.8	4	22.2	2	11.1
My parents' views on life were good enough for me, I don't need anything else. *M*=3.44, *SD*=1.15	1	5.6	2	11.1	7	38.9	4	22.2	4	22.2	-	-

Table 4.6 contains the results of five statements related to Identity Moratorium as assessed on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. The mean scores and frequency distributions were analyzed to find level of agreement. "I have a lot of questions about different denominations and faiths, like 'Which one is true or best?'" had the highest mean score of 3.11 with 27.8% of subjects indicating that they "Moderately Disagree" with the statement. "I'm not sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done yet. (I know and don't want to make my mind up)," had the

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lowest mean score of 1.83 with 44.4% indicated they "Strongly Disagree" with the

statement.

Table 4.6

Moratorium (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree=1, Moderately Disagree=2, Slightly Disagree=3, Slightly Agree=4, Moderately Agree=5, Strongly Agree=6)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
I have a lot of questions about different denominations and faiths, like "Which one is true or best?" *M*=3.11, *SD*=1.57	3	16.7	5	27.8	2	11.1	4	22.2	3	16.7	1	5.6
My religious beliefs are different from others, and I am still forming them. *M*=2.89, *SD*=1.32	3	16.7	5	27.8	3	16.7	5	27.8	2	11.1	-	-
I'm not sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done yet. (I know and don't want to make my mind up) *M*=1.83, *SD*=1.04	8	44.4	7	38.9	2	11.1	-	-	1	5.6	-	-
I am still exploring my faith and I'm not sure where I will end up. *M*=2.33, *SD*=1.01	5	27.8	5	27.8	5	27.8	3	16.7	-	-	-	-

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Table 4.6 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me. M=1.94, SD=1.01	8	44.4	5	27.8	3	16.7	2	11.1	-	-	-	-

Table 4.7 contains the results of two statements related to Global Identity
Moratorium as assessed on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey
items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly
Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. The mean scores
and frequency distributions were analyzed to find level of agreement. "In finding an
acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with
others and some self-exploration," 50% of students indicated that they "Slightly Agree"
with the statement. "I feel like I am still trying to find out "who I am"' had 27.8% of
students indicating that they "Moderately Agree" with the statement.

Table 4.7

Global Identity Moratorium (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree=1, Moderately Disagree=2, Slightly Disagree=3, Slightly Agree=4,
Moderately Agree=5, Strongly Agree=6)

	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
Statement	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration. *M*=4.39, *SD*=1.04	-	-	3	16.7	-	-	9	50.0	2	11.1	4	22.2
I feel like I am still trying to find out "who I am" *M*=3.67, *SD*=1.85	4	22.2	1	5.6	3	16.7	2	11.1	5	27.8	3	16.7

Table 4.8 contains the results of five items related to Identity Integration as assessed on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. The mean scores and frequency distributions were analyzed to find level of agreement. "I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual," had the highest mean score of 5.17 and 50% of students indicating they "Moderately Agree" with the statement. "A person's faith is unique to each individual, I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I believe" had the highest mean score of 5.11 with 50% of students saying that they "Moderately Agree." "It took

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some time and effort, but after wrestling with my faith, I now know what I believe," had

the lowest mean score of 4.06 with 33.3% of students indicating they "Moderately

Agree" with the statement.

Table 4.8

Integration (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree=1, Moderately Disagree=2, Slightly Disagree=3, Slightly Agree=4,
Moderately Agree=5, Strongly Agree=6)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual. *M*=5.17, *SD*=0.71	3	16.7	5	27.8	2	11.1	4	22.2	3	16.7	1	5.6
I've questioned a lot of things about religions, and now I feel at peace with my faith. *M*=4.33, *SD*=.91	8	44.4	5	27.8	3	16.7	2	11.1	-	-	-	-
It took some time and effort, but after wrestling with my faith, I now know what I believe. *M*=4.06, *SD*=1.43	8	44.4	7	38.9	2	11.1	-	-	1	5.6	-	-
A person's faith is unique to each individual, I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I believe. M=5.11, *SD*= 0.83	3	16.7	5	27.8	3	16.7	5	27.8	2	11.1	-	-

Table 4.8 (continued)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I know what I believe, and even though I don't believe everything my religious tradition believes, it's still a part of who I am. M=4.39, *SD*=1.54	1	5.6	1	5.6	3	16.7	4	22.2	3	16.7	6	33.3

Table 4.9 contains the results of two items related to Global Identity Integration as assessed on Bell's (2009) religious identity study. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Disagree=1; Moderately Disagree=2; Slightly Disagree=3; Slightly Agree=4; Moderately Agree=5; Strongly Agree=6. The mean scores and frequency distributions were analyzed to find level of agreement. "After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal 'life style' and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective" had the highest percentage of students (33.3%) indicating they "Slightly Agree" with the statement. "I did a lot searching and exploring and I now feel at peace with my faith" had the highest percentage (38.9%) of students indicating that they "Moderately Agree" with the statement.

Table 4.9

Global Identity Integration (N=18)
(Strongly Disagree = 1, Moderately Disagree = 2, Slightly Disagree = 3, Slightly Agree
= 4, Moderately Agree = 5, Strongly Agree= 6)

	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree	
Statement	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "life style" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective. *M*=4.56, *SD*=1.20	-	-	1	5.6	2	11.1	6	33.3	4	22.2	5	27.8
I did a lot of searching and exploring and I now feel at peace with my faith *M*=4.50, *SD*=1.20	1	5.6	-	-	1	5.6	6	33.3	7	38.9	3	16.7

Profile of the Qualitative Interview Sample

  The eight participants of these interviews were selected through a convenience and snowball sampling method that began with Rowan University's Muslim Student Association (MSA). Participants included Muslim students that were members of the MSA and some that were not. The length of the interviews ranged from nine to 22 minutes. An audio consent form was provided to all eight participants and confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews were held inside of a conference room at Rowan University's Social Justice Inclusion & Conflict Resolution

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Office. There was an even split between gender, with four of the participants being female, and four of them being male.

A biography of each of the nine participants of the interview are listed below:

Bilal is a White male who converted to Islam upon entering Rowan University. He is a junior, lives on campus, and majors in Writing Arts with a minor in Psychology. He grew up in many different states including Ohio, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and New Jersey. Bilal chose to attend Rowan University because it was affordable and one of the few places that accepted him when applying for colleges. He is politically active on campus and involved in various different organizations. Islam did not play a big role in Bilal's life growing up, and only found out about in middle school. He started to practice Islam during high school.

Zahra is a Black female commuter student who transferred to Rowan University. She is currently a senior and grew up in south New Jersey and double majors in the social sciences. Rowan University was not Zahra's first choice but decided to attend because it was her only option at the time. Zahra does not consider herself very active on campus because she is a commuter and has other responsibilities in her household. Islam played an incredibly important role in Zahra's life growing up. She is the child of converts and attended Islamic school growing up. Her father was an Imam and stressed Islamic education on his children.

Haroon is a South Asian student majoring in the sciences and is from the south New Jersey area. He is currently a sophomore and chose to attend Rowan University because it was the cheapest and most reasonable choice. Since entering he has enjoyed his experience and decided to stay. Haroon is very active on campus holding leadership

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positions in some of the clubs he participates in. These campus clubs range from spiritual groups to ones that are geared towards the sciences. Islam was something that was always present in his life growing up and he described his parents teaching it as a "guideline" to live his life. Haroon used Islam as he got older to give his own life direction.

Ali is a freshman South Asian student majoring in business. He lives on campus and came from overseas with his family to move to south New Jersey. He chose to attend Rowan University because it was a smaller school environment and close to him. Ali is a member of multiple student organizations but he is not an active member. He describes his household as being a strict Muslim environment and is thankful for the lessons he learned.

Solomon is an Arab senior majoring in Health Sciences. He lives independently off-campus and chose to attend Rowan because of its medical program. He grew up with Islam in his household but was not a major part of his life growing up.

Fatima is a South Asian senior student who commutes from her family's home to Rowan University. She is a Health Sciences major and grew up with Islam in her family's home and attending mosque during holidays. She works many hours and does not consider herself very active on campus because of her busy schedule.

Sufia is a South Asian senior who lives on campus. She grew up in a strong Muslim household and is very involved on campus with the MSA along with the Office of Social Justice Inclusion and Conflict Resolution at Rowan University. Sufia wears the hijab and considers it an important part of her identity.

Madina is an Arab student, in her senior year studying Biology. Madina has been commuting to Rowan University for the past four years. She is involved in many clubs and organizations on campus, including the Muslim Student Association.

Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Research question 2. What do selected Muslim students report about their experience at Rowan University?

Content analysis was used to determine how Muslim students at Rowan University reported their experience. During the interview questions about their overall experience, ability to explore their understanding of Islam, and how their understanding has changed during their time. The following looks at questions related to their experience on campus as a Muslim-American.

"What has your experience been as a Muslim student at Rowan University?"

This question was the first question as part of the audio interview with the goal of allowing students the opportunity to express themselves openly and allow them to share what would be most pressing. Table 4.10 shows the main themes that came out of the responses that students made to this question. Feeling of other, role of community, and appearance of passing as a non-Muslim were brought up in the answers.

Feeling of other came out in students' descriptions of moments that made them feel marginalized. A senior, Sufia, described how when she first entered the university there was not a space to pray and said, "My freshman year it was hard to express my religion and had to go to my car, a room, or home" to complete one of the five daily obligatory prayers." Another student, Madina, shared how she first came into the university feeling very accepted and celebrated for her diversity and "…over the span of

four years, things have changed sometimes for the better sometimes for the worst. That's where I'm at."

The role of community also came up in multiple interviews. For many of the students, their experience was shaped positively or negatively based on their experiences with the community. Haroon's ability to find other Muslim students and an organization like the Muslim Student Association helped create a positive environment and atmosphere. He shared "I felt like it was pretty welcoming because of the MSA."

Contrasted with the experience of a Black Muslim student like Zahra who stated:

I don't really interact with other Muslims because I don't really care for organizations like MSA. So after experiencing it my first year I wasn't really about it. So if I see people on campus who are Muslim I give them the greeting. If they return it that's entirely up to them. That's pretty much it, I stick to myself.

Students also spoke about their appearance as a way to shield them from negative experiences and potential harm from being Muslim. One student Fatima said:

Honestly I feel like just because I don't wear hijab people, don't know I'm Muslim. Until I approach someone who's Muslim or make conversation with people who already know I'm Muslim but most people probably can't tell I'm Muslim or Indian or anything else in the South Asian area.

Another student Solomon shared:

I would say pretty normal. I'm not that dark so not that apparent that I'm Muslim. So most people don't notice. I think either way it would be ok but if I was a darker skin color or had more defining Arabic traits people would be would be slightly more expulsionist. Occasionally when I've told people there's a little

shock, but no one is like 'ahh' right when you tell them. You can see it in their faces but it's not a big deal.

Most students gave slightly non-committal answers in regards to their experience being positive, negative, or neutral. Two of the eight students gave directly positive responses. One student Ali shared, "Umm for the most part I would say Rowan is very religiously tolerant. I've never really had any problems so far." Haroon shared "Coming into the university, my first group of friends were Muslim. So I never really felt out casted because of my religious identity. I was always welcomed for it, and I was always able to practice as well."

Table 4.10

Experience at Rowan (N=8)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
Feeling of Other	I was different	5	1
	Friends confused ethnicity and religion		
	Marginalized in Muslim spaces		
	Less accepted over the years		
Role of Community	Muslim friends	4	2
	friends open to difference		
Passing as Non-Muslim	People don't know I'm Muslim	2	3
Welcoming	Religiously tolerant	2	3
	Not experienced any problems		
	Open to differences		

"Are you able to explore your understanding of Islam and your Muslim identity here on this campus?"

Table 4.11 shows the major themes that emerged for this question was students choosing to explore their religion and identity within the university campus. There were different reasons for this and some chose to elaborate while others did not. Some students like Solomon focused their exploration within their households and amongst family. He stated, "I do most of it probably at home or with my family at home because I'm not very you know, voiceful about religion in general. It's not something I project." Fatima spoke about this exploration happening at her local mosque and said, "If I go anywhere, it's going to be my mosque near where I live" she explained. Zahra found that the Muslim community at Rowan was not conducive to her understanding and growth of Islam. She pointed out that the Muslim students on campus engage in their religion through socializing and did not allow for the kind of spiritual exploration she hoped for.

When asked the question she responded:

"No that's why I stick to myself. Anything that has to do with other Muslims on campus, it doesn't have to do with religion it's social. So, I don't really feel it's necessary to hang out with people socially when my interest is to strengthen my religious background. So I'll go somewhere else because there's not a lot of people here for me."

The second major theme was the sense that students separated their Muslim identity and religion from campus life. In particular, commuters explained that their main focus on campus was strictly academic and there was not a need or interest beyond that. Fatima explained, "And being a commuter it's kind of like, I feel like I have a different perspective. I'm not here enough to kind of care about what's going on here. I go to class and then I go home". Another student, Haroon shared "When I'm on campus I'm usually

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studying for class. But that could be because I'm a commuter here. I guess it would be skewed. I guess if you lived on campus you would study religion here as well."

Ali lives on campus and still found that he did not find it necessary to engage in this exploration on campus. He talked about wanting to do this more but focusing solely on academics:

To be quite honest not really but that's because I'm not really here as much, as I'd like to be you know, I'm not around the people like that as much as I'd want to be, I just strictly focus on my schoolwork and academics and on the weekends I go home so yeah.

The third theme was students expressing limited opportunities and resources on campus to explore their understanding of Islam. Two of the students expressed that they wanted some type of class that would allow them to develop their understanding of Islam further. They both mentioned some opportunities but expressed frustration about their ability to access them. Madina stated "That wasn't offered to me. I had to go out of my way" when speaking about classes on religion that discussed Islam. Sufia felt that other religions had opportunities and classes but not for Muslims or Islam. She explained, "I know there's a lot of Bible classes, Jewish Studies, there's a political class about Palestine and Israel, but not something on Islamic studies and that would really help me."

Table 4.11

Ability to Explore Understanding of Islam and Muslim Identity on Campus (N=8)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
Explore outside of campus	Home	5	1
	Elsewhere		
	Local Mosque		
Religion not a focus on campus	Not voiceful about my religion	4	2
	I got to class then I go home		
	When I'm on campus usually studying		
	Strictly focus on schoolwork and academics		
Limited Opportunities	Not an Islamic class that would help me	2	3
	Have to go out of my way		
Not able to explore	I go somewhere else because not a lot of people here for me	1	4

Research question 3. What do selected Muslim students report about perceived discrimination on and off-campus?

Content analysis was used to determine what Muslim students at Rowan University reported regarding discrimination they may have faced because of their identity. There were two questions in the interview that were directed towards perceived discrimination. The first question focuses on their experience within Rowan University by asking about their experience being a Muslim student following recent terrorist attacks and events that have sparked anti-Muslim rhetoric becoming more prevalent in society. The other question more directly asks if people have treated them differently on or off-campus because of their Muslim identity.

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"What's it like being Muslim on a college campus with the rhetoric around Muslims from Donald Trump and recent terrorist attacks such as the Orlando mass shooting, San Bernardino, and Paris?"

Table 4.12 shows that experiencing bias emerged as a major theme in this question. The overwhelming majority of students spoke about experiencing, perceiving, or being in contact with someone who has dealt with some form of bias for being Muslim. Some students spoke about feelings of discomfort such as Sufia who described the day after the presidential election where Donald Trump was elected, "I could see people who would look at me and look away really fast like they did something wrong. I don't know, I had to smile and prove to them I'm not like what they hear and what Trump was saying." Solomon's answer started off saying that he had not been the direct target of discrimination on campus, but still had fear. He explained, "It wasn't directed towards me because it's not very obvious I'm Muslim but especially with anti-Islamic views that are more prevalent in the US now and abroad it's definitely a little scary."

Many of the students used descriptors such as discomfort, division, nasty, and scary to describe things that they have experienced or witnessed following these events.

Haroon described a protest that occurred after the presidential election and said:
I've seen really nasty things because of Trump and certain actions when people try to protest…these big guys came out of nowhere from what I saw and started yelling…'Oh you should get out of this country' and all this bs they were shouting.

In addition to this bias, students also mentioned a sense of collective guilt or responsibility for actions that were carried out by terrorists. Ali mentioned having to take action to combat the messages and stereotypes around Muslims stating:

The best way to prove people wrong is to graduate and get your education. You know I feel like that is the best thing to do to prove people wrong you know what I mean. To break that stigma that Muslims are this or that.

After the Orlando nightclub shooting that targeted an LGBTQ nightclub, Madina discussed her fear of backlash or anger from the LGBTQ community. She said, "I was kind of afraid that the LGBTQ community here might think like, oh those Muslims…it's almost like creating a sense of division." Madina found that this community did not end up alienating her for being Muslim and found solidarity instead.

Bilal spoke about being asked to speak on behalf of Muslims and condemn the attacks. He was asked, "As a Muslim do you need to denounce every terrorist attack?" He responded:

You don't need to be part of that religion to know that's wrong and you don't need to come and say 'yes I don't support killing people.' You don't need to do that but in today's Islamophobic society where the media constantly wants Muslims to denounce those things that question persists.

Physical appearance also came up as a theme in this question. Two students spoke about people being unable to identify them as Muslim from their physical appearance. Another student spoke about being both Black and visibly Muslim which has directly impacted her experience as a Muslim. Zahra explained:

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I feel like it hasn't really changed anything because of me being Muslim. Wearing hijab yeah I'm visibly Muslim, but I'm also African American so I haven't really had any different experiences when it comes to being Muslim on a college campus.

The other two students reiterated the fact that they have not experienced anything they perceive to be directly targeted, because their physical appearance does not clearly identify them as Muslim.

As they perceive their Muslim identity to be under attack, two students spoke about the solidarity they felt with other marginalized groups. Sufia shared, "they think we (Muslims) hate White people or hate America, but I also saw a good thing that minorities were coming together, that's also really nice." Madina also spoke about how many of the minorities on campus know each other and migrate towards similar interests, and said, "I feel like we understand each other better…we might not see eye to eye on everything but we're someone's target." Despite the division and rhetoric students heard, the sense of camaraderie that has been built by other groups has been a positive outcome for them.

Table 4.12

Experience on Campus After Terrorist Attacks and Anti-Muslim Rhetoric (N=8)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
Perceptions or Experience of Discrimination	Odd looks	7	1
	Told to denounce attacks		
	Discomfort in a room full of white men		
	Witnessing act of discrimination		
	Hearing about acts of discrimination		
	Hateful comments on social media		
	Stigma towards Muslims		

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Table 4.12 (continued)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
Collective Guilt	Prove to them I'm not what they hear Shouldn't have to apologize for actions of others Some people identify Islam as the problem Proving people wrong	5	2
Physical Appearance	People can't tell I'm Muslim I'm not obviously Muslim Visibly Muslim and Black	3	3

"Do people treat you differently on or off-campus because of your Muslim identity? And have you ever felt people were suspicious towards you because you were Muslim?"

Overwhelmingly, as Table 4.13 indicates, students have been treated differently because of their Muslim identity. Seven of eight students interviewed shared or alluded to some type of experience that they could pinpoint. Some occurred at Rowan University while others happened off-campus.

On-campus, Sufia referred to the way that people look at her that she has perceived as a level of suspicion or fear from others. She explained:

They won't outwardly say it. They just won't make eye contact. They look away really quick. They wouldn't say anything mean but it's like just they wouldn't also be friendly about it either. Sometimes I'm like is it all in my head are they ignoring me. Maybe if I wasn't Muslim they would come up and talk to me.

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Ali shared an incident that occurred at his family's home. He shared a story of how his father put up an American flag in front of their home for 12 years and after a storm passed by it was ripped and hanging upside down. An anonymous letter was left at his home that they are certain came from a neighbor. The letter referred to them as "dirty Muslims" and threatened to burn their house down.

The second theme that emerged was the treatment they received in connection to their physical appearance. Bilal spoke about being a White convert to Islam and the confusion that others felt when revealing that he was Muslim. He spoke about an interaction with another student:

> He said 'oh you're Muslim?' Yes. 'But you're white.' Yes I am thank you. Obviously this came from lack of understanding. In his mind only people who converted to Islam were African-American. Primarily from the Nation (of Islam). So he obviously didn't know white Muslims who have converted I guess.

Madina shared a comparison of the type of treatment she received when being visibly Muslim with a headscarf as opposed to the more favorable treatment she got after taking it off. She said, "…now (after removing the headscarf) I kind of see you as a person eye to eye but before it was almost like I'm tolerating you." Solomon talked about how his own personal racial identity changing, where he previously would have been considered White. He said, "…maybe like two years ago or so if this didn't happen people would've been like oh you're white, but now people are like oh basically you're not White." Zahra spoke about being targeted more for her race as a Black person more than religion and mentioned a story when she and her mother were called "towelheads" because of their head covering.

Table 4.13

Treated Differently Because of Muslim Identity (N=8)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
Yes	On campus	7	1
	Off-campus		
Physical appearance	Confused I'm white	5	2
	Used to be considered white		
	Treated differently for being Black		
	Coworker misidentified as Muslim		
	Treated differently when with scarf, versus without scarf		

Research question 4. In what ways has recent political rhetoric influenced the role of selected Muslim students view of Islam and the role it plays in their life?

Content analysis was used to determine how recent political rhetoric has impacted students view of Islam. The question, "What's it like being Muslim on a college campus with the rhetoric around Muslims from Donald Trump and recent terrorist attacks such as the Orlando mass shooting, San Bernardino, and Paris? Has this rhetoric impacted your view of Islam and how it impacts your life?" contained answers that help us answer this research question. Students were also asked if their understanding of religion changed since they have been on campus. During the interview, participants tended to focus on the first part and discuss the impact of the rhetoric but not directly tie it to their view of Islam.

"How has your understanding of religion changed since you have been on campus?"

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Table 4.14 shows that students overwhelmingly shared some type of change that happened for them during their time at Rowan University. For some that change meant reevaluating what they had been taught by parents to come to their own conclusions. Solomon discusses how his process made him rethink the role of religion and whether it still serves a purpose in people's lives.

So I read like the Bible, Quran, and a few other things. And you know you realize there's negative aspects to every religion. So in the beginning it might be like you know this is what I am, but it's more just something you're kind of given. You're like sure and if you don't take time to self-explore and learn about your own and other religions it's definitely negative because you won't understand the ideas of religion as a whole which is interesting because it has had its purpose. I don't know if it still does because we can explain a lot of things now. And you can still have faith but you don't have to be overtly religious.

Similarly, Fatima articulated what religion means to her presently, "The way I practice has changed, my beliefs on the religion has not changed. Like my faith hasn't."

Haroon described a clear improvement in his understanding that began with an understanding from his parents towards a deeper self-exploration. He shared:

Like I said I became really close with my religion Islam in the past year or so. Since I been at rowan it's changed dramatically from what I'm used to. It's become more pure, more authentic, in a sense. I guess I've just learned more. Before my parents taught me and they would say read your namaz (prayer), read your Fatiha (opening verse of the Quran) but you would

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have no idea what it means. But as you look into your religion you know,
ok this is what this Surah (verse of Quran) means and oh I'm putting my
head on the ground for this reason now and that actually makes a lot of
sense. So when you really understand what you're doing it makes a huge
difference.

The other theme that came up from this question came from two students who
stated that there was no change in their understanding of religion. Zahra explained "That
masjid in Cherry Hill (NJ) shaped me who I am today but that was here before I got to
rowan and came on this campus." Additionally, Ali shared, "I feel like I'm not really
involved in any religion on campus so I haven't had anything sway my mind into any
direction."

Table 4.14

Changes in Religious Understanding (N=8)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
Strengthened Understanding	Experience for ourselves and see the value	6	1
	Taken advantage of campus resources Read different holy books to better understanding		
	Practice has changed based on experience		
	More authentic		
	Learned more about other faiths		
Unchanged	Already committed when entering college Haven't had anything sway my mind in any direction	2	2

"What's it like being Muslim on a college campus with the rhetoric around Muslims from Donald Trump and recent terrorist attacks such as the Orlando mass shooting, San Bernardino, and Paris? Has this rhetoric impacted your view of Islam and how it impacts your life?"

For Sufia, she was able to find compassion with individuals discriminating against Muslims through her understanding of Islam. She explained:

Islam taught me to be more peaceful, and keep calm. I'm trying not to look at them as others as much and trying to look at it as they support Trump but not all bad people…Sometimes Allah puts a blindfold in front of them so they don't see the truth.

Another student, said that the rhetoric had an impact on all religions as a whole. Ali shared how the current situation forced him to reassess the role of culture within religion. He said:

The rhetoric kind of, changed my view on all religions and to be quite honest in a negative way because it allowed me to realize religions can be very bad in some sense. it also makes the culture that your around. um like for example in Christianity, you know down in the south for the most part, you find that there's hardcore Christians who want to do bad things to you just like if you go and in countries like where you find those Islamic terrorists, they want to do bad things to you too. but I feel like its a mix of culture, you know what I mean but like for the most part the rhetoric has changed my mind on religions in some sense, not just Islam. I feel like culture plays a really big part in religion.

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Research question 5. What recommendations do selected Muslim students have for faculty and administrators to create a more inclusive campus?

Content analysis was used to determine students' recommendations for Rowan University. The interview question, "What recommendations do you have for Rowan University to help ensure a more inclusive space for Muslim students" was used to determine students' thoughts towards this question. Table 4.15 shows that most students gave suggestions on services for students, while a few felt that no changes were necessary. The three main themes tied towards action from the university were providing a space dedicated for Muslim students, creating more opportunities for education on Islam, and actively standing against the rhetoric. The others felt that the university was already doing a good job and did not express much desire for additional action from the university.

The first theme that came up was having an on-campus space dedicated for Muslim students. Two students mentioned that this could be a place for them to complete their prayers. Fatima mentioned the importance of this space being private to avoid potential safety concerns. She stated:

I feel like they should hold a place where Muslim students can go pray, read Quran, so it's not so out in the open. It's great I respect, every single one of them who pray out in the open but a lot of people, that's where issues will start.

Currently there is a small prayer room available for Muslim students in the Office of Social Justice and Inclusion at Rowan, and one student mentioned the need to publicize this space more so that other students were aware of it.

Creating more educational opportunities for people to learn about Islam was another point that was made during the interviews. Sufia felt that this would be a way to help with the misunderstanding that occurs around Islam. She suggested that there be a class on Islam or a Qu'ran study opportunity to help misquoted references that are used to show negative images or opinions of Islam. Ali also mentioned hosting programs that would teach people about Islam or other religions as a strategy for Rowan University.

Two students also mentioned that they were satisfied with the efforts Rowan University had put forth at this time. Haroon said:

> As someone who hasn't necessarily struggled with the religion that's hard for me to say. I feel like personally, Rowan does offer a lot already. we have a prayer room available. We actually have two. one in the library one in the SJICR office. Which is just incredible with how they help people.

One particular student, Bilal suggested the importance of Rowan University being more political and speaking out against political rhetoric that exists around Muslim-Americans. He stated, "The only way you can have a campus be inclusive for the Muslim community is really denounce what is happening in America." He referred to some of the rhetoric being said during the presidential election as "Fascism, Nazism, and Alt-Right" and felt that there needed to be a clear message condemning this rhetoric sent to students and the wider community.

Table 4.15

Recommendations for Rowan University (N=8)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
On-campus space	Prayer room	3	1
	Office of Social Justice and Inclusion		
Education on Islam	Qu'ran study	2	2
	Academic courses		
No change necessary	Already offers a lot	2	2
	What they're doing is fine		
Actively stand against rhetoric	Denounce what's happening in America	1	3

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

The study analyzed Muslim-American college students' religious identity status development and sense of belonging in higher education. With limited research and studies focused around religious identity on college campuses, even fewer studies have looked into the Muslim student population (Aziz, 2010; Bradford, 2008; Peek, 2005). Muslim students at Rowan University were given David Bell's (2009) *Religious Identity Status* (RISt) scale to indicate their religious identity status based on four statuses: Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium, and Achieved identity. In addition, students also participated in an audio recorded interview that assessed their experiences of discrimination and sense of belonging at Rowan University based on three studies. These studies include Tovar, Simon, & Lee's *College Mattering Scale* (2009), Pew Research Center's study on Muslim-Americans (2011), and Hurtado & Carter's (1997) study of campus racial climate on Latino college students. The questions gave an opportunity for Muslim students to share their experiences of being a student at Rowan University and their recommendations for improvement. Three questions related to students' Sense of Belonging, two questions asked them about their Religious Identity, and one question looked at how Sense of Belonging may have impacted Religious Identity. All six questions are under the backdrop of a period in U.S. history when Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslim-Americans have been at an all-time high.

Surveys and interviews were completed during the spring 2017 semester at Rowan University. Surveys were taken at Muslim Student Association (MSA) meetings

and events. Interviews were held at the Rowan University Office of Social Justice and Inclusion. Each interview was audio recorded and later transcribed, allowing for appropriate qualitative analysis of the data. Content analysis was used on the transcriptions to determine themes, which were organized into tables. Direct quotes were used to further support and illustrate the themes that emerged.

Discussion of the Findings

Research question 1. What do selected Muslim students at Rowan University report as their status of religious identity based on the four modes of identity–diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and integration?

Identity Integration was found to be the religious identity status identified as having the highest average among those interviewed. All five questions had mean scores between 4.09 – 5.17. The majority of responses were identified as students choosing "Slightly Agree," "Moderately Agree," and "Strongly Agree." Based on the higher scale responses, a majority of students have gone through periods of questioning and have been able to reassess their values and beliefs on religion. As Fowler's (1981) research on faith development indicates, the stages of development may have a correlation to a person's age. With 13 of 18 students being either a sophomore, junior, or senior, these students will have been able to spend more time reflecting on their spiritual beliefs and development. These findings support both Fowler (1981) along with Sharon Daloz-Parks (2000) also indicated that after adolescence students begin to probe their own commitments to become more secure in them. This finding is also supported by scholars (Bradford, 2008; Peek, 2005;) who have argued that after 9/11, a reactive identity to

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Islam in which Muslim identity becomes more salient and seen as positive despite negative attention in the media.

Foreclosure was found to have the next highest set of mean values. Students indicated that they would never consider changing denomination or faiths in their answer with 94% either slightly, moderately, or strongly agreeing. "I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my family it must be right for me," received the lowest mean score in this category. The disagreement with this statement supports Erikson's (1959) stages of development research, which says that in young adulthood, individuals become connected with others outside of one's own family. Students are able to develop an identity that is self-selected rather than imposed on them by parental figures.

Moratorium and Diffusion were found to be the lowest mean scores from the participants. With the population being affiliated with the Muslim Student Association, many of these students will identify strongly with their religious identity and have gone through a set of understanding and self-exploration. Part of the goals of the Muslim Student Association is for these individuals to find a stronger sense of religious and spiritual identity. The fact that many students are dealing with the crisis of rampant Islamophobia may also be reasoning for these low values. As they experience this crisis, they are going through decision-making processes that will help define the student's values.

Research question 2. What do selected Muslim students report about their experience at Rowan University?

During the audio interviews, participants were asked, "What has your experience been as a Muslim student at Rowan University?" This was one of the first questions

asked and was left open for students to express what had come to mind for them in their answers. Five out of the eight students interviewed mentioned some type of feeling of marginalization in their answer. These students shared experiences of marginalization that generally came from those outside of the community, but it was also important to note the student who identified as a Black woman, felt marginalized within Muslim spaces. This student not only deals with the difficulties of being a Muslim student on-campus but also faces discrimination inside of Muslim settings because of her race.

Students also shared that the community at Rowan University could provide a greater sense of support. Interviewee Haroon described how the MSA made him feel more welcomed and connected with the campus. This supports Astin's (1984) Theory of Involvement and Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (1998), which both state that student satisfaction and retention increases as students become more involved in organizations and activities on campus.

Even in this general question about experience, students began to discuss how their physical appearance played a role. Two students spoke about how they are not seen as Muslim because of their physical appearance. Fatima said because she did not wear a hijab, people could not recognize her as Muslim and Solomon said that because he is not darker skinned with a beard, he is also difficult to identify. Both students seemed to have an underlying assumption that if they had in fact been noticeably Muslim that their experiences would be negative had they been exposed as Muslim.

Research question 3. What do selected Muslim students report about perceived discrimination on and off-campus?

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This question gave students an opportunity to go in depth about their experiences and struggles that many of them have faced because of their Muslim identity. The first question in this section referred to the experiences of students with the backdrop of recent terrorist attacks at San Bernardino, CA, Orlando, FL and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States. The overwhelming majority of students spoke about dealing with some form of bias. Seven out of eight students said they experienced some type of discrimination on campus. The students are not immune to the level of Islamophobia that has become accepted within the mainstream (Foran, 2016).

Collective guilt and physical appearance also emerged as a theme in this question. Students spoke about a need to prove others wrong and feel a responsibility to change the narrative. Tinto (1998) says that these social factors can be a part of why students may not succeed academically, and although it could not be determined that these students were negatively impacted academically, the long-term effects must be considered for these students. Physical appearance also came up in this question as students were beginning to make the connection that they were being targeted because of how they looked and the assumptions that they were Muslim.

Research question 4. In what ways has recent political rhetoric influenced the role of selected Muslim students view of Islam and the role it plays in their life?

Most of the students expressed that their understanding of religion changed since being on campus but did not clearly state whether that was a result of the rhetoric happening around them. One student spoke about how she was able to find compassion and forgiveness towards those who have been unjust towards her as a result of Islam. Another student spoke about it reinforcing some of the questions they had about religion

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overall. The data suggest that students' understanding of their religion strengthened as a student at Rowan University but it was difficult to determine how much of that was due to the political rhetoric surrounding them. Peek (2005) and Aziz (2010) suggest that the experience of crisis such as the events of 9/11 and other media portrayals of Muslims are the reasoning for students heightened sense of Muslim identity but that could not be determined through the students answers.

Research question 5. What recommendations do selected Muslim students have for faculty and administrators to create a more inclusive campus?

Ensuring physical space is available for students was the suggestion that was referenced most in this question. Similarly found in Farouk Dey's (2012) study of Muslim identity development, students spoke about having this space as being important for them to complete their daily prayers. Students who did not spend much time on campus or were particularly observant also felt the need that those in their community who prayed should have a space for them. One student mentioned that the university should have one without knowing it already existed, which speaks to the fact that some students may not be aware of the resources that currently exist for them. These spaces can ensure students feel welcomed and accepted within the university and can support them when research has shown that these religious and cultural differences can have a negative impact on the education experiences of Muslim students (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003).

Students also spoke about more educational opportunities that would improve understanding among the Muslim and non-Muslim students on campus. With targeted Islamophobia campaigns, the need for further education on this community is crucial to students feeling welcomed as part of the campus. The institutional pressures that these

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students face as minorities on campuses require both student services and academic support for them to succeed. Astin (1984) describes involvement as being comprised of the different services and academic experiences students have on the college campus and ensuring that the academic engagement reflects values of inclusion can be an additional support.

Conclusions

This study supported findings from previous studies and provide vital information of the sense of belonging for Muslim students at Rowan University. The selected students appeared to have gone through a period of faith exploration and identified strongly with having an achieved identity. Students' sense of belonging at Rowan University appeared to have mixed responses. Majority of students had experienced some form of discrimination and also felt that there were additional actions that could be taken by the university to support these students.

Students identified most strongly with a religious identity Integration status. These findings indicate these students have gone through a period of decision making and exploration to reach this point of their identity. Although it could not be determined the reasoning, this study does follow the research that higher levels discrimination and prejudice lead to a higher salience of Muslim religious identity.

Muslim students expressed a high sense of marginalization and discrimination within the university. When asked to describe their experience at Rowan University, a majority of students expressed some type of instance of discrimination, marginalization, or bias on campus. Appearance also played a big role in how they felt about their sense of belonging on campus. Being visibly Muslim or the appearance of being Muslim was a

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point brought up by the students and also supported by research that suggests this makes them a more vulnerable target for discrimination. These students also shared that recent political rhetoric and climate has caused more difficulty and an increased sense of marginalization on campus.

Muslim students offered institutional and academic suggestions to support their sense of belonging on campus. They felt that an established prayer space was a common theme among students. Prayer often being a public and visible action for Muslims, this was something that came to mind for many students. Rowan University currently has a prayer space, but perhaps shows that the visibility of this space is just as important as having one established. Additionally, students also suggested classes as well as more programming opportunities for people to learn about Islam.

Recommendations for Practice

1. Create more visibly public stances against hate and Islamophobic rhetoric by the institution.

2. Ensure training on Islamophobia and the issues facing Muslim students for students, staff, and faculty.

3. Establish a Middle Eastern Student Center modeled after University of California, Riverside to reach out to students who are impacted by Islamophobia but not as closely affiliated with religious or spiritual identity.

4. Establish Halal dining options on campus.

5. Explore the option of a spiritual identity learning community.

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Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following suggestions for future research are recommended.

1. Further research should be done at other similar institutions to compare results of these findings.

2. Expand the number of participants to make broader generalizations.

3. Adding a measure of religious identity salience to determine the impact of this rhetoric on those who have highly salient Muslim identity to those that do not.

4. Separate studies looking at the impact of Black Muslims who face discrimination within Muslim spaces as well as outside of it.

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Dear NAME,

My name is Omar Aziz. I am a master's candidate at Rowan University conducting research on Muslim American religious identity and belonging.

I would like to attend your next Muslim Student Association meeting to ask for your members to participate in a survey. Your participation in this study will allow university staff and administrators understand more about the experience of Muslim students on campus. Approximately 35 students will be participating in the study.

At the beginning of the meeting I will introduce myself and let everyone in attendance know about the purposes of the survey. Participants will be given approximately 15 minutes to complete this survey. There will be no identifying information given out during the survey. I will leave the room while participants are taking the survey. I will ask that a member of your group collect the surveys and place them in an envelope and return them back to me upon completion.

During this meeting I will hand out an interest form asking members if they would like to participate in a follow-up interview. These interviews will be held at a mutually agreed upon location between the participant and the interviewer. I will select 6-8 participants among those who show interest to participate in the interview. Before the interview begins, all participants will choose a pseudonym for their identity. Prior to the interview, I will ask you to sign a form in my presence that states you understand the topic being discussed and that you are participating on your own accord.

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be used to identify participants will be used only for the research of this study.

Sincerely,

Omar Aziz

Informed Consent Form

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE OF STUDY: Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging Among Rowan
University Muslim Students
Principal Investigator: Dr. Burton Sisco
Co-Investigator: Omar Azz

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will
provide information that will help you to decide whether you wish to volunteer for this
research study. It will help you to understand what the study is about and what will
happen in the course of the study.

If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask
them and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study,
you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

The Co-Investigator Omar Aziz or another member of the study team will also be asked
to sign this informed consent. You will be given a copy of the signed consent form to
keep.

You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or
by signing this consent form.

A.   Why is this study being done?

To have a better understanding of the Muslim experience at Rowan University. This
study is also part of the requirements for the co-investigator's degree of Master's in
Higher Education Administration.

B.   Why have you been asked to take part in this study?

You identify as a Muslim student at Rowan University taking more than six credits.

C.   Who may take part in this study? And who may not?

Only students who self-identify as Muslim-American, and enrolled in six or more credits
at Rowan University's Glassboro campus will be selected for this study. Only students
above the age of 18 are permitted to participate. I will be including all genders for this
study.

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The target population is Muslim-American undergraduate and graduate students at Rowan University. These students should self-identify as Muslim and be enrolled in at least six credits worth of courses through the university. There are no restrictions in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, or lifestyle.

Students who do not identify as Muslim will not be included in this study because this study aims to research Muslim student identity. Students who are enrolled in less than six units of courses are not eligible to participate because they may not have enough connection to the university to effectively assess their sense of belonging.

D.   How many subjects will be enrolled in the study?

6-8 students will be enrolled in the interview.

E.   How long will my participation in this study take?

As a participant, your interview will take approximately 30 minutes.

F.   Where will the study take place?

The interview will take place in a meeting room in Robinson Hall at the Office of Social Justice Inclusion and Conflict Resolution at Rowan University. A mutually agreed upon alternative may also be worked out.

G.   What will you be asked to do if you take part in this research study?

The interview will have the co-investigator asking you ten questions related to your experience as a Muslim student at Rowan University. The co-investigator will record the audio of your answers. Your perceptions of campus climate and recommendations for practice will be asked.

H.   What are the risks and/or discomforts you might experience if you take part in this study?

There is minimal to no risk in taking part in this study.

I.   Are there any benefits for you if you choose to take part in this research study?

It is possible that you might receive no direct personal benefit from taking part in this study. However, your participation may help us understand which can benefit you directly, and may help other people to understand the experiences and perceptions of Muslim students at Rowan University.

J.   What are your alternatives if you don't want to take part in this study?

There are no alternatives available. Your alternative is to not take part in this study.

K.   How will you know if new information is learned that may affect whether you are willing to stay in this research study?

During the course of the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted.

L.   Will there be any cost to you to take part in this study?

There will be no cost to you taking part in this study.

M.   Will you be paid to take part in this study?

You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.

N.   How will information about you be kept private or confidential?

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be given out, if required by law. Presentations and publications to the public and meetings will not use your name and other personal information.

Data and audio from the interviews will be stored in the co-investigators password protected laptop. The co-investigator will keep the data for a minimum of six years as a precaution in case any issues or concerns arise after the study is completed. During the interviews, the co-investigator will take notes as well as record the conversations. Identity of participants in the focus groups will be kept separate from the audio recordings and field notes. Similar to survey data, all focus group data will be kept secured by a password protected computer of the co-investigator, and all paper documentation will be in a locked cabinet for a minimum of six years.

O.   What will happen if you are injured during this study?

If you are injured in this study and need treatment, contact Counseling & Psychological Services or the Rowan Wellness Center and seek treatment.

We will offer the care needed to treat injuries directly resulting from taking part in this study. Rowan University may bill your insurance company or other third parties, if

appropriate, for the costs of the care you get for the injury. However, you may be responsible for some of those costs. Rowan University does not plan to pay you or provide compensation for the injury. You do not give up your legal rights by signing this form.

If at any time during your participation and conduct in the study you have been or are injured, you should communicate those injuries to the research staff present at the time of injury and to the Principal Investigator, whose name and contact information is on this consent form.

P. What will happen if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you later decide not to stay in the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to:

Dr. Burton Sisco
James Hall - 201 Mullica Hill Rd.
Glassoboro, NJ 08028

If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

Q. Who can you call if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research related injury, you can call the Principal Investigator:

> *Dr. Burton Sisco*
> *Department of Educational Services and Leadership*
> *856-256-4500 Ext 3717*

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

> Office of Research Compliance
> (856) 256-4078– Glassboro/CMSRU

What are your rights if you decide to take part in this research study?

You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

ROWAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AUDIO/VIDEOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Omar Aziz (Co-Investigator) and Dr. Burton Sisco (Primary Investigator). We are asking for your permission to allow us to record the audio of your interview as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording of your interview will be used for analysis by Omar Aziz's Master's Thesis on "Religious Identity Status and Sense of Belonging Among Rowan University Muslim Students".

The audio recording will not include any identifiers. Before we begin you will assign yourself a pseudonym to be used during the interview and in the analysis.

The recording will be stored in a password protected phone and transferred to a password protected computer. The co-investigator will keep the data for a minimum of six years as a precaution in case any issues or concerns arise after the study is completed. The data will be locked in a secured file cabinet with no link to the subjects identity.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read this entire form, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed. All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered.

Subject Name:_____

Subject Signature:_____ Date:_____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Follow-Up Interest Interview Form

As part of this study I will be conducting follow-up interviews to the survey you just completed. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes at a mutually agreed upon location in Rowan University between the participant and researcher. The interview will be a set of ten questions related to your experiences as a Muslim student at Rowan University, effects of discrimination, and recommendations for administrators. This will provide additional research and information for the administrators in supporting you as Muslim students.

No identifying information will be included in the thesis. Before the interview begins, all participants will choose a pseudonym for their identity. Prior to the interview, I will ask you to sign a form in my presence that states you understand the topic being discussed and that you are participating on your own accord.

Please circle yes or no for the following questions:

1. I am interested in participating in a 30 minute follow-up interview.
   a. Yes
   b. No

If you said yes to Question 1 please answer the following questions.

2. I have completed the survey on Religious Identity Status and Sense of Belonging Among Rowan University Muslim Students?
   a. Yes
   b. No

3. I identify as Muslim-American
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. I take at least 6 credits at Rowan University
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. What is your name? (Please write-in your answer)

6. What is your e-mail address? (Please write-in your answer)

7. What is your class rank? (Please write-in your answer)

8. What is your gender? (Please write-in your answer)

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Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Please state your name for the record.

Demographics
1. Tell me about yourself. What is your major? Where are you from?
2. Why did you choose to attend Rowan University?
3. What kinds of activities are you involved in on campus?
4. How would you describe the role Islam played in your life growing up?
5. How would you describe your current religious practice?
    a. Do you pray regularly? If so, how often?
    b. Do you attend a mosque or community space for prayer? If so, how often?
    c. Has your religious practices changed since attending Rowan? How?

Research Questions
6. How would you describe your experience here as a Muslim student at Rowan University?
7. Are you able to explore your understanding of Islam and your Muslim identity here on campus?
8. What's it like being Muslim on a college campus after recent terrorist attacks (Orlando, Paris, and san Bernadino) and political rhetoric targeting Muslims?
    a. Has this rhetoric impacted your view of Islam and the role it plays in your life
    b. In what ways has recent political rhetoric influenced your view of Islam and the role it plays in your life
    c. Has your understanding of religion changed since you have been a student at Rowan?
9. Do people treat you differently on or off-campus because you are Muslim?
10. What recommendations do you have for Rowan University to make Muslim students feel welcomed and supported?

Appendix E

Religious Identity Status Survey Instrument

Participation in this survey is voluntary, and you are not required to answer any of the questions, however your cooperation is greatly appreciated and important to the success of this study. The purpose of the study is to have a better understand of the experience Rowan University's Muslim-American students and their religious identity status and sense of belonging. All participants must be 18 years or older and all responses will be kept anonymous and confidential and no personal information is being requested. If you have any questions or problems regarding your participation in this study, you may contact Omar Aziz by phone at (510) 449-9601, or email at omfaziz@gmail.com or Dr. Burton Sisco by phone at (856) 256 – 4500 x. 3717 or email at sisco@rowan.edu.

Please circle the letter that corresponds to your answer.

Demographics:

1. **What is your gender?**

   a. Male

   b. Female

   c. Other

2. **What is your age?**

   a. 28 or older

   b. 25-27

   c. 23-25

   d. 20-22

   e. 18-19

3. **Family income**

   Please enter your best estimate of your family's yearly income (if dependent student, partnered, or married) or your yearly income (if single and independent student)

   $ _____

4. **What is your race/ethnicity?**

   a. African-American/Black/Caribeean

   b. Arab

   c. European

   d. Asian

   e. Latinx/Hispanic

f. South Asian (Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Afghan)

g. Southeast Asian (Malaysian, Indnoesian, Filipino)

h. White American

i. Mixed: _____

j. Other: _____

5. **Please describe your religious background**

a. I was born into Islam

b. I am a convert to Islam

6. **What is your current college class ranking?**

a. Freshman

b. Sophomore

c. Junior

d. Senior

e. Graduate student

7. **Where do you reside?**

Campus Housing (residence halls, apartments)

a. Residence Hall

b. Student Housing Apartments

Non-Campus Housing

c. Independent Off-campus housing

d. Living with family member/guardian

8. **Please write your cumulative GPA below:**

_____

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Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging Among Rowan University Muslim-American Students

For each of the statements mark the box that corresponds to your level of agreement. If the statement has two parts (connected with "and"), take it as a whole and ask yourself if you agree with both parts of the statement (not just one part).

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
When it comes to religion I just haven't found anything that appeals to me and I don't really feel the need to look.						
A person's faith is unique to each individual, I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.						
I have never really thought about "who I am."						
I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my family it must be right for me.						
I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.						
After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "life style" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.						
I'm not sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done yet. (I know and don't want to make my mind up)						
I feel like I am still trying to find out "who I am".						
Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.						

Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging Among Rowan University Muslim-American Students

For each of the statements mark the box that corresponds to your level of agreement. If the statement has two parts (connected with "and"), take it as a whole and ask yourself if you agree with both parts of the statement (not just one part).

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration.						
I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.						
My parents' views on life were good enough for me, I don't need anything else.						
I am still exploring my faith and I'm not sure where I will end up.						
I am committed to my religious beliefs and never really had any period of questioning my faith.						
I have a few religious beliefs, but I am not committed to any religious tradition and am not concerned about finding one.						
My faith is very important to me, and I have never really doubted it.						
I have a lot of questions about different denominations and faiths, like "Which one is true or best?"						
There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another.						
It took some time and effort, but after wrestling with my faith, I now know what I believe.						

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Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging Among Rowan University Muslim-American Students

For each of the statements mark the box that corresponds to your level of agreement. If the statement has two parts (connected with "and"), take it as a whole and ask yourself if you agree with both parts of the statement (not just one part).

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
I know what I believe, and even though I don't believe everything my religious tradition believes, it's still a part of who I am.						
I like my church/religious community, and I have never considered changing denomination or faiths.						
I don't see religion as important to who I am, and I'm not concerned with religion.						
My religious beliefs are different from others, and I am still forming them.						
I know "who I am" and I have never had to worry about it much.						
I've questioned a lot of things about religions, and now I feel at peace with my faith.						
I've never thought about whether religion is important to me or not.						
I did a lot of searching and exploring and I now feel at peace with my faith.						
I attend the same church/faith community (or same kind of mosque) that my family has always attended, and I've never really questioned why.						

Appendix F

IRB Approval Letter

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier:
FWA00007111
IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman
IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy
Effective Date: 1/25/2017

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID: Pro2016001343

Title: Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging Among Rowan University Muslim-American Students

Principal Investigator:	Burton Sisco	**Study Coordinator:**	
Co-Investigator(s):	Omar Aziz	**Other Study Staff:**	There are no items to display
Sponsor:	Department Funded	**Approval Cycle:**	Twelve Months
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	**Device Determination:**	Not Applicable

Review Type:	Expedited	**Expedited Category:**	6 7	**Exempt Category:**	3
Subjects:	35	**Specimens:**	0	**Records:**	

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type:	Research Protocol/Study	Submission Status:	Approved
Approval Date:	1/25/2017	Expiration Date:	1/24/2018

Pregnancy Code:	No Pregnant Women as Subjects	Pediatric Code:	No Children As Subjects	Prisoner Code:	No Prisoners As Subjects

Protocol:	Interview Protocol FINALAZIZIRBprotocol.docx Survey Instrument	Consent:	There are no items to display	Recruitment Materials:	Aziz Interview Interest Form.docx Aziz MSA email.docx MSA Email Response

* Study Performance Sites:

Glassboro Campus   College of Education - Rowan University 201 Mullica Hill Rd. 08028

There are no items to display

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Appendix G

Rules and Procedures for Logical Analysis of Written Data

RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN DATA

The following decisions were made regarding what was to be the unit of data analysis (Sisco, 1981):

1. A phrase or clause will be the basic unit of analysis.

2. verbiage not considered essential to the phrase or clause will be edited out-- e.g., articles of speech, possessives, some adjectives, elaborative examples.

3. Where there is a violation of convention syntax in the data, it will be corrected.

4. Where there are compound thoughts in a phrase or clause, each unit of thought will be represented separately (unless one was an elaboration of the other).

5. Where information seems important to add to the statement in order to clarify it in a context, this information will be added to the unit by using parentheses.

The following decisions were made regarding the procedures for categorization of content units:

1. After several units are listed on a sheet of paper, they will be scanned in order to determine differences and similarities.

2. From this tentative analysis, logical categories will derived for the units.

3. When additional units of data suggest further categories, they will be added to the classification scheme.

4. After all the units from a particular question responses are thus classified, the categories are further reduced to broader clusters (collapsing of categories).

5. Frequencies of units in each cluster category are determined and further analysis steps are undertaken, depending on the nature of the data-- i.e., ranking of categories with verbatim quotes which represent the range of ideas or opinions. (p.177).

From: Sisco, B.R. (1981). A study of the attitudes of slected academics and selected decision-makers toward adult learners.Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University.