Immigrant Muslim women’s belief and practice of the veil in Southern California

Fatimah Alsuhaibani
Claremont Graduate University

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Immigrant Muslim women’s belief and practice of the veil in Southern California

By

Fatimah Alsuhaibani

Claremont Graduate University

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Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Fatimah Alsuhaibani as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religion.

Tammi Schneider, Chair
Claremont Graduate University
Professor of Religion

Daniel Ramirez
Claremont Graduate University
Associate Professor of Religion

Sallama Shaker
Claremont Graduate University
Senior Fellow of Middle East & International Studies
Abstract

The literature lacks a thorough examination of why a Muslim woman decides to veil or not. Thus, utilizing interviews and the theoretical frameworks developed by Tweed, Vasquez, and others, my study investigated the practice and beliefs of Sunni immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire in terms of the veil. Because of the global nature of Islam and the transnational Muslim community, their framework may be utilized to evaluate immigrant Muslim women in the United States, who exemplify principles of transnationalism and globalization. Furthermore, my research found that once Muslim women relocate to the Inland Empire and adjust to life in a non-Muslim country, they shift their veiling practice to the hijab since it is the most widespread type of veiling in the United States and attracts less attention. However, their ideas and interpretations of Quranic verses surrounding the veil did not change since the women in the research spent the most of their childhood in a Muslim nation where their beliefs were formed, making them more resistant to change. However, it is different for their second-generation immigrant daughters because they were born in a non-Muslim country, which may affect their practice and belief in veiling and can be a future area of study. Moreover, due to the study's limited sample size the results do not reflect all immigrant Muslim women in Southern California, and thus additional research on this issue is needed to clearly illustrate the influence of immigration on the practice and belief in veiling.
Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents whose words of encouragement who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done. I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my husband and my wonderful children for being there for me throughout the entire doctorate program.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW
The relationship between location and identity is under increasing pressure in the 21st century. The ability and means for an individual to be quickly and inexpensively transported across borders are unprecedented. In the last 75 years, this element of globalization has brought people together from all corners of the world. The confluence of people from around the world is particularly apparent in the United States. Specifically, the Inland Empire area of Southern California is home to dozens of ethnic, racial, and religious communities. Within each of these communities, further diversity exists. Take for example the diversity of my community – the Muslim community – which comprise 3.45 million people, or 1.1% of the U.S. population. The community contains dozens of nationalities and ethnicities which include Indonesians, Pakistanis, Egyptians, Iranians, Turks, Azeris, Syrians, Nigerians, and Moroccans. The Muslim community, in the Inland Empire specifically, consists of a diversity of religious beliefs and views. The diversity is due to the widespread growth of Islam. Globally, there are 57 Muslim countries and around two billion adherents to Islam, and it is the fastest growing religion in the world. Thus, the diversity includes distinct religious differences between Sunni, Shia, and Ismailis to more subtle differences within the Sunni community concerning their adherence to a particular Sunni legal school – Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i, and Hanbali. Therefore, this study seeks to broaden and deepen the understanding of the interplay between globalization, Islam, and women. It captures several different sub-topics or elements: the role of identity, Islamic beliefs and practices, Islam in America, and Islam and women. By its very nature, it is an interdisciplinary study.

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Specifically, my study investigates the beliefs and practices of veiling by first-generation immigrant Sunni Muslim women in the Inland Empire region of Southern California. Specifically, the literature on the veil lacks a deep analysis of the belief in why a Muslim woman chooses to practice veiling or not and her interpretation of the Quranic verses regarding it. Thus, my study has explored the practice and belief of Sunni immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire in terms of the veil with a qualitative approach using interviews and the theoretical frameworks by Tweed, Vasquez, and others. Their framework can be used to analyze immigrant Muslim women because in the U.S they constitute a minority population, embodying concepts of transnationalism and globalization due to the global nature of Islam and the transnational Muslim community. Moreover, my study analyzes how immigrant Muslim adapt to living in the Inland Empire, in terms of the veil, and if immigrating has an effect on their practice and belief in the veil.

The investigation employs two important elements for the analysis- immigration and the Quranic scripture. The goal of the study is to ascertain whether a change(s) in belief and practices of veiling is attributable to movement across boundaries. It seeks to answer the question: Does immigrating to the Inland Empire have an impact on Muslim women’s belief and practice of veiling? Are there changes observed in their belief and interpretation of the Quranic verses regarding veiling? If so, do Muslim immigrant women conform to a particular set of beliefs and practices regarding veiling after immigrating or do they maintain the unique beliefs and practices of their home country? Furthermore, it is also essential to understand and analyze not only if Muslim women veil, but also why they veil? What is their understanding of the Quranic verses regarding the veil, and did it inform their decision to veil?
I utilize a qualitative approach for understanding how and why recent female Muslim immigrants practice veiling. The qualitative approach incorporates a series of interviews with a variety of female Muslim immigrants in the Inland Empire. Each interview uses the same set of questions about the Quranic verses as well as their beliefs and practices of veiling. The interviews allow the participants to speak at length providing the ability to compare the beliefs and practices of the participants. An analysis of the interviews utilizing the theoretical framework will determine if there is a change observed in the belief and practice of veiling for Muslim women after immigrating to the Inland Empire. Furthermore, if there is a change observed, a comparative analysis of the interview results will determine whether the beliefs and practices of veiling in the Inland Empire are a unique phenomenon or whether it is informed by the place of the immigrant’s origin.

Ultimately, my study seeks to determine whether immigrant Muslim women change their belief and practices of veiling due to immigrating to the Inland Empire. For example, if they practiced the veil using an *abaya*\(^2\) in their home country, did that same style of veiling persist or did it change, for example into a *hijab*,\(^3\) after moving to the Inland empire? My study also aims to discern if the beliefs and practices of veiling in the United States are a unique phenomenon, or do the beliefs and practices of a Muslim woman’s country of origin prevail after arriving in the United States? The interview results of each participant are compared to determine the presence of common themes/responses to the questions.

As mentioned, the Sunni Muslim community of the Inland Empire area is quite diverse. Diverse in terms of religious beliefs and practices. My analysis will focus on the Sunni Muslim

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\(^2\) A style of veiling that covers the entire body; a long cloak.

\(^3\) A style of veiling; a head scarf that covers the hair.
woman’s beliefs and practices. It concerns the internal and external aspects of a Sunni Muslim woman’s religion – how she understands the Quranic scripture and how it is demonstrated externally through her veiling. The veiling is an outward expression of her identity. When a diverse group of Sunni Muslim women from a variety of national and ethnic backgrounds converge in a particular location, what happens to those beliefs and sense of identity? Does a particular understanding of scripture and its relationship to veiling emerge or do they maintain an understanding and outward display of their origins – Saudi Arabia? Indonesia? Nigeria? Or does it change over time?

Veiling is a manifestation of female modesty. It is a belief and an act intended to prevent indecency, particularly in public and religious settings. According to Saher Amer, the practice and belief of veiling is not exclusive to Islam. The practice and belief of veiling is also present in the Judaic and Christian religions, albeit on much more restricted terms or among smaller populations. Nor is veiling exclusive to the Abrahamic religions. Manifestations of it have existed throughout history including the Roman and Greek Empires. Evidence of veiling dates back to the Assyrian Empire (1200 BCE) where rules stipulated that a married woman was required to cover herself in public or would be susceptible to punishment.4

Regardless of the rich extensive history of veiling and its practice by other religions, in the modern context the practice of veiling is mainly linked to Islam. In the context of Islam, veiling signifies a variety of ideas: social interaction, gender, religious practice, as well as religious, ethnic, and national identity. Veiling is a complex concept as it is greatly exceeded by the types of veiling and the terms used to signify it in the Muslim world.

However, it is important to note that the Quran emphasizes that both women and men are to be modest and pious. The Qur'an discusses physical modesty with the story of Adam and Eve in Surat “Al-Araf,” where the verse states: “Children of Adam. We have sent down on you a garment to conceal your private parts and adornment. But the clothing of righteousness is better for you” [7:26]. Thus, modesty is an important aspect of Islam for both men and women, yet women are required to veil, thereby creating a unique impact on their experience as immigrant Muslim women.

My study of the relationship between the movement of Sunni Muslim women and their beliefs and practices is necessary for several reasons. First, Islam is more than just a religion that requires certain beliefs. Islam is not just restricted to reading the Qur'an. Islam is a religion of action. How one acts, conducts, or presents oneself also matters. It is about both what one believes and how one practices or invokes those beliefs. For example, it is not only important that one pray, it is also important how one prays – there is a certain process or a correct way of praying. Orthopraxy (the correct practice) is just as critical as orthodoxy (the correct belief).

Thus, in this study, it is important to analyze both immigrant Muslim women’s practice and belief in veiling.

Second, Islam is not a sedentary religion that is centered in one location but rather a global religion that transcends borders and continues to grow globally. It is always on the move. Islam is a paradigm of life for Muslims. Muslims bring their religion elsewhere, beyond the

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lands of its origins. According to Nasser Rabbat, Islam is a global phenomenon as it “emerged from its birthplace of Arabia and prospered across geographic, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and even religious boundaries.” My study will add to the understanding of that globalization. It will provide an example and insight into Islam, one of the global processes. My analysis is significant because it is more than just about identity, it is also about ideas and beliefs. It is therefore important to analyze how immigrating to the U.S. influences Muslim women’s belief and practice in veiling, if it all, including their understanding of the Quranic verses regarding veiling.

Third, another important component of this study is its contributions to the understanding of Islam in America. Islam is not native to the United States nor was it a contributing factor to the founding of the United States. It has been brought here by Muslim immigrants from diverse backgrounds since the 1880s and the story of immigration is a continual process which requires continual critiques and analysis. The Muslim community of the Inland Empire area grows and our study of it should also evolve. It is not a stagnant community nor should our study of it be. Within this study of Islam in America, my analysis focuses on one subtopic – Muslim women in America and Islam. An enormous number of studies have been conducted on this topic, especially the issue of veiling. However, there are a variety of variables that require further scrutiny concerning the subject of immigrant Muslim women in the U.S. such as the women’s belief and interpretation of the Quranic verses pertaining to the veil.

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Although Muslim women face various challenges when immigrating to the United States, I am concentrating on the veil especially since it serves as an identity marker for many Muslim women who choose to veil. Veiling is associated with political turmoil in the United States following the events of 9/11. Thus, it may influence a Muslim woman's decision to veil or not after immigrating to the United States, thus impacting her experience and possibly her practice and belief in the veil. Furthermore, as the literature review in this chapter will demonstrate, there are limited studies on Muslim women's beliefs and interpretations of the veil and the Quranic verses related to it. As a result, my research will look at how immigrant Muslim women adjust to life in the United States in terms of the veil and whether there are any changes in their practice and belief in the veil.

**Literature Review**

As a practicing Muslim woman from Saudi Arabia, I am part of this story of the relationship between location and identity- and a witness to it. I experience it and witness it in the university. I witness and experience it in my day-to-day routines. I also witness it and experience it at my mosque. My experiences and observations have made me particularly cognizant of the relationship between location and identity and its impact on the practicing Sunni Muslim woman in two regards: 1) Its portrayal in the scholarship and 2) its impact on the practice of Muslim women in the Inland Empire.

The confluence of practicing Sunni Muslim women at the mosque raises several questions. What happens to the practicing Sunni Muslim woman when she (re)locates? Does it impact her sense of identity? Does it impact how she veils? Does it change her beliefs about the
veil and the Quranic verses pertaining to it? Are the experiences the same? Or do they differ? If so, how? Are their experiences and observations shared or are they unique?

In western discourse little distinction is made between the idea of the term veil or *hijab*. The terms are used interchangeably, although the hijab constitutes a verb. Hijab roughly translates as the action of veiling. However, the term veil has dual significance when applied in non-Arabic contexts – the object and the act. Veil as an object has a wide range of terminology and manifestations. The terms and manifestation vary across ethnicities and nationalities. For example, the *chador*, a black cloak that covers a woman from head to toe, is found predominantly in Iran. The *burqa*, a face veil, also entails an entire covering of women from Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the rural parts of Syria and Palestine one discovers the *ghatweh*. The *dupatta* is found in Indonesia which accompanies the body outfit of the *shalwar qamis*. The variation of the veils demonstrates that while the practice is widespread throughout the Muslim world, how one veils is not uniform. The absence of uniformity demonstrates the role of culture in Islamic practices.

The literature on veiling is massive. Any keyword search regarding veiling or *hijab* pulls up pages of data. Publications - articles and books – on the topic easily exceed a thousand entries. Why? The large number of studies are attributable to several reasons. The increased interest in the study of Islam in western societies is one factor. Another issue is the growing emphasis on gender throughout all societies. Besides the focus on gender, the issue of the veil raises questions of oppression and equality. Another factor is the sheer expanse of Muslim civilization today. Muslims live in every corner of the world. It makes them a subject of analysis.

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whether one lives in Sweden, Australia, or Saudi Arabia, particularly the female experience in these locales. How does one dissect and critique such a large volume of studies?

As a result of the aforementioned factors, the study of the veil and veiling becomes a multi-disciplinary affair and there are many ways in which it is analyzed in the literature. It is an aesthetic topic because scholars are interested in the fashion aspect of the veil and what Muslim women wear and how they wear it. It is also a religious topic as people are interested in why a woman wears the veil. What are her motivations? What is her understanding of Islam? It is a gender issue as many are interested in the veil as a symbol – oppression or liberation. It is a geographic issue because people are interested in the different expressions of Islam. Does or how does Islam change based on a person’s location?

When one examines the aesthetic and physical aspect of veiling in the literature, one would expect to find considerable material. The aesthetic aspect, as demonstrated earlier, includes the many manifestations of the veil in different parts of the world– e.g., chador and the burqa. However, an examination of the literature on the physical component are rather eclectic and somewhat incomplete- there is no clear illustration of the veil itself. The scholar offers glimpses and pieces of the physical, but it is intertwined with other elements like politics, business (monetary) and fashion. There is a lack of a comprehensive account of the various manifestations of the veil. For example, The Routledge International Handbook to Veils and Veiling edited by Anna-Mari Almila and David Inglis, demonstrates the eclectic way of studying of the phenomenon of veiling. Part of the edited work addresses the “Fashion and anti-Fashion.” While it looks at the issues in the context of Africa (Niger), Rio De Janeiro (Brazil),

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and Berlin (Germany) but is absent of any study in the Arab world. It does not provide a complete picture of the veil. The theme of eclectic case studies is also found in *Veiling in Africa* edited by Elisha P. Renne and others.\(^{14}\) While it provides some insight into the various manifestations of a veil in Africa, it is also lacking. The study is not comprehensive, even for Africa. It cuts across a variety of themes and countries. While there is background on the practice of veiling in Zanzibar, it is unclear why the predominantly Muslim African country of Ghana is left out of the study or South Africa for that matter.

Magdalena Craciun's *Islam, Faith, and Fashion: The Islamic Fashion Industry in Turkey* contains a narrow examination of the physicality of the veil.\(^{15}\) Rather than drawing on the elements of the veil throughout the world, the author provides a limited examination of the veil. It discusses the issue of a secular Turkish society, the role of the veil in that secular Turkish society and how this is transformed into a fashion industry. Notions of beauty, fashion, and the veil are intertwined. But the focus of the study is more on how the individuals navigate the business than the actual presentation of the veil in various formats. The ideas of Craciun are largely repeated in Emma Tarlo’s *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith*.\(^{16}\) However, Tarlo’s study is conducted in a multi-cultural setting – the United Kingdom. The best account of the physicality of the veil is Saher Amer’s *What is Veiling*?\(^{17}\) Amer provides the most comprehensive account of the various manifestations of the physical veil. Most of this account is found in the introduction and glossary of the study. Like the previous studies discussed, the emphasis is more on the issues of politics, identity, and location. Saher’s account in this regard is


extensively concerned with a western perspective. She ignores the practice of veiling in historically Muslim countries and focuses on its presence in Western societies (i.e., the United States and Great Britain).

As the brief assessment of some of the literature has so far indicated, there is a relative lack in understanding the physicality and how the veil is worn in different places of the world and why it is different in a complete and systematic way. The notion of homogeneity in the veil persists throughout much of the literature. The subtle emphasis on the uniformity of the physical manifestation demonstrates that there is a failure to connect the physical to the mental. The focus is largely elsewhere – the religious motivation, the willingness to identify as a Muslim, and the geographic relevance – while not connecting the two in a more nuanced way. Considering the curiosity and attention given to the veil and the practice of veiling by the media and western scholars, few studies are specifically devoted to understanding its religious foundations. For example, few studies focus on why this practice occurs in the Islamic religion. What does the Qur’an say about veiling? What hadith are attributable to the practice? A survey of the literature reveals two examples of studies dedicated to the issue: 1) Emi Goto’s Quran and the Veil; and 2) Munirul Ikhwan’s “Interpreting the Qur’ān between Shari’ah and Changing Custom: On Women’s Dress in Indonesia.” 18 Goto examines three verses from the Quran and their relationship to hadith. The author concludes that the practice of veiling in the early Islamic community evolved from a means to distinguish women of status to separating all women from men to prevent any societal disorder. The prevention of societal disorder continues to be used as rationale for maintaining the practice of veiling. The second study is part of an edited volume

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entitled: *New Trends in Quranic Studies: Text, Context, and Interpretation.* Munirul Ikhwan explains that the exegetical methods of the modernist scholar, Quraish Shihab, would entail that women have a choice to veil.

Several studies examine women and the Quran. Sections of these works touch upon the veil and veiling. Barbara Freyer Stowasser’s *Women in the Quran, Traditions, and Interpretations* explores the stories and role of the women in the Quran and the prophet’s wives, and the lessons they impart for the Muslim community from a modernist, conservative, and fundamentalist perspective. Hijab is one element of the analysis. Other examples of studies focused on the issue of the veil and veiling from a religious perspective are contained in broader studies about women and Islam. Three publications all with the same title — *Women and Islam* — address various aspects of a woman’s conduct in Islam and Islamic societies with the issue of veiling found alongside the topics of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other “rights.” Or the subject of women and Islam is further reduced to a chapter in a study on Islam which further reduces the attention given to the veil. One example is Tariq Ramadan’s *Introduction to Islam.* The veil is a subsection of a section on social affairs.

The veil is also a component of legal studies. Islamic law, derived from the Quran, hadith, and mechanisms of the jurists (e.g., qiyas and ijma) greatly contributes to order in Islamic societies. The ordering of societies include male-female relations which obviously pertains to

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veiling practices. An understanding of veiling from a legal perspective occurs in two contexts. The first context corresponds to issue of rights in Islam in contemporary Muslim societies. The second context is a historical-legal understanding. Susan Spectsky addresses veiling in her *Women in Classical Islam: A Survey of Sources*. The scholar analyzes the Quran and early Islamic history for an understanding how Islamic law arrives at regarding how women should act outside the house.

A majority of the studies on veiling occur in the fields of cultural anthropology and sociology. The phenomenon of veiling is particularly prevalent in these fields because veiling provides insight into the behaviors of communities and societies. How does veiling evolve or how is it practiced in a particular locale? What are the conditions for veiling? What are the repercussions? How does society respond to the veil and how does the woman respond to society? The issue of gender figures prominently. A reoccurring theme in studies is the dichotomy of control vs. empowerment. Is the veil a mechanism to control the woman in a Muslim society or Muslim state? Or does the veil become a tool of empowerment? Does the woman feel stronger when she dons the veil? And why?

For cultural anthropology and sociology, the veil also acts as a marker or a boundary between people and groups. The veil acts as a figurative and literal boundary marker between the Muslim and non-Muslim and between and within societies. These studies represent a “clash of civilizations” motif that details issues of assimilation or integration, experiences of discrimination, and being the “other” or the “outsider.” The study of the veil in the fields of cultural anthropology and sociology are often conducted in the context of nations. The studies

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incorporate various methods. The methods include anecdotal presentations,\textsuperscript{24} historical analysis,\textsuperscript{25} the summary and analysis of interviews,\textsuperscript{26} or statistical analysis.\textsuperscript{27} Studies sometime employ a comparative approach – the role of the veil in Turkey versus Iran, but most often the phenomenon is observed in a single nation.\textsuperscript{28} Studies on the veil have occurred in countries with very low Muslim populations where it is not recognized or realized as a topic worth studying. In this regard, veiling has been addressed in the context of Korea\textsuperscript{29} and Northwest China – an area largely cut off from the outside world, while another addresses New Zealand.\textsuperscript{30}

When the phenomenon of veiling is observed and studied in the Middle East it appears to address two themes. The most prominent theme is the Islamic/secular dichotomy. The theme is observed in \textit{To Veil or not to Veil: Turkish and Iranian Hijab policies and the Struggle for Recognition}.\textsuperscript{31} In Iran, the hijab prevents or opposes the secularization of Iranian society whereas the hijab poses a threat to the secular identity of Turkey. The phenomenon of veiling is moving in opposing directions in the two countries. The other theme when veiling is studied in the context of the Middle East relates to independence and empowerment. This study is the product

\textsuperscript{31} Gi Yeon Koo and Ha Eun Han, “To veil or not to veil: Turkish and Iranian hijab policies and the struggle for recognition,” \textit{Asian Journal of Women's Studies} 24(1), 47-70. For another comparative study with a religious/secular theme see: Claire Hancock, “Spatialities of the Secular: Geographies of the Veil in France and Turkey” \textit{The European journal of women's studies} 15:3 (2008) 165-179. For the topic in a specifically Turkish context see: Richard Peres, \textit{Headscarf: the day Turkey stood still} (Reading: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2013).
of the feminist movement that challenges traditional beliefs about the veil. Muddassir Quamar argues that many Saudi women did not see the need for naqab all the time which demonstrates a growing independence or willingness to defy the societal norms of the Kingdom.\textsuperscript{32}

It is not surprising that most studies of veiling in a national context are focused on Western societies. The veil challenges many Western principles and beliefs. The veil is a barometer of how well Western societies adhere to their beliefs in multi-culturalism, tolerance, and freedom. France receives particular attention in this regard. Several studies are conducted in the context of France. From the perspective of some French, the veil is a threat to the French identity and the French idea of laïcité (secularism). The \textit{Politics of the Veil} is one study on this matter.\textsuperscript{33} It is a somewhat anecdotal, historical study of the role of state, and the issues facing a woman wearing the veil. The study argues that intolerance and challenges of integration reflect poorly on the democratic ideals of France. Another study with a similar theme is \textit{Why the French don't like headscarves}.\textsuperscript{34} In the context of Norway, a qualitative study was conducted on whether the veil is a source of discrimination.\textsuperscript{35} The level of discrimination for a veiled versus an unveiled woman when she enters the workforce is distinct regardless of the level of her education. An edited volume provides a comparative study of sorts for the various contexts of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} John R. Bowen. \textit{Why the French don’t Like Headscarves} (Princeton: Princeton University, 2010).
\end{itemize}
Europe – politics, religion, and gender: framing and regulating the veil. The work includes the countries of Austria, the United Kingdom, and Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{36}

A similar curiosity regarding tolerance and multi-culturalism in academia exists about the United States. The majority of the studies look at the phenomenon from the national perspective. Studies examine the “Muslim American woman” and the issue of veiling. The most comprehensive study in this regard is \textit{The Politics of the Headscarf in the United States}.\textsuperscript{37} The edited volume argues that wearing the headscarf inflicts a social and political cost on the woman and the community. These costs pose a challenge to the democratic pluralism of the United States. The study surveyed almost two thousand women in 49 states. The surveys were complemented by 17 focus group interviews that entailed 72 women from seven cities. The size of the study sharply contrasts with Najwa Raouda’s small study that only interviews ten women. However, Raouda expanded the scope of the questioning beyond the veil to include issues such as marriage, children, and gender roles.\textsuperscript{38} The author explores the friction caused by maintaining a religious-cultural identity in the pro-feminist environment of the United States.


The Muslim women of Los Angeles, California and Austin, Texas received other studies. In Inger Furseth’s study on Muslim women from Los Angeles, the participants demonstrate that women believe the veil is a boundary and marker between them and non-Muslim American women. Some believe that marker should be embraced – wearing it, while others do not wish to establish that boundary with others. The study in Austin by Jen’Nan Ghazal Read and John Bartkowski provides different insight. The study concluded that the hijab does not create division within the community through its analysis of twenty-four interviews. The women demonstrate agency by emphasizing diversity or tolerance in their decision to veil or not to veil.

Added to the western element is a temporal component, particularly in the United States. Literature on the veil and veiling in the United States has emerged around the events of 9/11. The tragic events have been used as a point of reference for understanding how American society responds to Islam, most notably the presence of the veil. On the other hand, 9/11 has proven to be a pivotal challenging moment for the Muslim woman in American society. It has provoked questions around the ability or desire of the woman to veil. A prominent study marking the significance of 9/11 is Yvonne Haddad’s “The Post-9/11 Hijab as Icon” article. Haddad argues that re-Islamization in America is occurring in the wake of 9/11. The hijab represents a

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dimension of that re-Islamization. The hijab is increasingly worn by American Muslim women because they perceive it to be a symbol of solidarity and resistance against the vitriol produced by 9/11. Leila Ahmad’s *Quiet Revolution* also emphasizes the significance of 9/11 and the resurgence of the veil in America. Ahmad’s study places 9/11 on a much longer continuum – she traces the resurgence of the veil from the 1970s into the twenty-first century.41

Largely missing from the literature on the veil and veiling are the elements of movement or migration and Muslim women’s interpretation of the Quranic scripture regarding the veil. One study, Samaa Abdurraqib’s *Hijab scenes* provides a review of the various venues (novels and poetry) where immigrant veiled Muslim women tell their story. But it is not a systematic study.

Thus, it is clear from the review of the literature that the impact of immigration on the practice and belief of immigrant Muslim women’s veiling is missing from the scholarly debate. Specifically, the literature lacks an extended analysis of immigrant Muslim women’s beliefs in the Quranic scripture and how that impacts their choice of veiling, if at all. Therefore, my study fills the void in the literature regarding the belief and practice in veiling of Sunni immigrant Muslim women in the U.S. Through interviews with immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire area, my study will examine how or if their beliefs and practices of veiling change with their immigration to the U.S. Does their understanding of the Quranic scripture change because of a change in location? Do they adopt a particular form of veiling? Or do they maintain the practices from their country of origin?

The study consists of several chapters. The second chapter examines the phenomenon of transnationalism and globalization in terms of immigrant Muslim women. An understanding of

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globalization and transnationalism is critical because it provides the ability to analyze and interpret the answers of how or if a Muslim woman in the Inland Empire area decides to veil. The chapter provides a two-pronged theoretical framework of analysis: 1) Tweed’s definition of religion as a “confluence of organic cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and superhuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries” and 2) Vaquez, Martinez, and Marquadt’s Globalizing the Sacred: Religion across the Americas that address the movement of religious people across borders. The third chapter provides an understanding of veiling in the Quran. It introduces the verses that are used to engage participants in the study and a detailed analysis of their interpretation. The fourth chapter offers a deep analysis of the interview material. The chapter includes the methodological approach for the interviews as well as material extracted from the interviews. It also includes an analysis of the interviews through the lens of the theoretical framework. Finally, the fifth and final chapter – the conclusion – provides the answers to the fundamental question of the study: Do immigrant Muslim women change their practice and belief in veiling after immigrating to the Inland Empire, and if so, is there a distinct practice of veiling in the Inland Empire?
CHAPTER II: IMMIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM- THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The Theoretical Framework

This chapter is an introductory exploration of the frameworks that will be employed to analyze the beliefs and practices of Sunni Immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire regarding the veil and the Quranic verses pertaining to it. Immigrant Muslim women within the American context constitute a minority population, embodying concepts of diaspora, transnationalism, and globalization due to the global nature of Islam and the transnational Muslim community. Therefore, this chapter lays the foundation by introducing the phenomenon of migration and its associated terminology, which is crucial in shaping the study's theoretical framework.

Scholarly discourse in the past decade has increasingly converged on the intersection of religion and migration, revealing that religion significantly shapes the lives of new immigrants in their host countries. Even though many scholars of religion have, in particular, sought to understand the role that religion plays in the lives of immigrant Muslim women, a significant gap still exists in understanding not only the practice of veiling among Muslim women but also their evolving beliefs as they navigate the immigration process to the U.S. This gap is a pivotal aspect of this chapter, as well as the central focus of the study.

The theoretical frameworks examined in this chapter cover a wide range of dimensions, including migration, religion, transnationalism, diaspora, borders, hybridity, and identity, all of which are applied to the context of immigrant Muslim women and their veil engagement. The theoretical framework will be established using the literature by Vertovec and Cohen, Vasquez

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42 Evrard, Amy Y., "What All Americans Should Know about Women in the Muslim World: An Introduction" (2016). What All Americans Should Know About Women in the Muslim World. 12.
and Marquardt and Tweed, in discussion with Warner and Wittner as well as Chafetz and Ebaugh. This chapter lays the groundwork for a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between immigration, transnationalism, religious identity, and the veil's significance among immigrant Muslim women by combining these diverse theoretical perspectives.

The impact of religion on the experience of immigrant Muslim women in the U.S

As Muslim women immigrate to the United States, they face a complicated web of problems, with a particular emphasis on discrimination related to their veiling habit, mainly as a result of the misrepresentation of Muslim women in the media.\(^{44}\) Therefore, an in-depth analysis of how these women handle their transition to the United States and the ramifications of their veiling beliefs and practices is necessary. The correlation between Islam and perceived fundamentalism has led to a concerning trend of stereotyping, resulting in the objectification of Muslim women through their dress and appearance.\(^ {45}\) This includes connotations of women's oppression, Islam's purported backwardness, and the subjugation of women within the religion.

Tragically, this misapprehension has exacerbated the marginalization of Muslim immigrants in the U.S., significantly impacting women's sense of safety and inclusion.\(^ {46}\) Instances of verbal and physical assaults targeting veiled women, like those adorning the "hijab" or traditional Muslim attire such as "salwar kameez," are alarmingly frequent.\(^ {47}\) Underpinning

\(^ {46}\) Evrard, Amy Y., "What All Americans Should Know about Women in the Muslim World: An Introduction" (2016). What All Americans Should Know About Women in the Muslim World. 12.
these actions is the unwarranted assumption that Islam inherently equates to violence, terrorism, and distrust. Thus, my study will analyze if similar incidents are experienced by immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire, and if so, if they affect their practice and belief in veiling.

In order to establish the motivations driving immigrant Muslim women to immigrate to the United States, Durán and Pipes outline two overarching reasons. The first is seeking refuge from traumatic events, violent regimes, or conflicts in their home countries. The harrowing experiences of war-torn regions such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria have led to a significant refugee influx, which led Muslim women to form ethnic communities in the U.S. The second is pursuing educational opportunities in the United States. Education emerges as a pivotal driver as it prompts many to relocate for studies temporarily and often opting to remain permanently due to enhanced professional prospects and economic benefits within the U.S.

However, the adjustment process for many Muslim immigrants in the United States is far from seamless. In stark contrast to their homogenous majority status in their home countries, Muslims in the U.S. find themselves in a socio-cultural landscape characterized by secularism, pluralism, and a minority Islamic presence. This dynamic significantly impacts the identity of immigrant Muslim women, especially given their religious beliefs and practices, notably concerning the veil, which they are accustomed to and are expected to uphold within their religion. This juxtaposition thrusts them into a cultural milieu that inevitably influences their beliefs and practices of veiling, requiring a delicate balance between cultural preservation and adaptation to the new American context.

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Within the framework of transnationalism, immigrant Muslim women reshape their sense of place and locality as they migrate to the United States. This transformative journey involves making necessary adjustments to assimilate into American society while simultaneously upholding elements of their cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{50} Central to this process are religious institutions such as mosques that act as anchors for immigrant Muslim women, offering vital support to navigate the challenges and uncertainties inherent in adapting to a new cultural environment.\textsuperscript{51}

Ebaugh and Chafetz conceptualize networks as the organizational framework through which religious exchanges unfold among actors in host countries. In the context of immigrant Muslim women, these institutions and networks serve as pivotal conduits for preserving and adapting cultural norms and values within their new setting. This support system extends beyond cultural preservation; it is critical in helping Muslim women integrate into American society. By providing psychological and cultural refuge and facilitating the development of social networks and social capital, these institutions enable a smoother transition into their new homeland.

Furthermore, applying the concepts of de-territorialization and re-territorialization put forth by Vasquez and Marquardt and the notion of religion as a map, as proposed by Tweed, unveils a complex process. Muslim women's movement from their home countries to the United States unveils a dual process that deconstructs and reconstructs territorial identities within the fluid dynamics of cultural flow.\textsuperscript{52} Furthermore, migrating to the U.S. plunges immigrant Muslim women into an environment characterized by a distinct minority culture encircled by the often

culturally dominant Western ethos. This transition triggers a profound culture shock and necessitates adaptation to unfamiliar surroundings. In the words of Anthony and Ziebertz, migration embodies a profound reorientation and realignment toward the host country. In this context, religion is a powerful facilitator, offering a sense of cultural identity that aids in easing the orientation process. Religion becomes a connective thread that helps immigrant Muslim women find common ground with others sharing their religion and culture in their new homeland. This shared cultural and religious foundation acts as a bridge, simplifying their integration and expanding their social circles.

Additionally, the discussion of migration among Muslim women cannot be independent of transnationalism and diaspora. In terms of diaspora, Vertovec defines it as a term that practically describes any population which is considered deterritorialized or transnational. Similarly, in its most straightforward definitions, Schiller et al. define transnationalism as the “process through which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement”. That is why immigrant Muslim women are transmigrants as they develop and maintain multiple relations that span the national borders of their home countries.

Moreover, multiple sociological studies on religion's role in the lives of new Muslim immigrants highlight religion's crucial role in ethnic identity and the difficulty of separating the two. Indeed, at the core of classical sociological studies of immigration and religion is the idea...

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of the centrality of religion for immigrants, mainly if they belong to a minority religious group.\textsuperscript{57} Modern diasporas, as argued by Armstrong, are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong links with their homelands.\textsuperscript{58}

Furthermore, Williams confirms that religion tends to assume a new level of importance once they have moved into the host country because it acts as one of the critical identity markers that help to preserve individual self-awareness and cohesion in immigrant groups. Comparably, Tweed uses dwelling and crossing as tropes to analyze religion and how religious flows through time and space because they are movements through time as one generation passes on religious traditions to the next. Thus, according to Duderija and Rane, parent immigrants, especially mothers, consider religion the key to cultural reproduction and, therefore, tend to ensure their children adhere to their religion in order to maintain ties to their identity.

Moreover, the religiosity of immigrant Muslim women upon their arrival in the United States is intricately tied to the strength of their religious connections back in their home countries. Durán and Pipes reveal that the religious trajectory of these women can vary: approximately two-thirds become religiously less observant or convert out of Islam, which is often due to the combination of many factors such as socioeconomic status, intra-Muslim tensions, and others. However, approximately one-third of them report an increase in religious observance after immigrating to the United States, which can be attributed to both cultural and moral factors. Culturally, the unfamiliarity of their new surroundings prompts them to seek solace in familiar religious rituals, often involving visits to the mosque. Morally, the realization that they had perhaps taken their religion for granted in their home country propels them to focus

\textsuperscript{57} Duderija, A., & Rane, H. \textit{Islam and Muslims in the West: Major issues and debates}. Springer, 2018.
on their religion more earnestly in their new context.\textsuperscript{59} Thus, this study will analyze if this increased religiosity is applicable to immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire, and if so, how it impacts their belief and practice in veiling.

Drawing upon similar themes of pluralism, globalization, religion, culture, migration, and transnationalism, Levitt asserts that many immigrants do not relinquish their connection to their home country's culture upon immigrating to the U.S. For immigrant Muslim women, religion becomes a crucial means of maintaining their link to their culture and homeland, as Islam is intrinsically woven into the fabric of many Muslim countries' societies. In parallel with Tweed's notion, Levitt employs the metaphor of passports to underscore religion's role as a transcendent force capable of crossing political, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. Immigrant Muslim women's religious connections strengthen as they span borders and transition to life in the U.S., creating a space for themselves and their children within the American landscape.\textsuperscript{60}

Siraj delves into the motivations behind the choices of some immigrant Muslim women to veil. This decision, she contends, serves a dual purpose: preserving their cultural identity and responding to a commitment to religious practices. For Muslim women in the diaspora, veiling establishes a tangible link to their homeland and reinforces their cultural and religious identity. This choice emerges as a response to the sense of "invisibility" experienced in their host countries and as a demonstration of belonging to the broader Muslim community. As Muslim

women migrate to the U.S, they carry their beliefs and practices with them, adapting with the laws and cultural norms of their new host country.  

According to Haddad and Smith, religion is a fundamental source of order, meaning, and solace during personal and social upheaval resulting from migration. For many Muslim women, religion establishes a sense of familiarity and comfort as they transition into new environments. Employing the concepts of movement, dwelling, and crossing, Tweed suggests that, for immigrants, "religions" represent the “convergence of organic-cultural currents that amplify joy and confront hardship by tapping into both human and supernatural forces to construct homes and traverse boundaries.” Moreover, Levitt describes religion as predominantly encompassing individualized, interior, and informal practices and beliefs alongside formal, collective expressions of religion enacted within institutional settings. Given the ethereal nature of various aspects of religious life, it is challenging to establish constants or delineate their boundaries. Although these aspects are deeply felt, articulating them can be complex.

Furthermore, the impact of religion on immigrants' lives can vary positively or negatively based on their destination. Over the past century, perspectives on Islam in the United States have significantly changed. Recent research highlights the experiences of women who relocated from Turkey to America; they note that while they previously felt compelled to conform to Turkish Muslim cultural norms, their social, religious, and political rights did not undergo substantial

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shifts upon moving to the United States. Consequently, the United States, often perceived as a free nation that upholds religious liberties, did not discriminate against Muslim immigrants.

While most immigrants cultivate individual religiosity, they also engage with religious communities and establish or affiliate with religious institutions. Immigrants, particularly those belonging to minority groups such as Muslim women, often accord significant prominence to religion and their ethnic identity to the extent that these aspects often supersede other identity markers. Echoing the assertions of Vertovec and Cohen, immigrant Muslim women collectively form a religious diaspora by perceiving themselves as outsiders in the U.S., uniting around their shared migration experience. Through practices like wearing the veil and attending mosques, they reinforce a collective identity and a sense of being part of a religious diaspora. Notably, observations suggest that immigrant Muslim women intensify their religious commitments in their new American environment compared to their lives before migration, as religion aids in identity preservation, heightened self-awareness, and group cohesion.

Similarly, the concept of diaspora, as articulated by Cohen, encompasses distinct traits that resonate with the experiences of immigrant Muslim women. This social form is characterized by relationships forged through historical and geographical ties, like how these women connect with congregations such as mosques and shared communities. Cohen's notion of diaspora as a form of consciousness extends beyond mere connections; it encompasses a broad spectrum of experiences, states of mind, and identities. This consciousness is shaped negatively by encounters with discrimination and exclusion in host countries and positively by affiliations

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with historical legacies and contemporary global cultural or political forces, such as Islam. This collective consciousness binds immigrant Muslim women together through shared experiences, identity, and a connection to Islam. However, it also reflects the negative aspect of shared experiences of discrimination and exclusion, particularly in the U.S., due to their veils.

Furthermore, religious institutions play a pivotal role in the lives of many immigrant Muslim women, often serving as their primary voluntary associations outside of their families. Many worship institutions such as mosques provide a vital social network for women and children. These networks offer a foundation of trust, acceptance, psychological support, access to employment opportunities, material resources, and education that contribute to the immigrants' integration into U.S. society.⁶⁷ Establishing religious identity and solidarity within these mosques and institutions allows immigrant Muslim women to forge strong bonds with fellow believers. This solidarity catalyzes their engagement in volunteer activities and other acts of citizenship, allowing them to interact with broader society while maintaining a solid connection to their religion.⁶⁷

Wittner and Stephen’s exploration of diaspora, immigration, religion, and the influence of globalization further underscores these themes. Their analysis highlights how immigrants and their descendants adapt their religious institutions to suit American conditions, fostering interaction with pre-existing religious communities. Immigrant Muslim women bring their cultural heritage and linguistic traditions, thereby shaping the landscape of American religions. Islamic religious gatherings, as an integral part of the cultural fabric of the U.S., provide vital

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spaces that identify and address the unique needs of immigrant Muslim women, resembling familial bonds formed to navigate life in an unfamiliar land.⁶⁸

Similarly, Vasquez and Marquardt offer a comprehensive understanding of globalization, framing it as a complex amalgamation of processes involving diverse actors, scales, and dimensions of human activity. These multifaceted forces exert harmonizing and divergent influences on local existence and religious institutions. The interconnectedness of people, ideas, media, and capital defies national boundaries, leading to deterritorialization catalyzed by various globalization mechanisms. This phenomenon ushers in a heightened intricacy and dynamism within the religious landscape of the United States.

Expanding on globalization, Vasquez and Marquardt propose that it manifests as a transformative process through which individuals create and dismantle new spatiotemporal configurations that interweave local, regional, and global dynamics. In the context of Muslim women, Islam serves as a beacon that offers stability amid the chaos of homogenization, providing a navigational anchor to comprehend the world around them. Moreover, transnational religious networks and communal centers, such as mosques, exemplify how religion actively contributes to globalization. These religious nodes establish tangible platforms and structural frameworks that facilitate the flow of economic, social, and cultural capitals across borders, fostering a nexus between local, regional, and global spheres.⁶⁹

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Summary

This chapter elucidates the intricate interplay between immigration, religion, and the experiences of newly arrived-Muslim women in the United States. Its primary objective is to discern the effect of immigration on these women's lives, particularly regarding their religious practices and the societal dynamics surrounding their veil. This investigation also investigates how the American community treats immigrant Muslim women differently than it does non-Muslim immigrant counterparts, notably due to veiling habits. The chapter underscores the role of religion as both a barrier and a bridge in the integration process.

It becomes evident that immigrant Muslim women often encounter lower acceptance levels within American society than non-Muslim immigrants. This disparity can be attributed to pervasive Islamophobia, which unjustly links Islam to global terrorism even though only a minority of radical individuals engage in such activities. Consequently, the veil becomes a symbol of contention and divisiveness, making the integration of Muslim women into American society more challenging and causing some to question their decision to veil. This hostile environment, paradoxically, fosters a sense of unity among Muslim women, as shared religious beliefs provide comfort and camaraderie in the face of adversity. Religious institutions, including mosques, serve as vital socializing hubs where new immigrants connect with established community members, aiding their assimilation process.

In addition, the theoretical framework employed in this chapter is constructed upon the works of Vertovec and Cohen, Vasquez and Marquardt, Tweed, Warner and Wittner, and Chafetz and Ebaugh. These theories encompass a spectrum of concepts, including immigration,

religion, transnationalism, diaspora, hybridity, globalization and identity. Applied to the context of immigrant Muslim women, these theories highlight the tendency for immigrants to become more devoted to their religion as they seek to maintain their cultural identities in a new environment.

Studies have examined whether immigrant Muslim women’s veiling style changes after immigration, but the intersection of practice and belief remains understudied. This critical gap emerges in the discourse surrounding immigrant Muslim women, specifically regarding the potential impact of immigration on their practice and belief in veiling and the associated Quranic verses. An example posed by Levitt suggests that some women may alter their veiling practice due to their surroundings, yet this does not necessarily denote a shift in their underlying beliefs. Although some studies have shown that immigrant Muslim women became more religious after immigrating to the U.S, a much more detailed analysis is needed regarding its impact on their practice of veiling as well as their belief in the veil and the Quranic verses pertaining to it. Therefore, this research embarks on interviews with immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire region of Southern California in order to delve into the nuanced changes, if any, in their veiling practices and beliefs after immigrating to the United States.

Generally, the theoretical underpinnings explored within this chapter will serve as a comprehensive framework for analyzing the beliefs and practices related to the veil among Sunni immigrant Muslim women in the Inland Empire region of Southern California. Immigrant Muslim women, as a minority demographic in the United States, represent the ideals of diaspora, transnationalism, and globalization due to Islam's global nature and the Muslim community's
transnational character.\textsuperscript{71} Thus, forthcoming analyses of interview findings will be intricately intertwined with the concepts explored in this chapter, offering a comprehensive understanding of how immigration influences the beliefs and practices of immigrant Muslim women concerning the veil and the relevant Quranic verses.

\textsuperscript{71} Evrard, Amy Y., "What All Americans Should Know about Women in the Muslim World: An Introduction" (2016). \textit{What All Americans Should Know About Women in the Muslim World}. 12.
CHAPTER III: THE QURAN AND THE VEIL
There is a long debate on the requirement of the veil in Islam. Many question whether the veil is required in Islam, if Muslim women should veil, and if it is even directly mentioned in the Quran and Hadith. Many Muslim women believe that it is necessary in Islam to veil since it is mentioned in the Quran, even if they choose not to veil themselves. They believe that there are different degrees of modesty in veiling, as some believe that it is required to cover the hair, others believe that wearing modest clothes is sufficient.

On the other hand, other Muslim women question the validity of those beliefs, arguing that the absence of a direct mention of the specific type of veil required in the Quran and Hadith suggests that it is not a scriptural or religious obligation but rather a social custom. There are many perspectives as to the requirement of veiling in Islam, especially scripturally. The first view is that the Quran does not directly order Muslim women to wear the veil, and thus veiling is not required in Islam. For instance, Jane Smith, the author of Islam in America, argues that the “Qur’an, despite what some Muslim women seem to think, does not actually specify how much of the body has to be covered.” Furthermore, the second view is that the veil is not required religiously in Islam but has become a cultural requirement in Muslim countries. For example, Imad ad Dean Ahmad, the president of the Minaret of Freedom Institute in Bethesda, Maryland claims, “it’s an inference on the part of Islamic jurists to say that because modesty in the Prophet’s day meant covering the hair that it is therefore immodest for women today to leave hair uncovered.” However, the third view, which is the mainstream view in many Muslim countries, stipulates that there is evidence in the Quran about the veil and its religious stipulation, which will be explored in this chapter in the interpretation of the verses.

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In contrast to other Abrahamic scriptures, such as the Bible, which provides a narrative that is more than a thousand pages long, the Quran is only six hundred and four pages long. Thus, there is a lack of detail and explanation of the verses. Furthermore, Sahar Amer in her book *What is Veiling?* explains that the Quran’s “poetic language often makes it difficult to understand even for educated native speakers of Arabic. It is thus accompanied by a lengthy tradition of commentary (*tafsir*) that has for centuries provided dominant modes of interpretation.”\(^{73}\) As a result, I will rely on the Sunni *tafsir* of the Quran by Ibn Kathir, a notable Muslim scholar, as well as al-Bukhari, one of Islam's most well-recognized and legitimate scholars and the author of one of Islam's most valuable compilations of Hadith, the *Sahih Al-Bukhari*.\(^{74}\)

However, before analyzing the verses regarding the veil in the Quran, it is important to establish a clear definition of the veil in Islam. The word "veil" describes a piece of clothing that conceals a woman's hair and sometimes her face.\(^{75}\) The definition of "veil" in the Merriam-Webster English dictionary is “a length of cloth worn by women as a covering for the head and shoulders and often for the face.”\(^{76}\) The western perception of the veil has been often associated with a certain practice of veiling, such as a black cloak (*Abaya*). However, as will be explored in this chapter, there are many different practices of veiling for Muslim women that vary based on their beliefs, country, culture, etc. Thus, Amer explains:

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\(^{75}\) Amer, Saher *What is veiling?* The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

\(^{76}\) “Veil definition and meaning.” *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/veil#:--text=3A%20a%20concealing%20curtain%20or%20cover,or%20obscures%20like%20a%20veil.
The use of the singular word (veil) instead of the plural (veils) fosters the false sense of a uniform dress code, of one unique way of thinking about and donning the veil. The truth…is that Muslim veiling practices range widely, as do other types of dress and fashion customs. The English word ‘veil’ is, therefore, best thought of as an umbrella term that refers to all kinds of Muslim women’s veiling practices. Precisely because of such variation in Muslim veiling practices, no one Arabic word exists for ‘veil’.77

In this study, the verses of the Quran and their mainstream interpretation must first be analyzed in order to establish the necessary underlying information. An understanding of the Quranic verses is pivotal in order to identify why Muslim women veil in the first place. Then, immigrant Muslim women’s personal interpretation of those verses can be analyzed in order to understand if their interpretation and belief changed after immigrating to the Inland Empire. Thus, a comparison can be accomplished to determine how it impacts their decision to veil or their style of veiling, and if that changed after immigrating to the Inland Empire.

Thus, the following verses that will be analyzed include all the verses that discuss the veil in the Quran in order to gain a comprehensive view of the scriptural discussion of the veil. The English translation of the verses include prominent and well-respected renditions by Arthur Arberry. However, it is important to note that the interpretations used in this chapter by scholars such as Al-Bukhari and Ibn Kathir are only the mainstream interpretations by Sunni Muslims but there are many other interpretations that Muslims use which are not covered in this chapter.

**Interpretation of the veil verses in the Quran:**

**The first verse:**

“O believers, enter not the houses of the Prophet, except leave is given you for a meal, without watching for its hour. But when you are invited, then enter; and when you have had the meal, disperse, neither lingering for idle talk; that is hurtful to the Prophet, and he is ashamed before you; but God is not ashamed before the truth. And when you ask his wives for any object, ask them from behind a curtain (hijab); that is cleaner for your hearts and theirs” [33:53].

This verse is quoted frequently by scholars and Muslims to argue that veiling is an Islamic obligation. In fact, it is known as "the verse of the hijab" and is regarded as the first revelation on the issue of Islamic veiling as it was the first to be sent down to the Prophet Muhammed regarding the veil. As such, it was the first step towards implementing the veil for Muslim women, which was not an instant process, but rather an evolution into the veil over some time. In this verse, the word “hijab” refers to the literal meaning of hijab in Arabic, a screen or cover, not the more widespread connotation of the hijab as a veil that describes Muslim women's attire. Thus, the evolution of Muslim women into wearing the veil began with a physical hijab or screen that separated them from non-familial men. However, the concept of women's proper dress has come to be understood by Muslims as the hijab over time as Muslim women began to wear the veil.

It was customary for Arabs during the Jahiliya (pre-Islamic era) to enter homes without asking permission. However, after the revelation of the Quran, the Muslim believers were

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commanded to seek permission before entering the house of the Prophet Muhammad and if they were to ask something of his wives, to do it behind a *hijab*, or barrier.\(^{81}\) Ibn Kathir, an influential Muslim scholar and exegete, explains that the verse denotes that “just as it is forbidden for you to enter upon them, it is forbidden for you to look at them at all. If anyone of you has any need to take anything from them, he should not look at them, but he should ask for whatever he needs from behind a screen.”\(^{82}\) Furthermore, al-Bukhari, as mentioned previously, indicates in his book *Sahih Al-Bukhari*:

> This verse was known as the Verse of Hijab, because it was the first to be revealed to the wives of the Prophet and the women of the believers, and it was revealed in five years of the Prophet’s migration.\(^{83}\)

Moreover, the wives of the Prophet, due to their great honor and high status, serve as the model for all Muslim women to follow and be guided by them.\(^{82}\) Thus, Muslim men were commanded, if they want to speak to all Muslim women, not only the prophet’s wives, to do it from behind a curtain, if the woman is in her house, not wearing a veil, in order to protect them. Therefore, as this verse was the first regarding the veil, it sets the tone for the interaction between men and women in the Muslim community and starts to provide a basis of how a woman should present herself to outsiders.


The second verse:

“O Prophet, say to thy wives and daughters and the believing women, that they draw their veils [jalabib, sg. jilbab] close to them; so, it is likelier they will be known, and not hurt. God is all-forgiving, all-compassionate” [33:59].

It is important to note that the word used in this verse to refer to the veil is jilbab, which is a long outer garment or cloak worn by both men and women that covers the head and the upper parts of the body, including the chest, which is used by modern Muslim women as a style of veiling.

Sahar Amer explains that since this verse “refers specifically to the Prophet’s wives, considered exceptional among humankind, Muslims continue to debate whether this physical hijab…is also required of other Muslims.” For example, Asma Barlas believes that this verse was intended only for the wives and daughters of the Prophet Muhammad since it is emphasized in the first half of the verse. However, the final words of the verse, “and the believing women,” indicates that all Muslim women are required to veil. On the other hand, other Muslim scholars such as Amer have agreed that the term jilbab, or cloak, that is mentioned in the verse is synonymous with veil, thus suggesting that all Muslim women, including the Prophet’s wives and daughters, are commanded in the verse to wear the veil.

Additionally, in her investigation of the ongoing debate in the Muslim community regarding Muslim women’s veil, Anne Roald suggests that scholars such as Fatema Mernissi, a notable sociologist and the author of the book Beyond the Veil, choose to neglect the jilbab verse

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in the Quran in order to argue that the veil is not mentioned in the Quran. Although their discussion of the verse is not inaccurate, she argues, it is somewhat incomplete. It should be “borne in mind that the verse addresses the Prophet’s wives only in part. The verse also includes ‘believing women.’ By concentrating on the issue of segregation [of women], Mernissi… neglects this aspect [“the believing women” aspect] of the verse.”

The verse first specified the wives and daughters of the Prophet Muhammad because of their honor and high status, and because of their close relation to the Prophet Muhammad, so they are more deserving of following God’s commands. Then, the verse reminds the women of the believers that they must also wear the jilbab.

Furthermore, Ibn Kathir explains:

Allah tells His Messenger to command the believing women -- especially his wives and daughters, because of their position of honor -- to draw their Jilbabs over their bodies, so that they will be distinct in their appearance from the women of the jahiliyyah [pre-Islamic era in Arabia]. The Jilbab…worn over the Khimar [a veil similar to a cloak] …is like the izar89 used today. Ibn Abbas90 said that Allah commanded the believing women, when they went out of their houses for some need, to cover their faces from above their heads with the Jilbab, leaving only one eye showing.91

Therefore, it is clear that the verse is intended for all Muslim women, including the wives of the prophet, as these interpretations of the verses by both Al-Bukhari and Ibn Kathir are regarded as

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89 The izar is a veil similar to the Abaya.
90 Abdullah Ibn Abbas was one of the prophet’s earliest companions.
the most authentic and reliable by the majority of Muslims.\textsuperscript{92} Additionally, Abdullah Yusuf Ali\textsuperscript{93} in his translation of the Quran, which is considered the most faithful interpretation available in English, in note 3764 of his book \textit{The Holy Qur’an}, writes, “this is for all Muslim women, those of the Prophet’s household, as well as the others. They were asked to cover themselves with outer garments when walking out of doors.” Also, in note 3765, he defines \textit{jalabeeb} (the plural of \textit{jilbab}), the term used in this verse, as “an outer garment; a long gown covering the whole body, or a cloak covering the neck and bosom.” The verse, therefore, clearly indicates that all Muslim women should cover themselves using a veil.

Quranic scholars have agreed that this verse demonstrates that the wives of the Prophet, their daughters, and the women of the believers should wear the \textit{jilbab}, covering their body and head when they leave their homes. It was commended because the chaste, pious Muslim believer should be recognized by her appearance, i.e., by covering her body.

\textbf{The third verse}

“Such women [\textit{Qawaid}] as are past child-bearing and have no hope of marriage -- there is no fault in them that they put off their clothes, so be it that they flaunt no ornament; but to abstain is better for them; and God is All-hearing, All-knowing” [24:60].\textsuperscript{94}

Scholars have come to a consensus that this verse illustrates that elderly Muslim women are excused from veiling. Therefore, Muslims who believe that the Quran directly mentions the

\textsuperscript{94} The translation is by Arberry, A. J. \textit{The Koran Interpreted}. Oxford University Press, 2008.
obligation of veiling use this verse as evidence to prove that. They argue that elderly Muslim women would not be excused from veiling if Muslim women were not required to veil in the first place. Furthermore, if such a Quranic verse had to be reported at all, it is most likely because Muslim women in general are required to veil, but elderly women are excused from doing so.

Furthermore, Bin Jubayr, a Muslim scholar and Qatadah, one of the prophet’s companions, explain that “the Qawaid among women,” as mentioned in this verse, are the women who can no longer bear children or do not hope for marriage. It is tolerable for them not to veil as long as they do not dress up. They are not required to cover their hair in the same manner that other Muslim women must, who are of child-bearing age. Furthermore, the last section of the verse, “but to abstain is better for them” indicates that not removing their veil, even though that is permissible for them, it is more favorable.

This verse indicates that elderly women who have reached the age of menopause are not required to wear the jilbab in order to ease their burden as they grow older if they should not bring attraction or attention by wearing necklaces, bracelets, or other items to catch the eye of men. However, if the elderly woman wears the jilbab, then God looks fondly upon it. Thus, this verse indicates that the veil is obligatory for all Muslim women between certain ages, from puberty to menopause. Furthermore, this verse is evidence that the requirement of the veil is directly mentioned in the Quran.

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The fourth verse:

“Say to the believers, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts [furujahum]; that is purer for them. God is aware of the things they work. And say to the believing women, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts [furujahunna], and reveal not their adornment [zīna] save such as is outward; and let them cast their veils [khumar, sg. khimar] over their bosoms [juyub], and not reveal their adornment [zīna]” [24:31].

In order to analyze the verse, an explanation of the Arabic terms will be provided to clarify its meaning. First, furujahum and furujahunna refer to private parts that both men and women are instructed to cover in the Quran. The term zīna refers to adornments, however, it is somewhat vague. Thus, some scholars, such as al-Tabari, a well-recognized Muslim scholar in his exegesis of the Quran three hundred years after the Prophet’s death, interpret zina as “the anklets, bracelets, earrings, and necklaces,” which should be covered. However, women’s adornments that could be left uncovered were the face and the hands. Nevertheless, modern scholars still debate the extent to which this verse instructs Muslim women to cover. For example, Muslim scholars such as Leena Al-Ali argue that Muslim women are not required to veil at all as long as they cover their private parts, which they regard as their only zina. Furthermore, other Muslim scholars such as Shaykh Hindawi argue that a Muslim women’s adornments, or zina, is her entire body, including the face and hands, which thus must be covered.

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It is believed that this verse instructs Muslim women to veil because the term *khimar*, similar to the *jilbab*, refers to a style of veiling used in the *jahiliya*, the pre-Islamic era. This item of clothing was used to specifically as a veil that also covers a women’s cleavage, or *juyub* as is used in the Quran. Thus, many Muslim scholars such as Shaykh Hindawi agree that the Muslim women’s body and hair must be covered, but debate on which style of veiling meets that specific level of modesty such as a head scarf (hijab) accompanied by modest clothing or a long cloak (abaya) that covers the whole body and hair, or many other styles of veiling. Thus, this explains why not all modern Muslim women cover and those who do use different styles of veiling with varying degrees of modesty because it depends on their interpretation of *zina*, which varies based on their country, culture, and what they believe the Quran stipulates should be covered.

However, this verse prohibits the Muslim woman from showing her adornment, and that is by wearing a veil and covering her body. The divine command in this verse sent down to Prophet Muhammed instructs Muslim women to put the veil over the breasts, covering the hair and the neck. It explains that Muslim women should wear the veil in a way as to cover their chests and bosom, so that they will be different from the women of the *jahiliyyah*, the pre-Islamic period in Arabia, who did not cover and would pass in front of men with their chests, necks, and hair uncovered. Therefore, this verse illustrates that the veil should cover a Muslim woman’s neck and chest. However, many Muslim scholars, such as Shaykh Hindawi and Asma Barlas as mentioned previously, still debate the level of modesty that is required for Muslim women. Scholars have not reached an agreement on which exact adornments, or *zina*, the Quran specifically refers to that Muslim women are required to cover. Thus, although the veil *khimar* is

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directly mentioned in the Quran, some scholars still question which specific adornments are Muslim women expected to cover with the *khimar*? This question continues to be debated by Muslims and Muslim scholars who are puzzled by the ambiguity as the Quran is multilayered, which is often difficult to communicate in English, and thus the reason the *tafsir*, or interpretation, of the Quran is often needed.\textsuperscript{101}

Overall, the specific terms used in the Quran to refer to the veil are *hijab*, *jilbab* and *khimar*, which explains some of the ambiguity scholars and Muslims face when interpreting the exact meaning of the veil in the Quran. However, there is still a large scholarly debate on which degree of modesty is directly stipulated in the Quran regarding women’s veiling that manifests itself in the different styles of veiling presented by Muslim women throughout the world.

The Quranic verses regarding veiling, as presented in this chapter, illustrate the religious obligation for Muslim women to veil. Furthermore, the practice of veiling has manifested throughout the Muslim world in a variety of ways. The veil in Islam is a garment worn by a Muslim woman for the purpose of concealment. It covers the entire body or just the hair from non-familial relations. The amount of covering demonstrates the varying degrees of modesty in the Islamic world and the veil manifests in different styles. Thus, in order to understand the diversity of the veil in Islam, the most common styles of veiling will be discussed:

The most common style of veiling is the *tarha*, which translates to “a head covering” in Arabic and is commonly known as the *hijab*. The *hijab* consists of a headscarf covering the hair and is worn by most Muslim women, especially in Europe and America. Another veiling style is the *khimar*, a garment that a woman wears over her clothes that covers the head, chest, and neck.

The *khimar* is usually worn by Muslim women from Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen. The *burqa* and *niqab* are different from the *khimar* because they cover the entirety of the woman. Only narrow openings around the eyes for the woman to see through are allowed. The *burqa* is typically found in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The *niqab* is similar to the *burqa*, except the opening for the eyes is wider. The *niqab* is worn by women in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt and Jordan. Another manifestation of the veil is a garment called the *abaya*. Women in the Arabian gulf use the garment to cover the whole body and the head. The last common traditional veil is the *punjab*. The women of Pakistan and India use it to cover the head and shoulders. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list as there are many types of veils worn by Muslim women around the world, these are just some of the most common styles of veiling. There is a wide “continuum of veiling” that ranges from different types and styles of veiling in different countries and cultures. Hence, there is no universal veil for all Muslim women.

The veil is an act of the Muslim women’s belief, practice, and identity around the world in numerous societies and cultures demonstrated by the verses in the Quran. In this study especially, the beliefs of immigrant Muslim women are reflected in their interpretation of the Quranic verses. Thus, it is important to understand immigrant Muslim women’s decision to wear the veil, the verses that support those beliefs, and their interpretation of those verses. While the Quran is explicit yet ambiguous about certain aspects of the veil, culture has influenced many of the variations in veiling. Even though it is clear for many Muslim women to veil, there is confusion over the extent and where culture enters and because of this there is variety. A variety that is magnified by a country like the United States, especially in the Inland Empire region of Southern California, where Muslim women of different cultures converge thus further demonstrating the need for my study. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the Quranic verses
that stipulate the necessity of veiling that is practiced by Muslim women all around the world.
Thus, although there is a wide debate in the academic realm and the Muslim community on
whether or not the veil is directly mentioned in the Quran, it is important to understand Muslim
women’s interpretation of those verses, and whether they have changed after immigrating to the
Inland Empire.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS
This chapter contains two sections. The first section presents the information extrapolated from the interviews conducted. It includes comments on the methodology, background to the interviews, and the questions given to all interviewees and responses. The section addresses an understanding of scripture, the beliefs of the interviewees, and their veiling practices. The second section of the chapter consists of the analysis. It compares material from the interviews. The analysis queries: What does a comparison of the interviews reveal? Does it challenge the hypothesis? The theoretical framework of Tweed and Vasquez will be utilized to package and present the information gleaned from the analysis.

SECTION I: THE INTERVIEWS

Purpose

My study investigates the beliefs and practices of veiling by first-generation immigrant Sunni Muslim women in the Inland Empire region of Southern California. The investigation employs two important elements for the analysis- immigration and scripture. The goal of the study is to ascertain whether a change(s) in belief and practices of veiling is attributable to movement across boundaries. It seeks to answer the question: Are there beliefs and practices of veiling unique to America? In other words, do Muslim women immigrants conform to a particular set of beliefs and practices regarding veiling or do they maintain the beliefs and practices of their origins.

Methodology

I utilize a qualitative approach for understanding how and why female Muslim immigrants practice veiling. The qualitative approach incorporates a series of questions with a
variety of recent female Muslim immigrants in the Inland Empire. Each interview uses the same set of questions about scripture, beliefs, and practices. The interviews allow the participants to speak at length providing the ability to compare the beliefs and practices of the participants. A comparison of the interview results provides to determine whether the beliefs and practices of veiling in the Inland Empire are a unique phenomenon or whether it is informed by the place of the immigrant’s origin.

Procedure for data collection

Prior to starting the interview process, the University’s Institutional Review Board granted approval to conduct research on human subjects. The recruitment process for eligible research subjects entailed contacting the manager of a local mosque in the Inland Empire. A mosque is an ideal place to recruit and research immigrant Muslim women. The mosque is not just a location for prayer, it acts as a community center or central location for Muslims from different nationalities and ethnicities. The manager granted me permission to recruit participants in the mosque for the study. Ultimately, 18 out of 21 immigrant Muslim women at the mosque agreed to partake in the study.

I scheduled a virtual one-on-one interview with each participant based on their availability from October 12 to November 10, 2022. Before each interview, the participant was presented with a consent form that she was required to sign before the interview could proceed. The consent form explained the expectations of the interview — revealing their age and country of origin while assuring the participant’s right to privacy and confidentiality. To ensure the

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102 The mosque is not named for confidentiality purposes
protection of every participant’s identity, I used pseudonyms instead of the participants’ actual names. After signing the consent form, each interview proceeded as follows: 1) Demographic questions regarding their age, country of origin, etc.; 2) Questions regarding their migration to the Inland Empire and their practice and belief of veiling. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Upon completion of the interview, each participant received a $15 gift card from Amazon. The interview questions can be found in appendix 1.

Interview Population

The interviews draw on a community of first-generation immigrant Muslim women ranging in age from adolescence to the elderly (18-74 years old). They are comprised of Sunni Muslim women, who encompass the majority of Muslim women living in Southern California, and specifically the Inland Empire. Their origins are from countries with significant, if not majority Muslim populations. The countries include Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Palestinian Territories.

Demographics

The sample included 18 immigrant Muslim women from the Inland empire area. They are from predominantly Muslim countries. The Muslim women interviewed were from a variety of different countries; 6 women were from Pakistan, 4 women from Egypt, 2 women from


104 An informal region in Southern California located east of the city of Los Angeles. It often consists of parts of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.
Indonesia, 2 women from Yemen, 1 woman from Lebanon, 1 from Palestinian Territories, 1 from Jordan, and 1 woman from Syria. The majority of the participants were between 35-50 years old (72%), and others were slightly above or below that range. The majority of the participants (66%) wore a veil in their home country and kept wearing it after moving to the Inland Empire, though 3 of the participants do not veil. However, 3 of the participants only started veiling after they moved to the United States.

NOTE: The names used below are pseudonyms and not the participants’ real names in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

1. Dalal, 47 years old, from Lebanon, moved to the U.S. in 1993, did not wear the veil but started to wear a veil when she moved to the U.S.
2. Huda, 38, from Palestine, moved to the U.S. when she got married, wore the veil since 9th grade.
3. Shams, 42 years old, from Jordan, moved to the U.S. when she got married, wore the veil since 2004.
4. Shahad, 51 years old, from Pakistan, does not veil.
5. Rana, 50 years old, from Pakistan, does not veil.
6. Nora, 38 years old, from Egypt, wore the veil since she was young and still wears it.
7. Hana, 35 years old, from Pakistan, wore the veil in Pakistan and the U.S.
8. Rema, 53 years old, from Syria, wore the veil in Syria and the U.S.
9. Amal, 46 years old, from Pakistan, wore the veil in Pakistan and the U.S.
10. Khadijah, 47 years old, from Yemen, wore the veil in Yemen and the U.S.
11. Sarah, 59 years old, from Indonesia, moved to the U.S. before 9/11, started wearing the veil after performing the Hajj in Mecca before moving to the U.S.
12. Noha, 44 years old, from Yemen, wore the veil in both Yemen and the U.S.
13. Rahma, 48 years old, from Indonesia, started veiling after she got married in Indonesia.
14. Hajar, 42 years old, from Egypt, started wearing the veil when she was 20 years old.
15. Nour, 53 years old, from Pakistan, wore the veil in both Pakistan and the U.S.
16. Ruqayah, 38 years old, from Pakistan, started wearing the veil when she moved to the U.S.
17. Fatimah, 45 years old, from Egypt, stopped veiling when she moved to the U.S.
18. Aisha, 32 years old, from Egypt, wore the veil in both Egypt and the U.S.

**Interviews**

Ultimately, my study seeks to determine whether immigrant Muslim women change their belief and practices of veiling because of migration. For example, if they used to wear an *abaya*[^1] in their home country but changed into a *hijab*[^2] after moving to the Inland empire. It aims to discern if the beliefs and practices of veiling in the United States are a unique phenomenon. Or do the beliefs and practices of a Muslim woman’s country of origin prevail after arriving in the United States? The interview results of each participant are compared to determine the presence of common themes/responses to the questions.

[^1]: A style of veiling that covers the entire body; a long cloak.
[^2]: A style of veiling; a head scarf that covers the hair.
QUESTION 1: What was your religious life like before you moved to the Inland Empire?

Themes NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

Islam is part of the culture of their home country 6

Less spiritually connected to Islam in their home country 10

More connected to Islam in their home country 8

**Islam is part of the culture in Muslim countries**

6 of the participants (33%) believe that the Islamic religion is integrated into the culture of Muslim countries, which in turn makes them more likely to veil due to how widespread Islam is and acts as a social pressure.

When asked why she wore a veil, Huda from Palestine replied, “I did it in the 9th grade because everyone was doing it and it was more of a cultural thing to wear the hijab.” She added, “When I used to live in Palestine, the Masjid was next to my parents’ house, so it was a secondhand thing. It's like the mosque is there, you can pray.” Since the immigrant’s home country is Muslim and the majority of the population practices Islam, the conditions increased pressure on her to veil because it was the norm and she wanted to fit in.

Hana from Pakistan describes a similar situation of the ubiquity of Islam. She states: “My life was, you know, better over there [in Pakistan] as a Muslim because everybody near me was eating halal...I never worried about taking care of food and wearing hijab and those things. Over there everybody was wearing the hijab and I was wearing the hijab and the big gown.”

The prevalence of Islam in their respective societies made it second nature for them to veil, if they chose to, because it was very common practice. Fatimah explains that “because in...
Egypt most of the population is Muslim, it was easier to follow the orders of Islam than here [in Southern California],” which indicates that she is able to practice veiling more comfortably in Egypt. Veiling is a common practice in Egypt while it is a rather unique practice in Southern California. Moreover, Khadijah describes that “in Yemen, we follow culture and traditions more than religion.”

More connected to Islam in their home country

8 of the participants (44%) believed that their spiritual connection to Islam was stronger in their home country. They prayed 5 times a day, fasted, and had a greater awareness of Allah in their day-to-day life than in the Inland Empire. Since Islam is widespread and the majority of the population is Muslim, it was therefore easier for them to practice Islam leading to a more profound spiritual connection. It made their practice of veiling much easier and their belief in veiling much stronger. Sarah explains that “in Indonesia it's 99.9% all Muslim…I don't feel that I am a minority there. We are all the same faith.”

When asked why she started veiling in Indonesia after she got married, Rahma answered:

I listened to the sermons from the Imam and from all the religious people in Indonesia.
And before I got married, I was going to wear the hijab. Wherever I go, outside the home I saw everyone wearing the hijab. I was thinking about what, but I didn't at that time. I didn't do it 100%, but after I got married then I started covering. But at that time, I heard the sermon then I was just thinking, I told myself I must do it right now I would like to start wearing the hijab all the time everywhere and every time I before I go out.
Less spiritually connected to Islam in their home country

10 of the participants (55%) believed that their religious spirituality strengthened after arriving in South California. Islam plays a prominent role in their native society, and therefore they were pressured into veiling there without a deep understanding and appreciation of it. When they immigrated to the Inland Empire, their religious beliefs and practices evolved because they were no longer exposed to societal pressure. Huda, from Palestine, explained:

I think I'm more religious right now than I was religious back home. Because when you go to a different country, and you see there's no Muslims around you like you will start counting on yourself to connect to your religion…It just connected to me when I moved here that I need to connect more to my identity and my religion to survive or it's going to be forgotten.

Moreover, Dalal from Lebanon describes that in Southern California, she “must focus on the roles of Islam more than the culture. When I came to the U.S, I developed a clearer vision about Islam. I had more freedom to practice without pressure from the outside.”

When asked about why her spiritual and religious connection became stronger after immigrating to the U.S, she explained:

In all Islamic countries, people practice Islam as a culture. It is different than when we come to the United States, and we have to adopt the religion. We're not forced to be Muslims. We adopt it. We and only we can make a conscious effort to adopt our being. Whatever it is, Christianity or Islam or whatever because it's so easy to get away from our religion in America. So, when we come here and when we have our children, we work hard to learn Islam and teach it to them.
QUESTION 2: Did you veil before you came to the Inland Empire? If so, why?

Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of participants:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veiled due to social pressure in home country</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not veil in her home country</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Veiled in their home country due to social pressure

13 of the participants (72%) explained that they wore a veil in their home country because of societal pressure. Since they grew up in Muslim countries and were surrounded by veiled Muslim women, they believed that they were required to veil to assimilate. In a certain way, there was never really a choice because veiling was a common practice.

When asked why she started veiling at a young age, Huda replied: “It was more of a cultural thing to wear hijab at my age and at that time. So, I just wore it because everyone was wearing it. I felt that all of my friends are wearing it, then I'm going to wear it. And I did that, and it was so easy to wear it back home because this is the normal thing to do.”

They wanted to fit in to their culture by veiling because the veil had an important cultural role, not just a religious one. Even though some of their parents initially did not want them to veil at such a young age. Moreover, Huda continued “even though my parents, they were like ‘no don't wear it, you're still young’ and none of my sisters were wearing it” but she still chose to veil in order to fit in socially.

Similarly, Shams from Jordan explains, “I covered because all my family and friends were wearing the hijab. I mean it was more culture.”
Did not veil in their home country

5 of the participants (27%) did not veil in their home country. They claimed that veiling was not enforced by their families, and the participants do not believe that it is necessarily important to veil as long as they dress modestly. For example, when asked if she wore a veil, Shahad from Pakistan replied:

No, it was never enforced. We always wore a scarf over our heads, but not like the proper hijab like covering all the hair, I never did that. But from our culture my mother wore scarves, and my grandmother wore a scarf. So, it was a cultural thing, not like a religious thing. Culturally, we always had a scarf or a big wrap around our shoulder and we are modest.

Similarly, Rana from Pakistan replied, “I don't veil because my understanding is that I need to cover my whole body, not necessarily my head.” They believe that it is not necessary to wear a hijab or veil if they are being modest. They also believe that their choice to veil is not evidence of their religiousity.

QUESTION 3: Before you moved to the Inland Empire, did you migrate to any other countries? If so, where, and how has it affected your choice of veiling, if any?

Themes                                      Number of participants:

Migrated to another country (or state) before immigrating to the Inland Empire 8
  Moving changed her practice of veiling 5
  Moving did NOT change her practice of veiling 3
Living in another country/state before immigrating to the Inland Empire did not change her practice of veiling

8 of the participants (44%) lived in a different country, or different state in the U.S, before immigrating to the Inland Empire. Only 3 of them did not change their practice of veiling after moving. For example, Shams, originally from Jordan, is one example of someone who lived in multiple places before arriving in the Inland Empire. She describes her experience of living in Saudi Arabia and San Francisco,

I went to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and I finished studying high school in Riyadh, and I was there for 18 years. Then I went back to Amman, Jordan to finish my bachelor’s degree in university. And I was in Amman until I migrated here in 2020. When I was in Saudi Arabia, I did not veil. And when I was in university too. I started wearing my hijab in 2004 after I finished my bachelor’s degree by one year. I used to wear the hijab in Jordan before I migrated to the United States…And then I first went to San Francisco. To be honest, I felt a lot of discrimination in San Francisco, and it hurt me badly. I did not like it at all. It really made me feel so angry, and it is unlike here [Southern California].

Living in another country/state before immigrating to the Inland Empire changed her practice of veiling

5 (27%) of these immigrant Muslim women did change their practice of veiling after moving to another country. Many of them believe that veiling is very unique to different parts of the world, even different parts of the U.S. Furthermore, they believe veiling is dependent on location.
Some of the participants lived in conservative countries or states, such as Texas, where they had to change their practice of veiling and decided to completely remove their veil. For example, Fatimah from Egypt describes her experience when she lived in Texas before moving to Southern California:

I lived in Texas before I came to California, and I had a baby. I was young, I was like 26 or 25 and I had a lot of stress over there because they would say “go back to your country” and bad things. They even said, “we want to kill you.” And, you know Texas is really tough. So, it was not easy to wear the hijab and I had it on for a little bit but then I had to take it off. And I started wearing a cap or like a turban [head cover] but then I took it off as well.

Rema from Syria also describes how her practice of veiling changed after living in Saudi Arabia. She answered, “wearing the hijab in Saudi Arabia is different from here in the U.S. Wearing the hijab in Saudi Arabia is different because we wear the abaya there, but here we only wear a scarf.”

On the contrary, Nora from Egypt, describes that moving to Zambia made her more attached to her veil. She answered, “I went to Zambia for six months. My husband used to live in Zambia until he was 17 years old. Then he went to Egypt for college and after we married, we went again for six months, and then we moved to the U.S. And I did not take off the veil there [in Zambia]. On the contrary, I became more attached to the veil than before [in Egypt].”

Similarly, Hajar from Egypt describes the difference between living in a Muslim and a non-Muslim country in terms of veiling. She explains:
I lived in an African country. I lived there for 17 years before I moved to back to Egypt. So, I was living in a non-Muslim country for 17 years before I went to Egypt. Then I went to Egypt, and then that's where I wore the hijab. It was three years after I moved to Egypt. So, I think what affected me was living in a Muslim country with many people wearing the hijab and listening to a lot of lessons. Listening to the lessons made me wear the hijab actually, because at that time, the focus was on the hijab more than anything. They focused on the teachings of Quran. But I also believe Islam is not only hijab, Islam is personality, wisdom, adaptability and hard work. But when I was back in Egypt, it was all about the hijab, beard and prayer, which is important. But it wasn't taught in a well-rounded manner. Like Islam is a lot more than just hijab. And that is what we don't teach them back home. You know, every Islamic lesson I attended, he spoke about the hijab. Whereby not every lesson he spoke about alghyba [talking about people behind their back], they do not spoke about that. Some people are wearing the hijab but they are cheating on taxes. Or you find people wearing the hijab but they abuse children or hit their spouse or things like that. So, I think hijab is just a part of it but we're just very focused on one thing. If we had lessons about how important it is as Muslims to educate ourselves about marriage, not just getting married but what is marriage? What do we need to do to make it successful? What do we need to do to make our work, job, or business successful? How can we balance? How can you have soft skills? I mean, the Prophet was very emotionally intelligent, which is a soft skill. We don't have soft skills. We have hard skills “do this, do that.” We don't have the soft skills that the prophet had. So, we don't talk about the big picture. We're very narrow minded or have tunnel vision.
Furthermore, Huda from Palestine explains that the “hijab is different between Islamic countries. For example, wearing an *abaya* is not appropriate in U.S. because it attracts attention, but in Saudi Arabia wearing an *abaya* is considered normal.”

Therefore, it is clear that, for many Muslim women, veiling is dependent on locality. Their choice of veiling is contingent on the country they are residing in and its culture. Thus, when many of them migrate to different countries, they change their practice of veiling accordingly.

**QUESTION 4:** Do you recognize any of the verses about hijab in the Quran? If so, what is your understanding of these verses?

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<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recognized the verses about the hijab in the Quran</td>
<td>18</td>
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*Recognized the verses about the hijab in the Quran*

Each interviewee knew that the Quran talks about the veil, however 7 of them did not know exactly what the Quran said about the veil. Despite their absence of specific knowledge about the surah and/or words, the participants knew the expectations of their religion regarding veiling.

As citizens of predominantly Muslim countries during their adolescence and sometimes well into their adulthood, the women were exposed to the beliefs and practices of Islam at school and in the home. Their exposure included verses about veiling. They understood that the verses are not just addressed to the wives of the prophet, but also all Muslim women. For instance, Rana from Pakistan answered,
My understanding is that I need to cover my whole body and not necessarily that I need to wear a head scarf. I need to cover my chest and that's my private part. If my head is not covered, it's not that important. If I am doing good deeds, then that does not affect my belief. But as long as I'm covering my chest and that I'm not showing my private parts to anybody, that is what’s important.

Similarly, Rema from Syria replied:

I know in Surah Al-Ahzab is the verse that commands veiling for the wives of the Prophet and the women of the believers. I understand that we have to cover so we protect ourselves from others. So, we don't have to show everybody our body, our hair, that's our privacy for us. So, we just have to cover ourselves and to let everybody know that I am a Muslim, especially here in America. Hijab is also obligatory for every Muslim woman.

Moreover, 6 of the participants (33%) knew that the verses were in Surat Al-Nour and Surat Al-Hazb but did not know the specific verse numbers or the verses by verbatim. Dalal from Lebanon explained:

I don't remember it word for word, but Sura al-Nour talks about veiling and the proper custom a woman must represent herself. It's like I said, God command not only for the prophets’ wives but for all Muslims for dignity and to protect them, and this is very important to understand. It's not by force. Just because I love my daughter doesn’t mean I have to force her to do this, you know, and because lately I know it's not a major sin. If you don't want to wear the hijab, it's up to you. But also, it's not up to you, but you have to…And I learned that through times, I learned all this because I am 47, so if you had talked to me when I was 18, maybe my answer would be different. Like I said, right now
I have more lessons from the roles of Islam because I'm reading more about Islam. I'm glad that at this time, I have more knowledge to give my kids and to my daughter.

Even though they all believed that it is required by Islam to veil, they had different understandings of the verses. My questioning demonstrated that two main interpretations prevailed. Huda from Palestine described the following understanding:

there is no specific hijab that we can say is the correct hijab, the most important thing is to wear somethings that covers the entire body. And my understanding of these verses about the veil is that the era of the prophet is different from our time now, and also different in culture because when I go to the mosque, I see some Pakistani women who do not cover all their hair, only a little, but you can find comfort and peace in this act, so this is called the hijab.

Shahad from Pakistan made similar remarks,

I cannot tell you the specifics, but if I search, I know they are in Sura al-Nour and others. And it's not only for the wives of the prophet. It is for women who are believers. It is for every woman who comes to age. They have to decide themselves to wear it. It's not forced by your father or your brother or family. It is by Islam; it is just a duty that we wear hijab and I think God will ask us as a person if we wear it or we don't wear it. There is no police coming and telling us we have to wear a hijab. That is my understanding.

Similarly, Noha from Yemen answered:

Yes, there are many verses in the Qur'an that talk about hijab. And my understanding of the verses is that a woman’s body must be covered with the hijab, and this is by not
wearing tight clothes like jeans. Covering the body is more important than covering the hair.

And when asked if the verses about the hijab in the Quran had impacted her decision to veil, Amal from Pakistan responded,

Yes, there was one which was important to me, which I, after hearing that, started wearing the hijab, which was Surah al-Ahzab, in which it says that the Muslim woman should, I don't exact words in English. It's like you should put your veil on you so that you should be identified. There are couple of things, though I have like researched about it. My understanding is that you should be wearing modest clothing and that your body should not be on display and wear loose clothing, that kind of thing. And then your hair should be covered. I'm more not about covering your face. But there there's school of thought that also says that we should cover our face also, but I don't follow that piece.

13 women (72%) believed that it is obligatory for a Muslim woman to eventually veil, but it should not be forced upon her because it is her decision. On the other hand, 5 women (27%) believe that even though Islam requires veiling, the degree of veiling should be decided by each woman. Modesty not uniformity in dress is the objective.

QUESTION 5: Has your experience in coming to the Inland Empire changed your understanding of any of the verses in the Quran regarding veiling? If so, why?

Themes

Immigrating had not weakened their belief in the Quranic verses 18
Immigrating reinforced and strengthened her belief in those verses

**Immigrating had not weakened their belief in the Quranic verses**

All participants stated that immigrating to the Inland Empire did not weaken their belief in the Quranic verses about veiling. Although their understanding of the Quranic verses remains constant, their practice of veiling varied. Moreover, 6 of the women (33%) stated that immigrating to the Inland Empire reinforced and strengthened their beliefs in those verses. The movement across borders changed their motivation to veil. Spiritual motivation replaced social pressure. The transition from a Muslim to a non-Muslim society triggered a need to maintain a connection to their religious beliefs and practices. For instance, Dalal from Lebanon explains:

> It makes me feel stronger when I wear it. Believe it or not. It made me feel stronger to wear it because I felt no pressure from my community. No pressure from culture. Because the surroundings of where you live, the culture around you are important. They sometimes make you hesitant about it. But when I am here, I felt that this is myself. I felt more at peace with myself. So, for me, coming here it made me stronger and more connected to my religion, more than I was in Lebanon…And like I said before, I was going to college. I have an art degree. I participated in art shows and one time, I went to take some advice on how to sell my art. An art consultant said when you walk into the room, you must feel safe while you wear your veil, because everything is about you. You show who you are with your art, and I never thought about it that way. So that gave me a positive idea about myself and veiling.
Similarly, Huda from Palestine believes that immigrating helped her strengthen her beliefs about the Quranic verses and veiling. She explains:

My understanding of the veil didn't change, but I think, for me, when you come to a different country that has all this freedom, you can take two different paths. Either you stay with your hijab, and you really feel stronger spiritually in Islam in your heart to really justify why you're wearing this hijab because it's not easy to wear hijab in a country, it's not really 100% on you. You need to strengthen your beliefs to find it easy to wear the hijab every day. The other side is to just get rid of the hijab and that pushes you away from Islam and pushes your family away from Islam. But for me, I feel that the hijab is a reminder every day for me.

Comparably, Shahad from Pakistan, who wears a scarf on her shoulder but does not veil explains:

I think coming to America has given me a lot more understanding of the religion but in regard to veiling I think I personally lack the strength to do it all the time. In public settings I wear it and I don't feel any shame. Where I work, in a public school, I go into a different room, I pray, and I wear the hijab. I wear a scarf all the time, but I don't wrap it around my head, so everybody knows I'm a Muslim because I have a scarf on. I have millions of scarfs. And when I pray, they know when I walk into my classroom. I'm never ashamed of wearing hijab and it never bothers me that if people see me that they're going to say something negative or they're going to be harsh to me. People are always respectful, I have felt. People always respect that and they never asked me, no matter how hot it is, and I had that piece around my neck. They don't really. I am not bothered by that. But the only thing is that I don't cover.
Hana from Pakistan also believes that her understanding of the verses became stronger as she describes:

I think that I have a better understanding when I came here because when I moved here, I saw different cultures and different people. So, here we get a chance to know more about our religion. Back home, everything was fine, and we don't have to pay attention too much. But when we come here, we pay more attention to our religion, and we study it more. In Pakistan, we don't study too much Quran because everything is premade like premade books and things about Islam. We know that whatever our family does that we will keep doing it. But when we come here, then we pay attention to why we do things, then we know the reason why we are wearing the hijab. What is the reason of the hijab? Why do we have to control the difference between haram and halal? I see that now that we are in this country, and I as a mother, we are paying more attention to this problem. Especially when I must explain to my daughter ‘you don't have to look like your friends, you don't have to wear what they are wearing.’ And I think that is the best thing here. We can explain to our kids exactly what it is sweetly that the people around us, even though they are not Muslim, they respect us because they know why we are doing it. If we do not disturb them, we don't say anything to them about their religion, then they don't say anything to us. So, I think that's a beautiful thing that's what I notice. It’s a beautiful thing that I'm paying more attention to the religion and I'm going into it. In my country, I never paid attention to those deep things.

However, Rema from Syria explains that, similar to others, immigrating made her more cautious of her behavior because veiling attracts more attention. Veiling becomes an identity marker. It lets people know that she is Muslim. The act of wearing the veil suggests that she is a
representative of the Muslim community. As a result, she is more conscious of her membership and representation of Islam. Rema explains,

Everyone knows that I am Muslim, so I must follow Islam correctly and not do anything wrong that harms Islam. Everybody knows from my *hijab* that I am Muslim. So, I have to take care of everything because the *hijab* lets people know how I am. If I do anything wrong, they're going to put everything on Islam.

QUESTION 6: Has your practice of veiling, if any, changed in any way since moving to the Inland Empire because of the different circumstances than your home country? If so, how did you deal with those circumstances?

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<td>Practice of veiling did not change after immigrating to the Inland Empire</td>
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Encountered discrimination/harassment due to their veil in the Inland Empire

8 of the participants (44%) encountered harassment and/or discrimination regarding their practice of veiling in the Inland Empire. For example, Huda from Palestine describes her experience of discrimination:

I had an incident where someone was rude to me in the store, but I didn't do anything because it was not direct, and I was not attacked so I didn't say anything. But it did hurt me, and it did take a toll on me that day, but I didn't do anything I think because of my personality, I don't really pay attention to the negative. I'm sure if someone who is very sensitive would notice more things. I'm sure they have happened, but I personally tend not to notice the negative stuff.

Shams from Jordan had a similar experience,

One incident happened while I was in Disneyland. As I was walking to Disneyland, some kid, 18 years old, jumped out of his car and started shouting “go back to your home.” But at the same time, I did not give it any attention. And people around me, non-Muslims, started apologizing and saying that he is insane, and he does not represent us. That's the only incident, but maybe it depends on the area that I live in. I mean, it hurt me at the beginning, but when the people around me apologized, I felt much more confident because they knew that we don't hurt people and that we are normal people who are practicing our religion. And we're not hurting anyone.

Witness the words of Amal from Pakistan:

When I came, a year before 9/11 happened, it was really hard at that time because everybody would kind of make you a target. That was a hard time, but thankfully, Allah
gave me the strength to be able to stick to it. And then when I was looking for jobs, I would get very negative feedback at that too. But then again, your faith keeps you through it.

Shahad from Pakistan described the incident she encountered after 9/11:

I think it has made me stronger as a Muslim. I never feel I am a weaker person just because I'm a Muslim and I wear a scarf. If I go to the store, I'm wearing it on my head. The only incident was when September 11 happened. I went out and my baby was in a stroller and my daughter was with me, she was four years old. Somebody drove their car towards us really fast as if they were going to run us over and they shouted because I was wearing the hijab a scarf over my hair. And they shouted at me, and they were saying “go back to your country.” And I didn't say anything, but I went home, and I thought to myself “this is my country, this is where I had my kids. Where do I go back to? Who are these people? If they are telling me to go back, then everybody should go back because in this country, everybody has come from somewhere to this country, they came like 200 years ago. I came 20 years ago. Everybody should go back then. I always felt that nobody is supposed to tell us what to do in America.”

Khadijah from Yemen had a similar 9/11 experience:

After 9/11, they started to misunderstand Muslims. They said that we are terrorist, we are not, Islam forbids harming people. It is difficult because some people do not understand my religion. But after 9/11, a lot of people understand more about Islam. And they search about Islam, so they know more than before about Islam.

Similarly, Sarah from Indonesia explains why removed her veil after the events of 9/11:
After 9/11 my dad said “come on, please just take off your hijab” but I didn’t want to. Still, I know that it is in the hands of the Almighty, but then again you don’t want to like die or suffer from these people that get mad at you, you know, because they can just shoot me, and they were wanting me to die. You know, that's what my dad doesn't want. He said, “it's just, please, for a little while only until the situation is good.” When we drive in the United States and stop at a traffic light, you don't know who's driving next to you. He said, “these kinds of people look at her, she's wearing a hijab, so she’s like one of them. And then just boom.” So, my dad, he explained it to, so I took it off. And by the time I took it off, I got a job. So, when I got an interview, I didn’t have my veil with me. I didn’t have my hijab so that I can work. And I am working there until now, I work at a school and teach kids with autism.”

Rahma from Indonesia describes encounters with Islamophobia in the wake of 9/11,

After 9/11, I was having a hard time going out, because at that time I was a graduate student and when it happened, the school told me that “you should go home and lock your door and don't come back.” And then I remember that week we didn’t have school. And they said “don't come out, if you need to go out, just take off your scarf. And then make sure that you go with your friends or with anyone, don’t walk alone.” At the time, I didn't understand, but after that I understood, but I still worried. One bad thing that happened, I remember there were some guys, they saw me driving and then they almost hit me with their car and it was not long ago after 9/11 and it was just very intense. At that time, there were so many things on the news and everything. Also, when I went once with my husband at that time. We were just going out to a restaurant. And while we were going to cross the street, and then a driver there he was yelling at us and almost ran me
over, but my husband pulled me away from the street. But I don’t take anything personal because of the situation.

All the Muslim women that encountered a bad experience in Southern California changed their practice of veiling to a less modest practice of veiling in order to attract less attention, and one even removed the veil completely because of it. Many of those experiences were due to 9/11, which still impacts Muslim women’s choice of veiling to this day because some of the women change their practice of veiling without having had bad experiences but solely to avoid being placed in those situations and potentially being put in danger.

**Started veiling after immigrating to the Inland Empire**

3 of the women (16%) started veiling after they moved to the Inland Empire. Dalal began wearing a hijab because she felt she had more freedom to practice her religion freely without social pressure. She did not want to conform to the norms of her place of origin but now, without the social pressure, she decided to wear the hijab. She explains that she did not want to be forced to veil. She stated: “I wanted to wear the hijab when I am convinced of wearing it.”

**Stopped veiling after immigrating to the Inland Empire**

In contrast, 2 women removed their veil after moving to the Inland Empire. The fear of discrimination provoked their change in behavior. Huda from Palestine describes the challenges of when she moved to the Inland Empire:
When I was 21 and first came over here it was just harder for me because I just wanted to fit in and I wanted to be like everyone else, especially because a lot of the people around me were not wearing the hijab. So, I wanted to fit in, and I took it out off, but only for one day, but it didn't feel right in my heart, so I put it back on.

Similarly, Fatimah from Egypt removed her veil after immigrating to Southern California. She attributes her change in the practice of veiling to the cultural dynamics. She states:

In Egypt, we follow religion as a culture more than a religion from God. And if I go to Egypt, I wear the hijab, but in America I don't wear the hijab. Because when I go my country, I have to cover myself a little bit more because of the culture difference over there. You can't wear something revealing because there is a lot of judgments over there, so I can't wear the same thing I wear here. And I mean my vision, it's changed since coming here.

**Practice of veiling changed after immigrating to the Inland Empire**

10 of the participants (55%) who veiled in their country of origin and the Inland Empire noted that they changed their practice of veiling after immigrating. When asked why they changed, they provided several explanations. They believe that it is easier to be more modest in their veil in their home country in contrast with the Inland Empire. Therefore, when they immigrated, they changed their style of veiling from a more modest veil such as an Abaya or Jilbab\(^\text{107}\) to a head scarf, generally called a Hijab. Essentially, their degree of modesty changed from more modest

\(^{107}\) A style of veiling which covers the hair and the upper part of the body (shorter than a cloak)
to somewhat modest. Although they wanted to be more modest, they were afraid of being harassed or discriminated against, so they were less modest in appearance. Bad experiences or the fear of discrimination triggered a change in the level of their modesty in terms of the veil. For instance, Nora from Egypt describes why she changed her practice of veiling,

I wore a jilbab in my country [Egypt] because of my understanding of my religion, so I need to take care of how what I wear. But it is also important where you wear these clothes. So, if I wear a jilbab here [in Southern California], it will be harder because I can be put in a bad situation. Which is different that if I wear a different hijab. Again, I mean every country has a specific veil. In Islamic countries, wearing the hijab is different from Western countries.

Furthermore, many started wearing a hijab rather than an abaya in order to attract less attention. Hana from Pakistan explains:

Yes, there is a very big difference over there. I used to wear a long hijab and abaya back in Pakistan. So, I used to wear it when I was going to college. And when I was walking back from university [in Pakistan], I noticed that even then, people were looking at me like I am something they need to dig into and find out who I am. And they were super mean people, they were looking at me, like ‘that girl is coming, why is she wearing that outside?’ I don't want you guys to look at me, right? But still, they look at me like that with open eyes like crazy people. So, here [in Southern California] I am just simply wearing a long coat and a little scarf. And they respect that that we don't want them to see our body. They don't look at your body. So, I think here wearing the hijab makes me feel more secure and it is easier.”
Similarly, Amal from Pakistan answered:

The only thing that changed was my clothing because in my home country I would wear what we call *shalvar*\(^{108}\) because that's normal over there. Here, I would just wear skirts or pants and I will wear longer shirts, so it is the same with the ideology of what Islam says, I will fit in with whatever clothing that I'm wearing. But other than that, the basic theme hasn't changed.

Noha from Yemen also replied:

Yes, I changed my *hijab* here because the country is not Islamic. I only wear a scarf even though I have not been exposed to any bad situations here, on the contrary, many of them here look at me with respect… but in Yemen, wearing the hijab is much easier and more concealing than here, because we used to wear the *abaya* that covered the whole body.”

Hana from Pakistan believes that in order to adjust to living in Southern California, she had to change her practice of veiling to assimilate into the community. She illustrates,

I adjusted actually because it was not like my home country. I notice that it's not a big problem to adjust, it was only my adjustment. I had to adjust with them, right? And now, nobody has a problem with that, and I never see any kind of bad behavior in terms of wearing the hijab as I am Muslim, nobody ever put me down for these things. I always see people appreciating me, my religion, my culture, everybody in my workplace, and in my school, people are always nice to me. Occasionally, I see something, but nobody else

\(^{108}\) The salwar (also spelt shalwar) kameez, popularly known as the Punjabi suit, is the traditional dress of women in the Punjab region of northwestern India and eastern Pakistan. The outfit comprises a pair of trousers (salwar) and a tunic (kameez) that is usually paired with a scarf (dupatta).

puts me down for my scarf. They never say that you're not allowed to wear a hijab here, they never say that to me.

*Practice of veiling did not change after immigrating to the Inland Empire*

8 of the participants (44%) did not change their practice of veiling after immigrating to the Inland Empire attributable to different reasons. For example, Rana, who did not veil in Pakistan and does not veil in the Inland Empire, maintains her practice of not veiling in both countries. She did not experience any difficult situations in regard to the veil due to her absence of veiling.

QUESTION 7: How have you adjusted to living in the Inland Empire in terms of veiling?

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<td>It is more challenging to veil in the Inland Empire than in their home country</td>
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*Immigrating to the Inland Empire gave them more confidence in their veiling*

All of the immigrant Muslim women have adjusted to living in a predominantly non-Muslim society - the Inland Empire. However, 3 of them believe that moving to the Inland Empire strengthened their belief in veiling. They gained more confidence in veiling publicly due to their increased religious observance, rather than being socially pressured to veil, even though they may have encountered bad experiences. They also believe that they are representing Muslim
women with their veil, so they feel compelled to display a positive image of Islam. For instance, Shams from Jordan explains,

When I wore the *hijab*, it was my decision, and I was not forced to do that. I love my *hijab* and every morning I thank God for this blessing in my life. I feel so confident when I wear it. I really don't bother or give any attention to anyone that doesn't like it. I like to keep wearing it the way I do back home, and I will not stop doing that. I'm more attached to it here than maybe back home because it represents Islam and I want to be a good messenger about Islam here in U.S.

*It is more challenging to veil in the Inland Empire than in their home country*

15 of the Muslim women (83%) believe that it is more difficult to wear a veil in the Inland Empire than in a Muslim country. For example, Rema from Syria explains that “it's a little bit hard, but if I believe in my religion and I believe what I'm doing is the correct thing for me and for my religion, I don't care about other people. I just put on my *hijab* and go out, and I let them think whatever they want to think. It's OK with me, this is my religion and I have to do whatever God asks of me.”

Similarly, Khadijah from Yemen explains:

Some people are nice, sometimes people are not but that's fine, I don’t care. I'm proud of myself for wearing my *hijab*. I don't have any difficulty. When I see them, I think maybe they misunderstand, and one day, maybe they will know why I wear it. I excused them because they don't know anything about my religion.
Rahma from Indonesia describes her situation:

For me, I don't have any problems. I know some people at work laugh at me because they think it's funny when I wear it and it's during summertime and it's very hot outside. Some people keep telling me that, even some Middle Eastern people also, but they are Christians and not Muslims. They say, “how aren't you feeling hot because it's summer and you're wearing long sleeves and the veil and everything?” But I just don't, I never take it to heart because I understand that they come from different backgrounds and they have a different religion than me, so I always say “well, it's OK, it's OK. I'm comfortable wearing this because I got used to it” so I just reply in a in a nice way to them, because I know that there's no point in arguing with them because we have a different perspective.

QUESTION 8: Do you have any daughters? If so, what is your opinion of their choice of veiling? Did you or will you have an impact on that decision? Has your own experience influenced that decision?

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<td>Her own experience with veiling affects her daughter’s decision</td>
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Her own experience does affect her decision

15 of the participants (83%) have a daughter(s), and all of them believe that their own experience does have an effect on their opinion of their daughter’s choice of veiling. For example, Dalal from Lebanon has a daughter who is 12 years old. She answered:

I try to explain it to her in a nice way and I leave it up to her, and she knows that she has the liberty to do it or not. But of course, it's better to do it according to the Quran and the Sunna, but she has to know it 100% in her heart because she’s the one who's going to face it. And also, because right now for any teenager in school, there is a lot of bullying and I do not want her to go through that. And she goes to the Islamic study, and they give her advice on why we do it and how to answer when people ask you about it. And like I said, confidence makes a big difference. If you are weak with your answers, they are going to say you are suppressed. But if you have confidence about who you are and how you represent yourself, they will respect you for that. That's my experience. They respect your opinion. And right now, when she goes to the mosque, she wears a hijab. And when we went to visit Turkey, she tried it on freely because she said, “I love it here because nobody is questioning you when you wear the hijab.” You're in a Muslim country. And when she mentioned it to her friends last year she asked, “if I wear the hijab, will you treat me differently?” They said “no, because this is who you are, but why do you have to wear it?” So, we have to teach them the right foundation, so they have the confidence and to do it for the sake of God.
Similarly, Huda from Palestine explains her opinion on her daughter’s veiling:

Right now, she goes to the mosque to take classes and she covers. And that was totally her choice and it's her choice to cover whenever she can. I leave it as is her choice, not set it to a certain time or when you hit a certain age, you need to start covering. It's not as easy over here [in Southern California] because it's a struggle. Every day, if you don't have the willpower to fight and believe in it to fight for it every day, it's going to be a struggle. So, I wouldn't want my daughter to have that struggle, especially if she doesn't have faith in it. I would leave it to be her choice. Forever, I would always leave it to be her choice. But also, *hijab* is not just covering our hair, it's also covering our body and how we dress on a daily basis. I understand when people in a Muslim country say that girls in a certain age, may cover. But right now, our worries in a foreign country are for our girls to dress modestly because there's a lot of temptation and normalization of barely wearing any clothes over here for teenage girls or for even older girls. So, my fight is not to cover her hair and veil, my fight is for her to wear modest clothes. And she sees me, I'm a *hijabi*\(^{109}\), this is normal, but the thing is, we're looking at the *hijab*, and this is what identifies us as Muslims. But it is almost the least important thing for a Muslim girl to worry about. This is only the outside, but if you work hard on the inside, of growing your Islam, then covering your hair is nothing.

Comparably, Shams from Jordan illustrates how her experience as a *hijabi* Muslim women can influence her daughter’s decision on veiling:

\(^{109}\) A woman who wears the hijab
For my daughters, I would definitely love for them to wear it, but I would also want them to wear it the right way. I did [veil], so I don't want it to be like a trend or just following rules without understanding the main issue of her job. 2 days ago, my daughter, she's in 7th grade, she said “I went to wear the hijab.” I told her “I'm so happy with your decision, but I can't let you wear the hijab because you're still not ready for it” and I told her, “First of all you need to understand what the hijab is. You need to be practicing your five prayers, you need to be a very good Muslim, and you cannot go with your tights and a long shirt. So, we need to work step by step so you can wear the veil in the right way. It's not just about I want to wear hijab and that's it… I will not accept that because you need to make your decision when you are ready to make it and you're mature enough.” Of course, I will never force my girls to wear hijab because of what I saw in my life. The girls that were forced to wear the hijab, they're not representing Islam in a good way. And I know a lot of them that took off the hijab later. And I don't want my girls to be one of them, I don't want them to represent it in a bad way, so I will always talk to them about the hijab and how it's a blessing and it's about obeying God. I will help them understand the rules because we want to go to the paradise and it's very good for the girls because it will protect you. So, I will always keep talking to them about the beauty of the hijab I will try to explain everything because I want them to make it the decision out of love, not just something that they have to do. Especially when they are in a country that has so many different religions, so many different ideas, thoughts that might affect them. So, if they don't make it out of love and out of understanding, then they will never be happy about their decision. And when they see me, they see that it's all about your faith, it does not affect anything else. So, I think I set a good example for them. And I think it does
influence them because when my daughter came and said that she wants to wear the hijab, I think it’s because I'm talking to them every day about it.

On the other hand, Shahad from Pakistan, who does not veil, believes that her own beliefs do influence her daughter,

When my 25-year-old daughter started college here in the United States, she started wearing the hijab. And she wore it for four years, and after she graduated college, all her pictures are with a hijab, and she got a job. She was also wearing it but then, she decided to take it off. So, I support her when she would decide to wear it. And I support her when she wants to take it off. But again, my reason is that this is her choice. And I don't want to force it on her. I know that she is modest. She keeps her body covered; she wears appropriate clothes. She always leaves the home with proper clothing and wears it outside; she doesn’t go outside and change you know. She doesn’t wear sleeveless shirts or anything too tight or change her personality when she goes outside. She's wearing full sleeve all the time. No shorts or anything like that, so she is covered in my eyes properly except for her hair which is the hijab. When she decided to cover her hair, I said “Mashallah, I'm so happy you're so much better than I am.” And when she decided not to do it and she's still covered head to toe, I also support her because I see at my work Muslim girls come from their home in abyas and when they come, they take their abyas off and they're wearing tank tops and short skirts or whatnot and showing off their bodies. But those are two different kinds of hypocrisy. So, for my daughter, she took off the hijab, but she makes sure that she is still covered, and she goes to places in the same way she dresses from home, and I support her now. And I think I have some influence because of that. We have extended family here and some cousins are American, they
wear shorts. But in my home, I don't do any of that, so my daughter does not do it. I don't have to tell her. So, I guess she sees her mom and she follows her.

Nora from Egypt explains how her own positive and supportive point of view on the veil has influenced her young daughter,

She decided by herself. She told me 3 months ago, “I would like to wear the hijab” So, I told her “You can wait, why would you like to wear the hijab now?” She told me “Because I would like to be make Allah happy.” And when she started wearing it, she said, “I feel like a Princess” and now in school they love her. They know her anywhere because she told me “I'm special, my friends love me and take care of me very well even with the hijab.

The positive view of the mother has been reflected on the daughter’s decision to veil by encouraging her to be like her mother, who serves as her role model.

Witness the words of Rema from Syria:

I don't want to force them [her daughters] to wear the hijab, its up to them. If they want to wear it, its their choice. I can’t tell them; I can’t push them to wear it or not to wear it. It’s their choice because they are going to university and to work, so I feel like they can decide whatever they want to do. And I think it is better not to force them to wear the hijab because wearing the hijab here is different from Islamic countries. Sometimes, I am afraid of someone attacking them and I don’t want anybody to bother them. So, this is one of the reasons why I don’t push them too much.”

Lastly, Aisha from Egypt clarifies her experience and its relationship to her daughter,
I let her wear it in the right circumstance like during Eid [an Islamic holiday], I told her she can put it on when we’re going to the Masjed [Mosque] to talk about it. She always sees me wearing a hijab and she will be raised in a Muslim family. And she sees her mom wear the hijab and other family members. But it’s her choice. I will never force her because I feel when families force their children to wear the hijab, their daughters sometimes feel trapped inside it. And then when they’re older, they just want to take it off. So, I don’t want her to go through that, I want her to feel comfortable with it and when she wears it, she never gets set off. It’s up to her.

However, Noha from Yemen illustrates her opinion on her daughter’s choice of veiling:

I always encourage my daughter to wear the hijab. For example, I buy her beautiful hijabs that she uses in prayer and when she goes to the mosque. And my role as a mother is encourage her to wear the hijab because she is a Muslim girl. But I do not force my daughter to wear the hijab, I want her to wear it with conviction.

Therefore, all the participants do not want to influence their daughters’ choice of veil, however their decision may have affected their daughters indirectly, They want them to make an informed decision by going to Islamic school and helping them become exposed to the experience of wearing a veil. They want their daughters to veil but do not want to push them into something they are not ready for or convinced of. Their own experience as immigrant Muslim women, whether veiled or not, helps inform their decision of not expecting a certain behavior and practice from their daughters. The mothers are afraid that their daughters will face discrimination or harassment like they did because of veiling in a non-Muslim country. The women do not want their daughters to blame them for similar experiences of discrimination because they forced them to veil. Immigrating from a Muslim to a non-Muslim country affected their decision because it
made them appreciate the struggles of veiling in a non-Muslim country, especially obstacles such as not being able to find a job due to their veil, which some of them faced after 9/11. They also saw how different women that were forced to veil behaved in their home country. Thus, they do not want to force their daughters to veil because they know the consequences of being pressured into it without fully being convinced thorough their experience.

Summary

The interviews reveal numerous ideas and help shed light on the phenomenon of migration and veiling in the Inland Empire. The immigrant Muslim women experienced similar, yet unique phenomena regarding their beliefs and practices of veiling in a foreign environment - Southern California or more specifically the Inland empire. These experiences appear to have informed a change to their practice of veiling after migrating in order to fit in to the culture in the Inland empire, and to attract less attention. Many of the women who migrated to other countries or states prior to the Inland Empire also noticed a difference in their veiling in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Moreover, when some of the Muslim women changed their practice of veiling, they all started wearing a hijab in the Inland Empire rather than an abaya or jilbab, or other styles of veiling in their home countries. This suggests that whatever their previous style of veiling was, they changed it to a hijab once they migrated to the Inland empire. Furthermore, immigrating to the Inland Empire did not affect the Muslim women’s understanding and interpretation of the verses in the Quran that discuss veiling. However, immigrating did affect many of their opinions regarding their daughters’ choice of veiling. Each woman’s experience impacted how she viewed veiling in non-Muslim countries. The experiences made them more cautious about encouraging their daughters to veil because they want to protect them.
SECTION II: ANALYSIS

Theoretical Framework

Immigrant Muslim women in the Inland empire constituted a religious diaspora in the way they viewed themselves as foreigners from their religious communities and the migration as a shared experience around which to identify themselves, similar to the contentions of Verotic and Cohen. They reinforced through their veil and mosques a collective identity and a notion of themselves as a religious diaspora. This led to the uniformity of wearing a hijab and being modest, which signifies the new religious culture emerging.

In terms of transnationalism, immigrant Muslim women develop transnational ties to both their country of origin as well as the United States, their new home, which has an impact on their identities. They reconstructed their place and locality as they moved to the Inland empire, while altering parts of their religious behavior in order to fit in to the social norm of the United States, such as by changing their style of veiling. There was also movement of capital, social and religious remittance as they brought with them symbols and elements of their Muslim culture. In terms of cultural production, which involves the production and the reproduction of associating transnational activity involving both material items and persons, they created fluidity and hybridity signaled in the unique style of veiling, the hijab, as they began wearing it as they moved to the Inland empire.

Vasquez and Marquardt’s theory is one about religion and globalization. Their theory emphasizes the concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which is the process by which immigrants construct and deconstruct the formation of new spatio-temporal arrangements that blend local, regional and global dynamics. Thus, if we apply the concept of
deterritorialization and reterritorialization and the use of religion as a map, we see, Tweed’s dual process of deconstruction and reconstruction of territory in an organic cultural flow representing the movement of Muslim women from Muslim countries to the Inland empire as they deconstruct homes in order to cross boundaries and reconstruct their identity and build transnational ties. In this case, religion makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and gain direction in the chaos of homogeneity to make sense of the world. Thus, in terms of globalization, Muslim women are linked to their home countries and are able to connect to other Muslims in the United States as Islam becomes less rooted solely in Muslim countries, but spreads globally due to diasporas and transnational ties. Furthermore, the new style of veiling, the hijab, is the greatest example for how religion played a key in the construction of both spatio-temporal arrangements and emerging cognitive maps. The immigrant Muslim women began wearing a hijab once they moved to the Inland empire, regardless of their style of veiling in their home country. This suggests that the beliefs and practices of veiling are unique to the United States and are not determined by the place of the immigrant’s origin.

Furthermore, the immigrant Muslim women aimed to preserve their language and ethnic and religious identity, linking them to their homelands through preserving their veil, in which religion, culture, and scripture were transmitted across generations. The immigrant Muslim women passed on their cultural and religious attributes to their daughters in order to preserve their identity as Muslim women. They sought to transmit their religion and scripture to their second-generation immigrant daughters by taking them to Islamic schools on Sundays and introducing them to the concept of veiling. However, their experience as first-generation immigrants helped them grasp the difficulties of wearing a veil in a non-Muslim country, and thus hesitant in encouraging their daughters to veil due to fears of discrimination.
Furthermore, the post-9/11 landscape has witnessed Muslim women's responses to discrimination ranging widely. Thus, some of the immigrant Muslim women in the study, driven by fears of discrimination, decided to relinquish their veils. These circumstances force a tension between preserving personal beliefs and confronting the realities of their adopted homeland. However, it is essential to recognize that for many other veiled Muslim women in the study, the veil represents an emblem of autonomy and agency.

Moreover, Vertovic and Cohen provide a framework of migration, in which this case fits greatly. More importantly, the case fits all three types of diaspora. As a social form, immigrant Muslim women are connected together through mosques and their shared communities. As a type of consciousness, immigrant Muslim women are bonded together by experience, state of mind and a sense of identity. It is constituted negatively by experiences of discrimination and exclusion that many have experienced in the Inland Empire due to the veil and positively by identification with Islam and a sense of shared Muslim identity. As a mode of cultural reproduction, immigrant Muslim women maintain their cultural and religious traditions after immigrating and pass them on to the next generation. In terms of transnationalism, they reconstruct their place and locality as they move to the Inland empire.

Peggy Levitt\textsuperscript{110} also touches on similar topics of pluralism, globalization, religion and culture, migration and transnationalism. She argues that many immigrants, including immigrant Muslim women, do not trade in their home country membership card for an American one. This can be seen through the strong connection that immigrant Muslim women have with their religion even after immigrating to the Inland Empire, which is why their beliefs did not weaken after

immigration. Furthermore, Levitt finds that religious traditions give Muslim women symbols, rituals and stories that create alternative sacred landscapes marked by holy sites, shrines and places of worship such as mosques. Through religion, immigrant Muslim women and their children carve out a space for themselves in the Inland Empire. Levitt’s analysis functions within the theoretical frames discussed. Her discussion about the concept of Ethnic America in terms of cultural reproduction is similar to Vertovic and Cohen’s notions. Within this cultural reproduction, religion acts as a membership card to signal the religious global citizenship of Islam, similar to Vasquez and Marquardt’s notion of religion as a compass and locus point.

Similar to the immigrant Muslim women in the study, according to Asifa Siraj\textsuperscript{111}, some immigrant Muslim women choose to wear the veil to preserve their culture and identity, while others because they observe an increase in religious observance after their immigration. With the increased practice of religion, immigrant Muslim women feel less alienated by society due to their veil, especially during times of uncertainty, and it helps them obtain a sense of belonging. Muslim women in diaspora, she argues, often chose to veil because it provides a physical link to their homeland and cultural and religious identity in response to the “invisibility” they experience in the United States and as participation in a wider Muslim community. As Muslim women immigrate to the United States, they bring with them their beliefs and practices, but they adapt their style of veiling, usually into a hijab, in order to respect the laws and culture of a non-Muslim country.

Moreover, since religion is important to immigrant Muslim women, and because their circumstances have changed drastically by immigrating, therefore religion, specifically the veil, must take on new forms to be capable of survival in the U.S, a non-Muslim country. In doing so,

they are making homes and crossing boundaries through the utilization of a unique veil, the *hijab*, as well as integrated models of worship. This then led to immigrant Muslim women uniformly veiling using the *hijab*, regardless of their country of origin as well as setting new religious understanding of the veil. The emergence of a new religious diaspora freed many of the Muslim women from the cultural expectations of their Muslim-majority home countries regarding their veil, allowing many to strengthen their belief and enrich their understanding of the Quranic verses.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION
The Immigrant Muslim woman is subjected to considerable observation and scrutiny. For many Americans, she is covered in black, she only reveals her eyes, she walks slowly, she speaks softly, she always follows the man. Many Americans perceive American Muslim women as a monolithic entity who follow the same philosophy and exhibit similar behaviors.\textsuperscript{112} They believe she is devoid of agency – she is asked: Do you have to wear this? Does your husband make you wear it?

Compounding the observation and scrutiny is the “foreign” or immigrant element. Many American Muslim women are recent immigrants to the United States. Therefore, the distinctions become more than just religious, there are also cultural, national, and/or ethnic elements. Moreover, the veil receives much attention in the study of Islam. Academics examine the issue of the veil in the Quran. Studies present the practices of veil throughout the Muslim world. These studies have extended to the United States. In the study of the American Muslim woman and the veil, it is predominantly approached from a sociological perspective. The attention this perspective receives has intensified since the events of 9/11. The Muslim woman and the veil represent conversations about globalization, transnationalism, identity, transformation, and assimilation.

However, although the immigrant Muslim woman is thoroughly examined, largely absent from the studies on the subject is her understanding of her beliefs and practices of the veil. There are a limited number of studies concerning the Muslim women’s belief and interpretation of the veil and the Quranic verses pertaining to it. Thus, my study has analyzed how immigrant Muslim

\textsuperscript{112} Evrard, Amy Y., "What All Americans Should Know about Women in the Muslim World: An Introduction" (2016). What All Americans Should Know About Women in the Muslim World. 12.
women adapt to living in the U.S. in terms of the veil and observed the changes witnessed regarding their practice and belief in the veil.

To summarize the main points of my study,

The first chapter served as an introduction into the study including the research question as well as a review of the current literature regarding immigrant Muslim women and the veil. The extensive literature review argues the necessity of this study and where the study is situated in the scholarship on the immigrant Muslim woman and the beliefs and practice of the veil. The chapter lays out the structure of the study - the questions posed by the addressed topics and the argument.

The second chapter introduces the various terminology associated with immigration, transnationalism, and globalization as well as set up the theoretical framework. It includes a brief account of how immigration impacts immigrant Muslim women in terms of the veil and their belief in the Quranic verses.

The third chapter then presents and analyzes the verses in the Quran regarding the veil as well as their respective interpretations. It also includes a brief understanding and presentation of some of the different styles of veiling for Muslim women.

The fourth chapter presents the information extrapolated from the interviews followed by an analysis utilizing the theoretical framework of Tweed and Vasquez. It covers the questions and responses of each interviewee. It is in this chapter that the understanding of scripture is discussed, what they believe, and how or if they practice veiling.

Finally, this chapter, the fifth chapter concludes the study by addressing where and how my analysis fills the void in scholarship on the practice and beliefs of veiling of the American
Muslim woman in the Inland Empire. It will also present the limitations of my study and ideas for future research on the immigrant Muslim woman and the veil.

My research asks the question: Does immigrating to the Inland Empire prompt Muslim women to change their style of veiling as compared to their Muslim-majority home country? Are there changes observed regarding their practice and belief in the veil as well as their interpretation of the Quranic verses pertaining to it? I ask this question for two reasons:

Firstly, as demonstrated by my study, Muslims women’s beliefs and practices of veiling vary by their home country. For example, the practice of veiling in Indonesia contrasts with Egypt. However, the United States is different from both countries because it is a country of immigrants and welcomes Muslim women from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, my study has concluded, through interviews with immigrant Muslim women, that beliefs and practices of veiling are an amalgamation of these Muslim communities. Many of the immigrant Muslim women in the study changed their veil into a *hijab* after immigrating to the Inland Empire, regardless of their style of veiling in their home country. Thus, immigrating to the Inland Empire changes immigrant Muslim women’s practice of veiling as they change their style of veiling into a less modest veil, mostly a *hijab*, than that of their Muslim-majority home countries in order to attract less attention in the United States.

Secondly, studies often place the practice of veiling as a response to American society and developments. The review of the literature suggests there is little account for how a Muslim woman engages with her religion, thus, my research reveals that she is reacting to her surroundings, not her relationship with God. Based on the results of the study, immigrant Muslim women change their style of veiling as a reaction to their environment, not their beliefs.
in the Quran. Although the practice of veiling does change in many cases, their belief and interpretation of the Quranic verses rarely changes.

Furthermore, some of the questions answered in the study include: Does immigrating to the Inland Empire have an impact on Muslim women’s belief and practice of veiling? Are there changes observed in their belief and interpretation of the Quranic verses regarding veiling? If so, do Muslim immigrant women conform to a particular set of beliefs and practices regarding veiling after immigrating or do they maintain the unique beliefs and practices of their home country? Furthermore, what is their understanding of the Quranic verses regarding the veil, and did it inform their decision to veil?

Ultimately my study has been able to ascertain whether there is a change in belief and practices of veiling through migration. It concludes that the practice of veiling is altered by the change in location but beliefs in veiling remain primarily unaltered and transcend borders. Based on an analysis of the interview results, as Muslim women immigrate from Muslim countries to the United States, a non-Muslim country, they change their practice of veiling in order to adapt to living in the Inland Empire region of Southern California. However, their religious beliefs remain mostly unchanged because many immigrated to the Inland Empire after growing up in a Muslim-majority country where they established their beliefs regarding veiling and the Quranic verses pertaining to it. Immigrating resulted in decreased religious observance for some the Muslim women in the study, but increased observance for others since it was easier for them to practice religious rituals in Muslim countries but immigrating to the U.S. relieved them of the social pressure, they experienced in their home countries. Thus, immigrant Muslim women did not observe a change in their belief in veiling nor in the Quranic verses as they immigrated to the
Inland Empire, however, some experienced a change in their practice of veiling in order to conform to life in a non-Muslim country.

In regard to the change in practice of veiling, all Muslim women who did change their style of veiling changed into a “less modest” style of veiling to attract less attention in the Inland Empire. As it is not specified in the Quran which style of veiling is required, Muslim women practice veiling with a wide variety of styles, mainly contingent on their home country and culture. However, many Muslim women decide to veil using a hijab after immigrating to the Inland Empire as it is the most common style of veiling in the United States.\textsuperscript{113} The immigrant Muslim women changed their practice of veiling mainly due to fears of discrimination, especially after 9/11. Some of the participants who immigrated prior to the events of 9/11 contend that it dramatically changed the perception of Muslims, especially Muslim women as they can be recognized by their veil, in the United States. Thus, Muslim women had to change their practice of veiling in response to their environment, not necessarily their beliefs.

Furthermore, some of the immigrant Muslim women chose not to veil at all after immigrating to the Inland Empire due to prejudiced encounters that they faced due to veiling or fears of facing those incidents. On the other hand, some chose to wear the veil in order to preserve their religious identity, while others because they observed an increase in religious observance after their immigration. When Muslim women relocate to other countries, they bring their beliefs and practices with them, but they change their style of veiling in order to respect the customs of that country. Furthermore, since religion is a vital aspect of immigrant Muslim women’s lives, and their circumstances have changed dramatically as a result of immigration,

\textsuperscript{113} Blakeman, Hannah. “The Muslim Veil in America: A Symbol of Oppression or Empowerment?” \textit{DigitalCommons, University of Maine}, digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/honors/150/?utm.
therefore, the veil must take on new forms in order to survive in the United States, a non-Muslim country. In doing so, they are constructing homes and crossing boundaries by utilizing a distinct veil, the *hijab*, as well as integrated forms of worship.

Overall, my study fills a void in the scholarship and reveals that it is important to not only analyze Muslim women’s practice of veiling, but also her beliefs. Furthermore, it is also essential to understand and analyze not only *if* Muslim women veil, but also *why* they veil? What is their understanding of the Quranic verses regarding the veil, and did it inform their decision to veil? As demonstrated by the interview results, all the immigrant Muslim women who participated in the study believed that the Quran emphasizes that veiling is a requirement for Muslim women. However, some did not veil even though they believe that veiling is a religious requirement largely due to their environment and fears of discrimination. Almost all participants changed their style of veiling or stopped veiling due to immigrating to the Inland Empire. Furthermore, many did not pressure their daughters to veil in order to protect them from any discrimination that they may face in a non-Muslim country, which they believe would not have been the case in a Muslim country. Thus, it is clear that a change in location prompts in many Muslim women a change in their practice of veiling. However, the belief in veiling and the Quranic verses regarding veiling was not influenced with a change in location, but rather strengthened in some cases.

Moreover, my study has concluded that as Muslim women immigrate to the Inland Empire and adapt to living in a non-Muslim country, they change their practice of veiling into the hijab because it is the most common style of veiling in the U.S and to attract less attention. However, their beliefs and interpretation of the Quranic verses regarding the veil did not change because the women in the study spent most of their childhood in a Muslim country where they
established their beliefs, so they are more resistant to changes. Nonetheless, it is different for their second-generation immigrant daughters as they were born in a non-Muslim country, which changes their practice and belief in veiling and can be an area for future research.

The study of immigrant Muslim women’s veiling is an interdisciplinary study as it entails the role of identity, Islamic beliefs and practices, Islam in America, immigration and transnationalism, Quranic scripture, and Islam and women. Thus, this study is unique in its exploration of the beliefs of immigrant Muslim women’s veils in relation to globalization and transnationalism as well as how those beliefs impact their practice of veiling in a non-Muslim country. Furthermore, the results of this study offer some insight into the veiling practices of the diverse Muslim community in the United States. The analysis of why immigrant Muslim women veil as well as the accompanying Quranic verses that prompt Muslim women to veil are essential in the study of veiling in Islam. Therefore, the study’s qualitative approach, which analyzes why immigrant Muslim women veil, change their style of veiling, as well as their belief in the Quranic verses, is important to understanding the effect of globalization and transnationalism on religion and scriptural belief, practice and understanding.

Significance and Limitations:

Significance

Academics have spent considerable time studying the American Muslim woman. However, they have failed to analyze her beliefs and practices about the veil in the context of scriptural, specifically Quranic, understanding. My study fills a void in the literature on the practice and beliefs of the veil in the United States. It provides further context, understanding,
and specificity. Studying the relationship between text and practices provide further insight into whether practices are a product of textual understandings or a response to the environment in which one resides. In a way, it tells us if the belief and practice of the veil is a product of globalization or if the practice and belief of the veil is manipulating globalization.

As the review of the literature has presented, there have been a few studies regarding the Muslim women’s belief and practice of the veil as well as their interpretation of the Quranic verses pertaining to it. Thus, my study provides insight into how immigrant Muslim women conform to living in the Inland Empire with regard to the veil and the changes observed regarding their practice and belief in the veil.

Furthermore, the diversity of the Muslim community in the Inland Empire provides rich insight into a potentially diverse understanding of the practice and beliefs of veiling in the United States. This is unlike areas like areas of Dearborn Michigan where the Muslim community is much more monolithic along country lines – Yemen, Iraq and the Palestinian territories. The Muslim community in the Inland Empire, as seen through the interviews presented in this study, features immigrant Muslim women from a vast range of Muslim countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Indonesia, Pakistan, etc. that had comparable experiences in their immigration. Thus, even though the participants were from different Muslim countries, they observe somewhat similar experiences after immigrating to the Inland Empire as well as changed their practice of veiling into a hijab or stopped veiling completely.
Limitations

The small sample size raises questions about the accuracy of the findings. The Muslim population in the Inland Empire is less than 1% of the population and represents a small percentage of the overall Muslim population in the United States. Do the findings in the Inland Empire accurately reflect the overall beliefs and practices of the veil for immigrant Muslim women in the United States? Also, the American Muslim community consists of individuals indigenous to the country and converts. Understanding the experiences of immigrant Muslim woman in the Inland Empire will only represent a portion of the geographic and demographic presence of the Muslim community.

Furthermore, the sample of immigrant Muslim women interviewed in this study is limited and does not represent all immigrant Muslim women as the immigrant Muslim community is very diverse. The Muslim women in this study are Sunni and visit the Mosque frequently, which can have an effect on their belief and practice of the veil. As clearly emphasized by authors such as Leila Ahmed,114 Asma Barlas,115 Saba Mahmood,116 and Leila Abou Lughod,117 understanding the practices of veiling in the United States is complex due to the diversity of the Muslim population.

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114 Leila Ahmed is a Professor of women’s studies in religion at Harvard and one of her famous books includes: *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil’s Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
Thus, future research can explore further into the belief and practice of other immigrant Muslim women in the United States such as ones who do not visit the Mosque in order to gain a clear picture of the changes that immigrant Muslim women encounter regarding veiling. Furthermore, the beliefs and practices of veiling by the second-generation immigrant Muslim women, the daughters of the women in this study, can also be explored in order to compare the results with the first-generation immigrants. Special emphasis can be placed on immigrant Muslim women’s belief and interpretation of the Quranic verses regarding veiling in comparison to their practice of veiling.
Appendix 1- Interview questions

1. Where are you from?
2. How old are you?
3. Do you veil?
4. Describe your religious life before moving to the Inland Empire?
5. Did you veil before arriving in the Inland Empire? If so, why?
6. Why did you move to the Inland Empire?
7. Do you know any of the verses in the Quran about the veil? If so, what is your understanding of these verses?
8. Has your residency in the Inland Empire transformed your interpretation of any of the verses in the Quran regarding veiling? If so, why?
9. Has your practice of veiling, if any, changed in any way since moving to the Inland Empire because of the different situations than your home country? If so, how did you deal with those situations?
10. How have you adjusted to living in the Inland Empire in terms of veiling?
11. Before immigrating to the Inland Empire, did you migrate to any other countries? If so, where, and how has it affected your choice of veiling, if any?
12. Do you have any daughters? If so, what is your opinion of their choice of veiling? Did you or will you have an impact on that decision? Has your own experience influenced that decision?
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