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Research Article

A Mixed Methods Look at the Effectiveness of Parental Ethnic-Racial Strategies Among Muslim Children

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Abstract

The ongoing Islamophobic ideology in the United States has magnified discriminatory practices, exclusion, and increased violence toward Muslims and Islamophobia has further disadvantaged Muslim American adolescents through various forms of discrimination against them in schools. In fact, Muslim American students report the highest rate of discrimination across all religious groups, and researchers have found that active family ethnic-racial socialization can often mitigate the negative impacts of discrimination. This study was designed to examine the ethnic–racial socialization practices of Muslim families, identify the strategies most commonly employed by Muslim students to exhibit resilience in the face of discrimination, and explore the implications of these practices for Muslim youths' adjustment within the context of school-based Islamophobia..This was accomplished using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design that used surveys, regression analysis, and focus groups. In the quantitative phase, a survey instrument was administered to 235 participants between 11 and 18 years of age. Results revealed that cultural socialization and egalitarianism were the most frequently practiced ethnic–racial socialization strategies among Muslim parents. The qualitative phase involved two focus groups of 17 Muslim Arab American students and three key themes were identified: (a) Muslim parents were actively involved in transmitting cultural-spiritual and sometimes moral socialization, and egalitarian knowledge; (b) Muslim parents involved in social justice matters, and those who experienced discrimination in schools, actively educated their children about Islamophobia; (c) Muslim parents often encouraged their children to form friendships with students from diverse backgrounds. Taken together, the results of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods design may provide educators, parents, and students with the knowledge and strategies needed to help combat the scourge of Islamophobia.

Keywords

Islamophobia, Discrimination, Resilience, Ethnic-Racial Socialization, Muslim American Students

1. Introduction

In recent years, Muslim Americans have experienced high rates of prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination [21, 58, 72] and are often perceived as potential threats [1], despite evidence that Muslim Americans have either similar or greater socioeconomic status and levels of education than average U.S. citizens and are active in civil and political society [59]. Prejudice and stereotyping are also both growing in U.S. classrooms, making it difficult for Muslim students to learn and thrive. Islamophobia has a strong and disturbing potential to negatively impact Muslim students attending public schools,

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and the consequences of encountering discrimination have been even greater and more substantive [3, 76]. Previous research has shown evidence that Muslim American adolescents experience persistent challenges in school, including physical assaults, death threats from peers, overt ethnic and religious bigotry, and harassment from teachers, school administrators, and peers [20, 43]. In California, 47.1% of Muslim students between 11–18 years old reported being bullied for their religious identity [15], and Muslim students are twice as likely to be bullied in school than other students [15]. Given the lack of educational practices to combat Islamophobia, we must consistently pursue solutions that advance equity in education. Studies suggested messages related to ethnic-racial socialization have the potential to act as a protective factor in the face of discrimination.. Many studies link adolescents' resilience to families' ethnic-racial socialization, which helps mitigate the harmful effects of discrimination. [9, 12, 13], strengthen intragroup positivity and cultivate skills to combat discrimination and racism [12].

Using the framework of ethnic-racial socialization, the aim of this study was to examine parental ethnic-racial socialization practices among Muslim families in the United States, and to explore the strategies most commonly employed by Muslim students to demonstrate resilience in the face of discrimination. To achieve this goal, this study employed an explanatory sequential design, which is a two-phase design that involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, followed by collecting and analyzing qualitative data based on the quantitative results [16].

Research Questions: Subsequently, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1) How do Muslim American students respond to experiences of discrimination?
2) What type and frequency of ethnic-racial socialization messages do Muslim American adolescents receive from their parents?
3) Which practice of ethnic-racial socialization is more effective at mitigating the negative impact of Islamophobia?

2. Literature Review

A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted to examine how resilience has been conceptualized among marginalized populations, with particular attention to its relationship with ethnic-racial identity. The studies reviewed revealed considerable variation in how resilience is defined and operationalized, suggesting that it remains a multidimensional construct whose meaning depends on the social, cultural, and structural contexts in which individuals develop. Several studies examined resilience in conjunction with ethnic-racial socialization without providing an explicit definition of resilience itself [9, 12, 13]. Other research conceptualized resilience as a potential outcome of positive ethnic-racial identity development, emphasizing the role of ethnic pride, cultural affirmation, and a positive sense of belonging in supporting individuals' capacity to navigate adversity [55]. Similarly, Jackson et al. (2013) highlighted the association between resilience and positive perceptions of one's racial and ethnic background. Collectively, these findings suggest that a stronger and more affirming relationship with one's ethnic-racial identity may contribute to resilience by providing individuals with a sense of belonging, continuity, self-worth, and cultural adherence. Moreover, resilience cannot be reduced solely to individual attitudes or positive identity development. Rather, it should also be understood in relation to the social relationships, community resources, cultural practices, and structural conditions that either facilitate or constrain individuals' capacity to respond to adversity.

Ethnic identity is central to understanding resilience among marginalized young people, as it shapes their sense of belonging, connection to their cultural heritage, and relationship with the broader society. Portes and Zhou (2025) [61] revisit their influential theory of segmented assimilation, reflecting on its development over the three decades since its introduction in the 1990s. The authors emphasize the immigrant's integration pathways are shaped by socioeconomic circumstances, family resources, experiences of racial and ethnic discrimination, ethnic community networks, structural opportunities, and immigration policies [24]. These factors influence immigrants' adaptation processes and long-term outcomes in the broader society. Building on this framework, Kasinitz (2025) [42] offers a useful perspective for understanding how social contexts shape immigrant integration and the development of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity can provide a sense of belonging, cultural continuity, and social support, enabling immigrant descendants to maintain connections with their cultural heritage while navigating the broader society. Consistent with this perspective, Su et al. (2024) [68] found that a stronger ethnic identity was associated with more positive developmental outcomes among second-generation Chinese American adolescents. Their findings further suggest that ethnic identity may help protect family relationships from the negative effects of discrimination. Furthermore, Feliciano and Rumbaut (2019) [22] demonstrate that ethnic identification can evolve across adolescence and adulthood [23], reflecting changes in how individuals relate to their national-origin groups and the broader society. Collectively, these studies illustrate that ethnic identity and immigrant integration are dynamic, interconnected processes shaped by individual experiences, family relationships, community resources, and broader structural conditions [31].

Bringing these perspectives together provides a valuable framework for understanding resilience as a process shaped by both individual characteristics and broader social and cultural contexts. For marginalized young people, a positive ethnic-racial identity can serve as an important resource for navigating discrimination, negotiating multiple cultural affiliations, and maintaining a sense of belonging across different

social environments. At the same time, the relationship between identity and resilience is influenced by the extent to which families recognize and affirm their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Ethnic-racial socialization, understood as the practices through which parents communicate cultural values, transmit knowledge about ethnic and racial heritage, prepare their children to experiences of discrimination, and foster positive understandings of group membership, is widely recognized in the literature as an important factor in fostering resilience among young people from marginalized backgrounds.

Historically, research on ethnic-racial socialization has concentrated primarily on racially and ethnically marginalized populations in the United States. Early studies primarily investigated African American children and families [11, 46], as well as immigrant Latino and Asian populations [10, 35]. Over time, the scope of this research has broadened to encompass a wider range of ethnic-racial groups and social contexts, including Asian American populations [54], Latinx youth [74]), Native American communities [73], and transracially adopted children and adolescents [6, 40, 53]. While ethnic-racial socialization has received considerable attention in research on diverse racial and ethnic groups in the United States, its role within Muslim American families remains comparatively underexplored [18]. Nevertheless, these socialization practices may play a significant role in shaping Muslim American youths' ethnic and religious identity development, fostering resilience, and influencing their broader psychosocial well-being [34].

Research has demonstrated that this form of socialization constitutes a vital component of parenting among ethnically and racially diverse families. It influences how adolescents construct and interpret the meaning of their racial and ethnic identities. It informs their understanding of familial and cultural values, strengthens their sense of group belonging and ethnic–racial pride, and shapes their perceptions of status and position within the broader social system [36]. Hughes et al. (2006) identified four key components of ethnic–racial socialization that have become a central framework for understanding the construct. These components include (a) cultural socialization; (b) preparation for bias; (c) promotion of mistrust; and (d) egalitarianism.

2.1. Cultural Socialization

Cultural socialization primarily emphasizes fostering cultural pride, transmitting cultural knowledge, and promoting engagement in cultural traditions [75]. Research has identified two forms of cultural socialization: overt and covert. Overt cultural socialization involves parents intentionally helping children build a strong connection to their heritage by teaching cultural values, norms, and customs, and encouraging participation in traditions and rituals [34, 74]. Covert cultural socialization occurs when parents subtly incorporate cultural values into everyday family activities. This may include participating in cultural events, preparing and sharing traditional foods, and engaging with members of their heritage community [34, 75], and decorating the home with ethnic and cultural artifacts [33]. One commonly reported form of cultural socialization is encouraging children to speak their parents' native language, reinforcing both heritage identity and familial cohesion [34].

Research consistently supports cultural socialization as a protective factor for youth. It is positively associated with multiple indicators of psychosocial adjustment, including strong ethnic-racial identity [9], higher self-esteem [26], academic adjustment [63], adaptive coping strategies [49], and overall psychological well-being [57]. More studies confirmed marginalized youth who have been exposed to a higher level of family cultural socialization regarding their heritage culture exhibit lower levels of loneliness and depressive symptoms [50, 60]. They also demonstrate enhanced adaptation in the school environment, including increased levels of active participation, a sense of belonging, and stronger connections with their peers [70, 79].

Among Asian American youth, parental cultural socialization significantly predicted stronger racial and ethnic identity [57]. Similarly, Mexican youth's ethnic-racial identity was positively associated with parental cultural socialization [75]. Research also highlights cultural socialization as a protective factor, fostering resilience in the face of discrimination [75]. African American youth exposed to cultural messages promoting ethnic-racial pride demonstrated greater resilience, adjustment, and academic protection against prejudice [37]. Burt et al. (2017) viewed cultural socialization as an adaptive factor for African American youth, buffering the harmful effects of racial discrimination by enhancing resilience.

Research on cultural socialization in Muslim families is limited [18]. However, evidence shows its practice even when not labeled as such, Arab Muslim American youths with strong cultural identities were more likely exposed to Arabic language and media at home [8].

2.2. Preparation for Bias

Preparation for bias involves educating youth about ethnic-racial bias and guiding them in strategies to respond effectively [36]. Parents help children recognize discrimination and develop coping strategies, which are linked to positive adaptation in marginalized youth [4, 44, 55]. However, findings are mixed, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the relationship between bias preparation and adolescent adaptation.

Research on preparation for bias and youth adjustment has produced mixed findings. Some studies report null associations [4, 70], while others find both positive and negative effects [37] or link preparation for bias to increased risk, such as higher depressive symptoms [17, 47, 56, 74]. Conversely, some research indicates preparation for bias can positively influence youth development, either directly [36, 66] by reducing negative effects of risk or by enhancing the impact of promotive factors [70].

Studies indicate that the impact of preparation for bias varies based on parent–adolescent communication, trust, family context, and neighborhood characteristics [12, 18, 44, 70, 79]. For instance, higher preparation for bias was linked to increased depressive symptoms in households with poor mother–adolescent relationships, but no association was observed in families with high trust and communication [45]. Similarly, Saleem et al. (2016) found that Black parents' experiences of ethnic-racial discrimination influenced how they communicated preparation for bias alongside cultural socialization messages. Similarly, Black parents' experiences of racial discrimination influence how they convey preparation for bias and cultural socialization messages [32, 51, 65]. These findings suggest that the links between preparation for bias and adolescent adaptation vary by context, and a clear understanding of this aspect of ethnic-racial socialization requires a systematic examination of contextual factors in the lives of marginalized youth and their families.

2.3. Promotion of Mistrust

Promotion of mistrust involves guiding youth to be cautious of individuals from different racial or ethnic groups, often by emphasizing distance and negative traits associated with these groups [34, 65]. Research generally suggests this approach poses risks to adolescents' well-being and adaptation [18], though some studies report null or positive effects [39, 56, 69]. The impact of this strategy may depend on contextual factors, such as its use alongside other socialization strategies [44] or alignment with youths' personal values [29, 71].

The literature offers limited support for the idea that promoting mistrust yields positive outcomes. Conversely, evidence suggests that greater engagement in this socialization practice is linked to increased maladjustment among marginalized youth, as endorsing distrust tends to exacerbate the negative effects of cultural stressors [17]. When parents convey negative messages without providing guidance on coping strategies, it can foster intergroup hostility and stress, leaving marginalized youth isolated from their peers [4, 17].

2.4. Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism emphasizes shared qualities across racial and ethnic groups and the importance of fostering positive intergroup relationships by downplaying differences and highlighting skills needed to succeed in society [34]. These messages can reflect a distributive justice perspective, recognizing diversity [78].

Egalitarian messages stress the role of race in shaping identity while promoting fair treatment and valuing diversity [34, 36, 55]. Although commonly reported in socialization, this type of messaging has received limited empirical attention, leaving its impact on youth adjustment unclear [36].

Although research on egalitarianism is limited, some studies suggest it may positively influence youth adjustment. Egalitarian messages often stress fairness and the belief in racial equality, which are central to children's understanding of racial bias [34, 62]. Studies show that White parents often emphasize egalitarian practices in ethnic-racial socialization, typically avoiding direct discussions about race or ethnicity [35]. Although their overall engagement in socialization is limited, when they do address these topics, they tend to convey egalitarian messages. Some White fathers actively promote anti-racist principles, encouraging empathetic interactions with diverse groups [28]. However, avoiding conversations about race can allow subtle forms of racism to persist, while reducing awareness of their impact on marginalized communities [48, 77]. In contrast, Latinx parents have been found to engage more frequently in discussions about egalitarian values than White parents [80, 81]. They may convey these messages to encourage their children to assimilate into society and avoid discrimination, particularly in contexts of heightened political hostility. For example, Ayón et al. (2019) found that parents of marginalized adolescents sometimes integrated egalitarian messages with cultural socialization and preparation for bias, while avoiding direct conversations about race. In a study of 73 Maryland mothers of biracial (White/Black) children, their approaches combined these socialization strategies in response to racial stratification, racism, and discrimination, amid an environment of "anti-immigrant sentiments and hostile environments for immigrants and their children" during the Trump administration [5, 64].

Egalitarianism as an ethnic-racial socialization practice remains underexplored, resulting in a limited evidence base [79]. Further research is needed to examine its role among marginalized adolescents in a more relevant and comprehensive manner.

3. Methodology

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data at different stages to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem [16]. Quantitative data were collected via questionnaires administered to 235 Muslim American students aged 11–18 attending public schools in San Diego, California, assessing resilience and ethnic-racial socialization. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 26.0. to initially calculate descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations of study variables. Additionally, multiple regression analysis using different models was used to determine an estimate of the association between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The qualitative phase included two focus groups comprising 17 Muslim Arab American students, providing in-depth insights to complement the quantitative findings.

The study used two scales to measure resilience, and ethnic-racial socialization practices.

3.1. Resilience

The research question in the quantitative phase, "How do Muslim American students respond to experiences of discrimination?" was assessed using the 10 item ConnorDavidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed by Drs. Campbell-Sills and Stein at the University of California, San Diego (see Appendix I). It is designed to assess Muslim students' level of resilience in the face of discrimination. This measure was chosen based on its ability to measure skills needed for effective problem solving, strength that can emerge from detrimental situations such as discrimination, and directly and consciously face the stress rather than acquiring strategies to avoid it. However, the item "I tend to bounce back" was not included in the survey because that idea has generated disapproval in the resilience literature [25].

Resilience was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not true at all and 5 = True nearly all the time) and a higher score reflects a greater resilience. Scoring of the scale was based on summing the total of all items, each of which was scored from 1–5. The total score ranges from 9–45, with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. Some of the questions included: (a) "I can deal with whatever comes my way;" (b) "I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles;" and (c) "I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties."

3.2. Familial Ethnic-Racial Socialization

The second survey in this study evaluated the type and frequency of ethnic-racial socialization messages that Muslim American parents convey to their adolescent children. The questionnaire (see Appendix II) included the familial ethnic socialization measure (FESM) with additional items that fit the participants' multiple identities (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). The FESM assessed the degree to which Muslim American students perceive their families socialized with them about their ethnicity and discuss and learn about discrimination and diversity. The scale consists of 22 items and four constructs: (a) cultural socialization (e.g., my family celebrates holidays that are specific to my ethnic, cultural background), (b) the preparation for bias (e.g., my parents told me that I will be treated unfairly because of my religious beliefs), (c) promotion of mistrust (e.g., my parents told me to keep away from other groups because they may have discrimination against you), and (d) egalitarianism (e.g., my parents taught me that people should get the same rights and must be treated equally). The cultural socialization construct consists of two subscales: overt and covert familial ethnic socialization. The overt subscale assessed the extent to which Muslim family members intentionally socialize with their adolescents about their ethnic background, such as "My family teaches me about my ethnic, cultural background." The covert subscale assesses the extent to which family members unintentionally socialize with their adolescents about their ethnicity, such as "Our home is decorated with things that reflect my ethnic/cultural background." All the items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with endpoints of not at all (1) and very much (5). Responses were coded so that higher scores signified greater levels of familial ethnic-racial socialization. The total of items was calculated, and a composite score was used to assess the level of ethnic-racial socialization. The estimated time required to complete the three surveys was approximately 15–20 minutes.

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of San Diego, a total of 235 students who were born and raised in the United States and identified themselves as Muslim Americans were recruited for this study. These participants, ranging in age from 11–18 years, came from various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Those who reported moving to the United States before the age of 5 were also included in the analysis. The inclusion criterion of age 5 was established due to the fact that this is the age at which children begin kindergarten and initiate their journey of interacting with individuals beyond their immediate family and caregivers. This may involve socializing with individuals from diverse ethnicities, races, and religions. The questionnaires were filled out by Muslim students enrolled in public schools in San Diego. Participants were recruited from the Muslim community in San Diego. To draw in a wide range of participants, I reached out to mosques, religious, social, and cultural organizations. Additional participants were recruited from prominent Muslim parents' mailing lists and social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups. Participants were instructed to access a link that included an informed consent statement, a demographics page, and the scales.

The data collection endeavors were successfully concluded in a span of 3 months, between September 10-December 15, 2023. After acquiring a total of 235 participants, the study was deemed sufficient in terms of gender, age, ethnic background, languages spoken at home, parents' education, and parents' employment.

The mixed-methods approach was initially designed as a fixed design, in which quantitative and qualitative methods were predetermined and systematically organized at the beginning of the research process [16]. However, the evolving sociopolitical context, particularly the ongoing oppression and persecution experienced by Palestinians, restrictions on their freedom of movement, the Israeli blockade of Gaza imposed in 2007 [38], and the escalation of Israeli aerial bombardments and ground military operations in Gaza, which the United Nations (2023) described as among the most devastating military offensives in recent history, necessitated a reconsideration of the original research design. It further underscored the importance of examining the broader implications of these events for Muslim and Arab communities in the United States. In response to these developments and their potential implications for the study participants, the research design was adapted to incorporate additional data collection. This adjust-

ment reflected an emergent mixed-methods approach, allowing the research process to remain responsive to evolving circumstances and participants' experiences. As Creswell & Plano (2017) explains, emergent mixed-methods designs provide flexibility to refine research procedures as new questions to cultivate a deeper and more credible knowledge generation.

The quantitative data and statistical findings offered a general comprehension on the extent of the Muslim American students' resilient behaviors in the face of discrimination and the influence of ethnic-racial socialization. The qualitative data in the present study were essential for gaining profound insights into the findings that arose from the quantitative research phase. Qualitative research excels in its capacity to offer a more profound examination of the phenomenon.

Due to the fact that Muslim Arab American students in the quantitative phase exhibited a greater inclination toward expressing their religious identity compared to any other group examined in the current study, the qualitative data concentrated solely on Muslim Arab American students. A total of 18 students, nine girls and nine boys, were selected. They all attended public schools in various districts of the county of San Diego and differed in their adherence to Islamic tenets to effectively represent a wide range of perspectives. After a few email exchanges, the girls' focus group took place on January 8, 2024, and the boys' focus group took place on January 15, 2024. A formal email was sent to all participants about the date, the location, and the time agreed on. The email also included the parental consent and the child assent forms.

The participants were asked to arrive 15 minutes before the start of the group conversation to build familiarity as not all the participants knew each other. During the focus group, participants appeared relaxed, sitting more comfortably in the chair, engaged in the conversation, and seemed to forget about the audio recording. The tool for recording audio interviews came as standard on the phone, the Voice Memo function. Once the meeting had finished and the recording had processed, the recording folder was labeled and saved. Subsequently, once transcribing was completed using the Otter application and condensing process, coding, and assigning an evocative attribute for each portion of the transcript was an important step.

3.3. Positionality

Drawing on the advantages of insider research discussed by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), my familiarity with the Muslim community provided an important foundation for this study. An insider position can facilitate trust, strengthen relationships, enhance communication, and provide deeper insights into the cultural and structural barriers that may prevent Muslim students and families from participating.

As a Muslim immigrant woman and mother navigating the U.S. educational system, I became actively involved in school policies and parent-engagement committees. My presence at school sites encouraged Muslim students to share their experiences of discrimination, further strengthening my commitment to educational equity and the creation of safe, nurturing, and inclusive learning environments. In 2020, I received the Equity Champion Award from the San Diego County Office of Education in recognition of my commitment to equity.

Within this study, my insider status served as an important methodological asset. It facilitated participant recruitment, fostered trust, and supported efficient data collection. More importantly, my shared cultural and social experiences helped participants feel understood, respected, and comfortable sharing their perspectives, while reducing concerns about cultural misunderstanding or misrepresentation.

4. Quantitative Data Analysis

The full sample of Muslim American students consisted of 235 (115 male students and 120 female students) participants. Most participants were Arabs, which included 44 North African students and 94 South West Asian students, forming a group of 138 Arabs (59%). Additionally, there were 54 Southeast Asian students (23%), 32 Black individuals (13.61%), 18 East African students, 10 West African students, and four African Americans; 10 of the students (4.25%) were multiracial and Hispanic combined in the "others" group. In the study, 85% of the participants were native-born and raised in the United States, and 15% were immigrants who moved to the country between the ages of 1–5 years old. However, 95% of the parents of Muslim American students in the study were immigrants and only 5% were born and raised in the United States. The mean age of participants was 13.97 (SD = 2.259). Ages varied with 67.5% of female students between ages 11–14, 32.5% of female students were between ages 15–18, and 40% of male students were between ages 11–14 and 60% of male students were between ages 15–18 years old. The participants included 35 fifth-grade students (14.89%), 86 middle school students (36.59%), and 114 high school students (48.51%). Regarding school type and geographic location, 89 Muslim American students (38.00%) attended public schools located in the central city, while 69 (29.36%) attended public schools north of the city. Additionally, 46 participants (19.57%) attended charter schools, 14 (5.95%) attended public schools east of the city, and 12 (5.10%) attended public schools south of the city. The remaining four participants (1.70%) attended private non-Islamic schools. The majority of the schools represented in the study were located within a large public school district recognized for having the highest student enrollment in California and ranking as the second-largest public school district in Southern California.

Additional findings have been outlined in the quantitative research phase.

4.1. Resilience

To measure resilience, the 10-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed by Drs. Campbell-Sills and Stein at the 81 University of California, San Diego, was used to assess Muslim students' level of resilience. Measuring Muslim American students' resilience answered the first research question: "How do Muslim students demonstrate resilience in response to experiences of discrimination?" In this study, all the CD-RISC items had a mean that varies between 3.31 and 3.81 and standard deviation between 0.95 and 1.13 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Resilience Descriptive Statistics.*

Item	M	SD
I try to see the positive side of things when I am faced with problems	3.31	1.1
Having to cope with stress can make me stronger	3.37	1.13
I believe I can achieve my goals, even if I face obstacles	3.42	1.03
I am not easily discouraged by problems	3.50	1.01
I can deal with whatever comes my way	3.5	1.05
I am able to adapt when changes happen	3.6	1.1
I am able to handle painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger	3.64	1.11
I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges	3.7	.95
Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly	3.8	.98

4.2. Ethnic- Racial Socialization

Ethnic and racial socialization was assessed using the original familial ethnic socialization measure (FESM) [75]. The FESM, which includes four practices: (a) cultural socialization, (b) preparation for bias, (c) promotion for mistrust, and (d) egalitarianism. The items of the FESM were combined into five variables and represent overt cultural socialization, covert cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism. Descriptive analysis of each item of FESM presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics of Ethnic-Racial Socialization Practices.*

Variables	M	SD
Overt Cultural Socialization	4.28	0.73
Covert Cultural Socialization	4.06	0.75
Preparation for Bias	2.38	1.18
Promotion of Mistrust	2.20	1.31
Egalitarianism	3.90	0.87

The analysis indicated overt cultural socialization (M = 4.28, SD = 0.73) occurred more often than covert cultural socialization (M = 4.06, SD = 0.75); however, both forms of cultural socialization showed a high frequency. Additionally, overt cultural socialization occurred more often than egalitarianism (M = 3.90, SD = .0.87), preparation for bias (M = 2.38, SD = 1.18), and promotion of mistrust (M = 2.207, SD = 1.31). Thus, parents of Muslim American students engaged in cultural socialization practices more than egalitarianism, warnings about discrimination, or promotion of mistrust. Muslim students were more likely to receive cultural socialization and egalitarianism and were less likely to experience preparation for bias and the promotion of mistrust.

4.3. Effects of Ethnic-Racial Socialization Practices on Resilience

Several regression analyses were performed to address the research questions, "What type and frequency of ethnic-racial socialization messages do Muslim American adolescents receive from their parents?" and "which practice of ethnic-racial socialization is more effective at mitigating the negative impact of Islamophobia?" The analysis showed covert cultural socialization in the study was positively associated with resilience, indicating a statistical significance ($\beta = 1.74$, $t = 3.76$). The impact was significant as each additional unit of covert cultural socialization was linked to an increase of almost two units in resilience. A notable statistical association between resilience and overt cultural socialization was evident in the

study (β = 2.03, t = 4.32), highlighting the immense significance of all forms of cultural socialization in fostering the resilience of Muslim American students. Thus, parents engaged in cultural socialization practices more than preparing their children for discrimination and bias or promotion of mistrust. Preparation for bias and the promotion of mistrust were not statistically significant in the present study, suggesting when Muslim families engage in preparing their children for bias and discrimination or teaching their children to mistrust or be attentive of other groups or people from a different cultural background or race, it does not seem to have any effect on the other cultural socialization and egalitarianism. However, resilience exhibited a positive correlation with statistical significance to egalitarianism (β = 1.52, t = 3.86). The impact holds great importance, given that each additional unit of egalitarianism is linked to a 1.5 unit rise in resilience (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Estimated Coefficients and Levels of Significance for Ethnic Racial Socialization and Resilience in the Final Regression Models.*

Independent Variables	Estimated Coefficient	t
Egalitarianism	1.52***	3.86
Covert Cultural Socialization	1.74***	3.76
Overt Cultural Socialization	2.03***	4.32

Note. $R^2=0.58$; $p < 0.001$***. Only statistically significant estimated coefficients shown.

5. Qualitative Data Analysis

The findings in this chapter stem from an examination of qualitative focus groups carried out with Muslim Arab American students. Two focus group interviews were conducted, involving a total of 17 Arab students, out of which nine were girls. Unfortunately, one of the boys fell ill, resulting in the study consisting of only eight boys who were actively engaged in this study. The girls' focus group included three Palestinian Americans in Grades 8, 9, and 11, two Syrian Americans in Grades 11 and 12, one Iraqi American in Grade 10, one Lebanese American in Grade 9, one Egyptian American in Grade 7, and one Algerian American in Grade 10. Three among the participants were easily identifiable as Muslim due to their choice of wearing the hijab or headscarf commonly seen in schools. The boys' focus group included eight boys, three Palestinian Americans in Grades 8, 10 and 11, one Egyptian American in Grade 9, one Syrian American in Grade 10, one Syrian-Palestinian American in Grade 7, one Iraqi American in Grade 9, and one Lebanese American in Grade 12.

The themes arose from the discussions, with a particular focus on the resilience of Muslim students with an emphasis on few variables such as (a)) cultural-spiritual and moral socialization among Muslim families, as cultural socialization is consistently accompanied by spiritual and moral elements; (c) Islamic teachings on justice and equality serve as a basis for egalitarianism; and finally, (d) preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust.

5.1. Cultural-Spiritual and Moral Socialization

Among Muslim families, there is a recognized need to educate younger generations about their ethnic-racial heritage, cultural customs, and traditions, while fostering a sense of ethnic-racial pride [82]. These processes involve both verbal and nonverbal communication about the meaning and significance of ethnicity, religion, group membership, and identity, as well as guidance on interactions within and between groups [34, 46, 55]. All participants reported receiving parental verbal messages about their ethnic and cultural heritage through both direct interactions and observed discussions. These messages were often explicit, making them easily recalled in self-reports. As one student, Akram, noted, "I enjoy listening to my parents teaching us about the history of our country and telling us stories of cultural figures." Students also indicated that both children and parents were equally likely to initiate conversations about cultural heritage, as Jana explained, "I am always asking questions to my grandma about our history, food, and small things in our culture like 'tatriz,' and she is now teaching me Palestinian embroidery."

Muslim Arab students in this study reported that their parents actively engaged in cultural socialization, intentionally transmitting specific ethnic knowledge and values intertwined with spiritual messages. While spiritual socialization may not always accompany cultural socialization, cultural socialization was consistently infused with spiritual elements. As Malak noted, "My family always talks about our culture, our history, our people who made history, they were faithful, and worked hard to serve and worship Allah, and that makes me very connected to my culture." Isra provided an illustration of a statement their parents had made, saying, "you have to be proud as... Algerian, your ancestors fought courageously the French occupation to save our country and our culture. Our history was written because of the faith and belief of your ancestors." According to five students—three males and two females—their experience highlighted how closely culture and spirituality are interwoven, even when the discussion focuses

only on cultural practices. They explained that parents often naturally connect cultural topics to spirituality by using expressions such as *Alhamdulillah* (expressing gratitude to Allah), *Insha'Allah* ("God willing"), and *Bismillah* ("in the name of Allah"). Mohamed explained, "My parents would say, 'Alhamdullah, our culture is rich and unique: the food, the history, the people. Inshaallah we will be able to visit this summer."

Additionally, Muslim Arab parents in the current study were found to play a formative role in reminding their children about their moral campus. As children grow older, students noted their parents set higher standards for proper conduct and a good representation of their ethnic and religious identity. Moral socialization occurred when necessary, in conjunction with cultural and spiritual socialization. For instance, if Muslim parents become aware of their children or other Muslim students engaging in misconduct or behaving inappropriately, they feel compelled to reinforce the importance of Islamic moral values to their children. As Amir noted, "My parents talk about being good and represent well Muslims and Arabs in the United States... well they also talk about faith and culture." For the students, their experiences with cultural socialization demonstrated not just overt communication, but also the covert aspects of the culture. Parents engage in nonverbal socialization to preserve their cultural heritage by upholding their ethnic customs and adorning their homes with corresponding artifacts [32]. Examples of parental practices study participants noted included cooking ethnic food, discussing important cultural icons, narrating cultural stories to children, playing ethnic and racial music, owning cultural books, and the most frequently reported form of cultural socialization was found to be encouraging children to speak their native language. This finding aligned with previous studies—nonverbal messages can manifest in various ways.

In this study, covert cultural socialization was reported to often integrate elements of religiosity and spirituality. As Sara explained: "Our house is decorated with many objects that represent our culture, paintings, artifacts, we have many of those at home. We also have Arabic calligraphy, it takes from both the culture and religion, both aspects smooshed together. You walk to my house you will see culture and Islam and there is no way you can escape it". With a smile, Sereen added, "I know... we have the 99 names of Allah painting and aspects of the culture such as pictures, keffiyeh, and map of Palestine all hung up on the wall." Some students, however, spoke about engaging in discussions with their parents, about the Arab identity, and embracing the vibrant array of their diverse ethnic backgrounds. Students understood the Arab population living in the United States is diverse; however, they believed they are unified by speaking the same language and sharing the same culture. According to the students, the situation in Palestine has caused them to express concerns, encounter a decrease in morale, and experience emotional exhaustion. As Nadia explained: My parents always talk about our country, Syria, and they talk a lot about many aspects of our culture, but they never forget about Palestine every single day. Because of that, it makes me aware of it and it makes me not ashamed to say I am Arab. Akram added, "What my brothers and my sisters are experiencing in Gaza makes me sad, in pain, and feeling hopeless for not being able to provide any support for them." This finding aligns with a survey conducted by Zogby International in 2002, which reported that 73% of U.S.-born Arab American participants said their sense of ethnic pride had not diminished following the September 11 attacks. Additionally, 15% indicated that their pride had increased, while only 8% reported feeling less pride in their ethnic background [2]. However, the percentage of those surveyed who were proud of their ethnic heritage was almost 90% in both 2001 and 2002. In addition, 73% reported having strong emotional ties with their family's countries of origin [2].

5.2. Egalitarian Socialization

Egalitarian socialization was prevalent among Muslim Arab parents in the study. Other research has noted it promoted values centered on shared similarities rather than racial, ethnic, or cultural differences. In the current study, students conveyed that their parents use egalitarianism in their day-to-day parenting by expressing their gratitude for diversity and their aspiration for their children to steadfastly uphold their rights as U.S. citizens. As Yasmine explained: I used to feel embarrassed because of my mom wearing a hijab, but as I was growing up, she taught me that I am equal to anyone here in the U.S. And I deserve to be treated with the same respect and dignity. Nadia confirmed Muslim students "have the same right as any other student and it shouldn't be different just because we dress differently and have a different religion or different values."

However, students indicated their parents exhibited a decreased tendency to use this practice when dealing with younger children. This is primarily because such practices necessitate a deep understanding of complex concepts like discrimination and intergroup relations. In instances such as the recent surge in Islamophobia following the Israeli war on Gaza, parents often opt to communicate in a straightforward manner to avoid alarming their younger children. As Zack explained, "When my parents heard about the increased Islamophobic experiences, they asked my little siblings to report any incident that makes them feel uncomfortable. They also said that maybe this would never happen but just in case." Zack further added: "That is not what they told me. For me they were talking about the large cases of hate against Arab and Muslims, they did not hide their fear and worry, and they asked me to report and stay strong if someone harasses me." Interestingly, students reported certain occurrences of cultural-spiritual socialization took place in conjunction with egalitarian messages in the families. As Mariam put it: We were talking about the situation in Palestine, and my parents emphasized on the faith and resilience of the Palestinians, and

how they pray despite the pain and suffering. They are observing their cultural preparation for the month of Ramadan by planning to decorate their tents, sharing food with neighbors, as they are also fighting for justice. Mariam further explained, "My parents then said these are lessons for us to keep our culture, stay faithful regardless of the challenges we face, and never give up our rights." This finding aligned with other scholarly works that documented the widespread and occasionally concurrent adoption of these two socialization practices by parents [34]. The parenting approach of egalitarianism was discovered to have various aspects, which were examined through four primary lenses: (a) openness, (b) proactive conversation based, (c) reactive conversation based, and (d) celebrating diversity.

Openness. The concept of openness was central to the conversations parents engaged in when it came to overlooking differences between various groups and the avoidance of using race or ethnicity as a foundation for decision making. This socialization was based on embracing diversity and included people who frequently formed friendships, established connections in the community, resided in diverse neighborhoods, and worked in multicultural environments. This was the most frequently discussed type of egalitarianism principle. Youcef spoke of it being wrong to "be unkind to someone because of the way they look or because they speak a different language." Ramy believed individuals are "all human beings created by Allah" and "equal." A number of students discussed how their parents encouraged them to have friends from different races, ethnic backgrounds, and faiths. Several students discussed the importance of upholding egalitarian beliefs as part of their religious faith, emphasizing the need to integrate these values into their daily lives. Moreover, some explained that they use religious principles to convey ideas of egalitarianism as a way to avoid engaging in complex or sensitive conversations about race and ethnicity. As Assia noted, "Allah made everybody, and everybody in the sight of Allah is equal."

Proactive Conversation. Another method parents used to convey their egalitarian messages was through engaging in open dialogues with their children. Proactive conversations usually formed part of a parenting agenda rooted in egalitarian principles and represented more planned discussions. For example, Nabil explained, "My parents often remind us that we live in a diverse society, it is ok to be friends with students who are not Muslim, and who are not even Arabs because we are all the same."

Reactive Conversation. Reactive conversations rooted in egalitarian principles took place in reaction to various events, such as instances where parents and children observed discrimination, experienced discrimination firsthand, or were influenced by media coverage on the subject. The majority of students recalled engaging in a conversation with their parents regarding the importance of standing against discrimination after experiencing continuous Islamophobic incidents in schools. This conversation occurred simultaneously with other practices of ethnic-racial socialization. In this study, egalitarian messages occasionally coincided with the preparation for bias, and frequently transpired as a direct reaction to a racially discriminatory occurrence. An example of this emerged in a discussion with Akram when he spoke of the anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim comments made by students at his school. Akram explained:

> It was the time when my parents spoke about Islamophobia and the anti-Palestine rhetoric in the U.S.... and encouraged me to speak up and never be afraid to say the truth... that is your right.

Celebrating Diversity. Celebrating diversity occurs when parents introduce their children to various customs, cuisines, cultural objects, and other multicultural experiences. Parents emphasized the significance of understanding diversity, various religions, and tolerance. Jana spoke about celebrating different festivals and attending different religious places of worship. She explained, "My dad took me to an interfaith event at a church, interacting with people from different faiths makes you recognize that we have a lot in common." According to some students, parents demonstrated their commitment to egalitarianism by choosing to remain silent on the topic of race and ethnicity. By deliberately not acknowledging these factors, they subtly conveyed the notion that everyone is equal, and race and ethnicity should not serve as a basis for discussion. The students expressed their opinions about their parents' silent positions upon becoming aware of racist and discriminatory incidents happening across the nation via the media. Ahmad added their parents are "tired and overwhelmed with the surge of hate in this country, sometimes they don't even comment on experiences of discrimination."

5.3. Preparation for Bias

Studies indicated Arabs living in the United States are still subjected to negative stereotypes and racism [52] For instance, U.S. high school students' perceptions of Arabs and the Middle East region are "overwhelmingly negative" [41, 58]. Furthermore, Muslims experienced racist incidents and marginalization because of their religious beliefs [7, 19, 30] and these racist incidents have a negative effect on the mental health of young individuals [14]. Unfortunately, the current study revealed not all the Muslim Arab parents participated in preparing their children for bias, discrimination, and marginalization. To gain a deeper understanding of this finding, the focus group delved into a discussion surrounding preparation for bias. The conversation was centered around: (a) what would prevent parents from raising awareness of bias and discrimination and provide their children with possible coping skills and (b) whether children initiated a socialization on discrimination and what response parents exhibited. Most of the participants in the present study confirmed their parents refrained from preparing them for Islamophobia. However, two students indicated receiving messages emphasizing the barriers and biases they may experience in schools, giving them some form of preparation for bias and occasionally equipping them with

responses strategies. One particular family engaged in preparation for bias socialization had a deep commitment to activism and social justice issues at the local and national levels in the United States. As Sereen explained, "My parents and my older sisters are very active on issues related to injustices in our community and beyond. My parents often talk to me about Islamophobia and what to do if I face difficulties in school." The value of preparation for bias was emphasized by the second family, as both parents were born and raised in the United States and have undergone the same experiences their children are currently facing. As Mohamed put it, "My parents went to public school in the United States. They also faced Islamophobia and discrimination for being Muslims and Arabs." Previous research has found parents who encounter discrimination have been observed to convey messages about preparing their children for bias [27, 28, 35, 51]. In terms of students who indicated they did not receive any parental preparation for bias message, parents' experiences may be the reason behind the reluctance to discuss and prepare children for possible discrimination in schools. Most Muslim parents are immigrants who have grown up in Muslim and Arab countries and have not encountered marginalization or discrimination due to their religious belief. For instance, Isra explained: "Our parents have different experiences, they grew up back home and they went to school with people like them, who have the same religion, the same ethnicity as them. But we go to schools where we are the minority, so they would never know how to prepare or help us."

Similarly, Amir noted:

> A lot of our parents are immigrants, did not grow up in an American Western society, as much as they want to talk and help us they never gonna truly understand what is like to go to school in America, and what everyday life is like to us. Yes, they are exposed to the American society when they go shopping, working, studying... but it's different when you are a teenager, a student who is in school. They will never be able to understand our reality. It is not something that the parents are lacking themselves, it is just our reality is completely different from their reality.

Several studies argued that until parents experience discrimination, their level of concern for the challenges their children will face due to living in societies where racism and discrimination are deeply ingrained increases [4, 34] consequently, they sense a duty to convey messages about preparing their children for bias in the hopes that it may equip them to face potential discrimination [67].

Some students in this study backed the notion that apart from personal experiences, parents have endorsed concerns about protecting their children from potential negative or distressing effects arising from discussions about Islamophobia in schools. As Sara explained:

> "My two siblings go to a predominantly non-Muslim middle school. When the Israeli war on Gaza started, my mom knew about increased hate against Arabs and Muslims, so she told my little siblings to keep to themselves, and to not share their Arab origin with no conversation on discrimination."

Due to the enhanced availability of technology and social media, today's adolescents have greater accessibility to social movements, and access information about discrimination against marginalized communities, particularly Muslim communities. The increased availability often encouraged students participating in this study to start dialogues and engage in discussions regarding these subjects with their parents. The ways in which parents respond to children-initiated conversations about discrimination had a profound impact on the students' understanding of their parents' different experiences in schools. Additionally, the conversation acknowledges the parents' limited understanding of the difficulties their children encounter in schools' hostile environments. As Ramy explained, "When I talk to my parents about incidents of discrimination against Muslims around the country, they are surprised and left without words."

5.4. Promotion of Mistrust

Hughes et al. (2006) indicated qualitative studies using intensive interviewing or observational techniques are more likely to reveal the promotion of mistrust socialization among marginalized communities compared to survey-based research. Subsequently, students in this study were asked to discuss their experiences with parental promotion of mistrust socialization. Students conveyed that their parents never advised them against trusting individuals from different ethnic or racial backgrounds in school. Unexpectedly, parents wished for their children to participate in intergroup activities to clear the misconception and enhance people's knowledge of the Islamic faith and Arab culture. For instance, Zack spoke about how his parents emphasized the value of interethnic and interracial friendships to reduce prejudice and discrimination in schools. He noted, "I have friends who are White, Asians, and African Americans." Similarly, Yasmine explained, "I am friends with White girls."

The students emphasized that their parents focused on choosing friends with similar values, without drawing attention to ethnic or racial differences. This aligns with Islamic teachings that encourage cooperation and compassionate interaction with all people, principles that have historically contributed to the spread of Islam. As Nabil explained, "Following our Islamic teaching, it is good to be friends with different people, so we can learn about each other." However, the students also expressed feeling "disrespected" and "judged" by certain comments, yet they did not consider terminating their friendship, according to Sara.

6. Conclusion

Muslim students in the quantitative portion of this study were more likely to receive cultural socialization and egalitarian messages, and less likely to experience preparation for bias

or the promotion of mistrust. Both overt and covert forms of cultural socialization, along with the emphasis on egalitarian values that promote a sense of equality among children, functioned as protective factors against discrimination and strengthened the resilience of Muslim students. This type of socialization was found to be multifaceted, occurring across various settings and serving multiple purposes, with its frequency varying among Muslim families. The research also revealed a positive correlation between Muslim students' resilience and the extent of cultural and egalitarian socialization they received. However, the qualitative findings of this study revealed that Muslim Arab parents were actively engaged in cultural socialization, transmitting ethnic knowledge and values alongside spiritual messages and, at times, moral guidance. Moreover, while spiritual socialization did not always accompany cultural socialization, cultural socialization was consistently infused with spiritual elements. The process of instilling egalitarianism among Muslim Arab students was grounded in Islamic principles of justice and equality, which were deeply embedded in their parents' religious convictions. In contrast, the qualitative findings revealed that some Muslim families also engaged in preparation-for-bias socialization. Parents who were active in social justice efforts or who had attended public schools in the United States and experienced discrimination were more likely to educate their children about potential bias in school settings. However, Muslim Arab parents were found to encourage their children to form friendships across diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds, emphasizing the value of intergroup contact.

Abbreviations

CD-RISC	Connor Davidson Resilience Scale
FESM	Familial Ethnic Socialization Measure

Author Contributions

Lallia Allali: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Appendix

Appendix I: Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale

CD-RISC-10 scale
Please rate how much you agree with each of the following items.

Table A1. *Survey Instrument.*

	Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time.
1- I am able to adapt when changes happen					
2- I can deal with whatever comes my way					
3- I try to see the positive side of things when I am faced with problems.					
4- I try to see the positive side of things when I am faced with problems.					
5- Having to cope with stress can make me stronger					
6- Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly					
7- I am not easily discouraged by problems					
8- I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges					
9- I am able to handle painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger					

Appendix II: Family Ethnic-Racial Socialization Scale

Please rate how much you agree with each of the following items.

Table A2. *Survey Instrument.*

	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Much
1-My family teaches me about my ethnic/cultural background.					
2-My family encourages me to respect the cultural values and beliefs of our ethnic/cultural background.					
3- My family participates in activities that are specific to my ethnic group.					
4- Our home is decorated with things that reflect my ethnic/cultural background.					
5- The people who my family hangs out with the most are people who share the same ethnic background as my family.					
6-My family teaches me about the values and beliefs of our ethnic/cultural background.					
7-My family talks about how important it is to know about my ethnic/cultural background.					
8-My family celebrates holidays that are specific to my ethnic/cultural background.					
9-My family teaches me about the history of my ethnic/cultural background.					
10-My family listens to music sung or played by artists from my ethnic/cultural background.					
11-My family attends things such as concerts, plays, festivals, or other events that represent my ethnic/cultural background.					
12-My religious identity is an important part of my ethnic-racial background					
13- It is important for my family to go to the mosque					
14-I attend religious and community events at the Mosque.					
15-I have faith that Allah can protect and help me overcome difficulties in my life					
16-My belief in Allah helps me deal with life struggles					
17-My parents told me that I will be treated unfairly because of my religious beliefs					
18-My parents taught me that the system is not fair, and I don't always have the same opportunities as whites.					
19-My parents told me to keep away from other groups because they may discriminate against you.					
20- My parents told me about differences in rights based on religious, ethnic and racial status.					
21- My parents told me that the color of a person’s skin does not mean that person is better or worse than anyone else.					
22-My parents taught me that people should get the same rights and must be treated equally.					

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