Book Review

***Growing up Between Two Cultures: Problems and Issues of Muslim Children,* by Farideh Salili & Rumjahn Hoosain. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2014, 372 pages.**

Much of the research in multicultural education critically focuses on preparing teachers to work in diverse educational settings (Ladson-Billings, 2000). According to Merryfield (1998) and Sleeter (2008), the great majority of teachers in the U.S. lack knowledge about teaching diverse students and have poor understandings of the multicultural dimensions of their students' families and cultures. There is a gap between white, middle-class teachers and the children of "others" who are immigrants, low-income workers, and racial, ethnic, and religious minorities in the U.S. (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Lee, 2005; Phillion & Malewski, 2011). In addition, preservice teachers in rural areas, who grew up in white-dominant cultures, often resist practicing culturally responsive teaching since they expect to teach in communities like their own (Phillion & Malewski, 2011). To provide a better understanding of the social contexts of schools and classrooms, most teacher education programs develop multicultural courses that focus on race, class, gender, and language.

Within the fields of teacher education and multicultural education research, there is limited research investigating the role of teacher knowledge about religious diversity. Marks, Binkley, and Daly (2014) show that the lack of knowledge preservice teachers have about religious diversity should be urgently considered by teacher education programs in the U.S., not only for the purpose of teaching culturally responsive pedagogy, but also for allowing preservice teachers to practice reflective thinking about their own beliefs. Subedi (2006) pays attention to the lack of research focusing on the role of teaching religious diversity to preservice teachers and highlights how discussions about religion in teacher education intersect with other critical discussions on topics such as racism, power dynamics, and homophobia. Subedi (2006) also suggests that expanding teacher education research about religious diversity can play a key role in preparing culturally responsive teachers. In light of these studies, the edited collection by Farideh Salili and Rumjahn Hoossain, *Growing up Between two Cultures: Problems and Issues of Muslim Children,* provides critical perspectives on the educational issues faced by Muslim parents and students in non-Muslim countries. Contributors to the book use qualitative and quantitative research findings as well as personal experiences to highlight the problems that most Muslim students encounter in the education systems of non-Muslim countries such as the U.S., Australia, Norway, and Israel.

The book is comprised of five parts that cover in detail the issues of Muslim children regarding their educational problems in Western countries. The first part of the book includes an introduction written by the editors. The second part collects chapters that emphasize the acculturation issues of Muslim parents and students in the U.S. The third part of the book brings together perspectives on the identity formation of Muslim children in non-Muslim countries such as Norway, Canada, and the U.S. The fourth part of the book specifically focuses on the role of gender in the acculturation and identity formation of Muslims in the U.S. The last part of the

book includes chapters that exemplify the educational experiences of Muslims students and parents in non-Muslim countries such as Australia, England, and the U.S.

In chapter 1, Salili and Hoosain inform readers about the general characteristics of Muslims living in the West, specifically in North America, to provide a better understanding of the difficulties Muslim children experience in non-Muslim counties. The authors specifically focus on the challenges that Muslim children face in practicing Islam in public schools in the U.S. and on the religious identity development of Muslim students in the social context of the U.S., where Muslims and Islam are mostly misunderstood. The chapter provides critical information about the demographics of Muslims in the U.S., but more importantly, reveals the national, cultural, and language diversities among Muslims. One important highlight in this chapter shows that the difficulties of many Muslim children in U.S. society are closely related to how their families interact with American culture. At this point, Salili and Hoosain discuss the roles of Muslim immigrants' home cultures in how well most immigrants adapt to American culture and states, "Immigrant Muslims from many different countries and different denominations, and whether passage through adolescence is smooth or difficult can depend on their background" (p. 10). Toward the end of chapter 1, Salili and Hossain provide a brief summary of the following chapters.

The second part of the book begins with chapter 2, written by Kathleen P. King, Heba AbuZayyad-Nuseibeh, and Hasan Nuseibeh. This chapter shows the result of qualitative research that has focused on the problems of Middle Eastern–born parents raising their teens in the U.S. The research presented in this chapter is framed according to Transformative Learning Theory and Intercultural Competence. More specifically, the overarching purposes of this chapter are to show how Middle Eastern–born Muslim parents experience transformative learning while they raise children in the U.S., and how raising Muslim children in the U.S. helps many Middle Eastern-born Muslim parents to develop intercultural competencies. The study presented in this chapter includes the experiences and perspectives of seven Middle Eastern–born adults who are parents of Muslim children or teenagers who are being raised in the southeastern United States. The findings of the research show that the Middle Eastern–born parents who participated in this study transformed their native cultural beliefs and views that were shaped according to back-home culture. Additionally, the study shows that raising Muslim children or teenagers in the U.S allowed Middle Eastern–born parents to build cultural awareness skills, such as cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and navigating a host culture. I believe this chapter is critical for understanding that educational issues of Muslim children and teenagers in the U.S are not only related to fitting into American educational contexts but are also related to needing to meet their parents' expectations, which were formed according to the culture back home.

In chapter 3, Shifa Podikunju-Hussain provides the results of a quantitative study that sought to identify the acculturation issues of Muslim youths in the U.S. Podikunju-Hussain developed the Muslim Youth Acculturation Rating Questionnaire (MYARQ) to identify the extent of acculturation issues that Muslim youth experience in the U.S. The study includes the responses of 140 high-school-age Muslim students in public, private, and Islamic schools, or in home schooling. The author explains the relationship between the acculturation issues of Muslim youth and demographic variables, which "include gender, race, specific ethnicity, number of

years in the country, parental characteristics such as number of years in the country, and language spoken in the home" (p. 43). The study finds that male students experience acculturation issues more often than female students. Also, language spoken at home and parental characteristics, such as the native culture of parents, affect the extent of acculturation issues that some Muslim youth experience in the U.S.

In chapter 4, Mayra C. Daniel and Alexis Ball inform readers about the educational issues of Muslim students in the U.S. Daniel and Ball aim to cultivate teachers' knowledge about Islam and Muslims in the U.S.; their chapter highlights the educational challenges Muslim students experience in the U.S., such as being misunderstood, and lacking teachers who do not have enough knowledge about Islam and Muslims. Daniel and Ball point out the importance of improving teachers' intercultural competence so they can practice more culturally responsive teaching methods; they also discuss how "culturally responsive teachers eliminate mismatches between home and school for learners of Muslim descent when they design curricula that appropriately reflect the realities of race, ethnicity, culture, and religion" (p. 114). Throughout the chapter, Daniel and Ball develop readers' knowledge about Muslim culture in various areas such as Islamic diet, appropriate use of the left and right hand, gender roles in Muslim culture, education of women, and languages of the Muslim world, as well as suggesting culturally responsive methods to make classrooms more comfortable for Muslim students.

The third part of the book begins with chapter 5 in which Leslie Antonette and Lara Tahoun discuss the social difficulties that Muslim children experience between *Ummah,* "sociocultural religious communities" (p. 119), and the American public school system. Antonette and Tahoun detail the conflicts that Muslim children live with between *Ummah* and the American public school system by explaining the literature on ethnic diversity in Muslim communities in the U.S., why and how Muslim students do not fit in the American public school system, and how Muslim students construct their social and religious identities within the existence of conflicts that come up between *Ummah* and the American public school system. One of the important points mentioned by the authors in this chapter is that the multicultural educational pathway followed by the U.S. public school system does not go beyond "Food and Fun" fairs in attempting to provide critical understanding of the lives of minorities in the U.S. At the end of the chapter, Antonette and Tahoun suggest collaboration between *Ummah* and the American public school system to reveal the life experiences of Muslims in U.S. social and educational contexts.

The book continues to provide perspectives on identity formation of Muslims in non-Muslim countries in chapters 6 and 7. For example, in chapter 6, Deborah Stiles and Osman Ozturgut explore how Muslim adolescents living in Singapore and Norway express prosocial values. The study presented in this chapter includes 332 Muslim and 432 non-Muslim young adolescents from Singapore and Norway. Stiles and Ozturgut find that adolescent Muslim identities in Norway and Singapore are very much "borrowed, blended, rediscovered, and reinterpreted" (p. 161). The results of this study exemplify that some Muslim youth in Norway and Singapore adapt to society in both countries comfortably and contribute effectively within society. In chapter 7, Hafiz Printer explores the identity formation issues of Ismaili youth in Canada. Printer includes necessary information about Ismaili culture and how it is similar and

different to general Islam. Then Printer emphasizes how Ismaili youth in Canada build their Canadian identity and the issues related to this context. The narratives provided in this chapter show that Ismaili youth in Canada do not share a sense of belonging to a Muslim community, yet they are profiled as Muslim by Canadian society. Importantly, Printer addresses the reality of multiculturalism in North America and suggests that ideal multiculturalism should not propose to "embrace the differences found in society but also to embrace the different components of one's own identity" (p. 179). Printer's chapter represents a good example of how important it is to understand the internal diversity among Muslims in North America rather than having one general profile.

The fourth part of the book mainly focuses on the role of gender in Muslim identity formation. In chapter 8, Khalid Arar investigates equity and social justice discourse in a Muslim high school in Israel. Particularly, Arar aims to explore the role of gender and the differences in male and female perspectives regarding educational experiences in a Muslim high school in Israel. Arar also includes the perspectives of female and male teachers in his ethnographic case study to investigate how school climate relates to social justice, equity, and gendered curriculum. Arar concludes the chapter with his findings, and one of the interesting results of his study shows that social justice and equity were not effectively embedded within the school culture due to lack of support and involvement from the community surrounding the school.

In chapter 9, Delila Omerbasic examines the difficulties of living in the United States from the perspective of Muslim refugee women. Omerbasic's theoretical chapter is guided by postcolonial feminist theory to reveal the effects of race, class, age, ethnicity, nationality, and language on living in the U.S. as a Muslim female refugee. The introduction of this chapter highlights how many people living in Western societies misinterpret the roles of Muslim women and choose to profile Muslim women as weak and oppressed. Through the chapter, Omerbasic discusses a detailed literature review and meta-analysis from other research to address the role of power relations in including and excluding Muslim women in social contexts. To conclude, Omerbasic suggests providing collaborative learning experiences for all youth in the U.S. to help them identify issues and challenges regarding hybrid identity formation and to reinforce social transformation.

In chapter 10, Lisa Hoffman brings in narratives of Bosnian Muslim girls to explore their cultural and religious identity construction in the U.S. The narratives of Bosnian Muslim girls give us details about the processes of acculturation and identity construction. Interestingly, the narratives presented in this chapter show the role of native culture in adapting to U.S. culture. For example, all narratives in the chapter address the fact that the European background of Bosnian culture allows the participants of this study to experience less isolation in the U.S. mainstream when compared to other immigrants and their experiences. In the conclusion of the chapter, Hoffman critically points out how the religious and identity formation of Muslims will likely be transformed in different ways through the next generations.

The last part of the book pays attention to the experiences of Muslim youth growing up in a non-Muslim country. In chapter 11, Agnes Dodds, Nadia Albert, and Jeanette Lawrence explore Somali children's personal strengths and school-related skills in Australian schools by

comparing the children's work on both computerized and illustrated tasks. The findings of this comparative study show that Somalian children's self-descriptions share similarities and differences with those of their Australian peers. For example, in terms of being brave, Somali children describe themselves similarly to Australian children but, on the other hand, being loved was not a popular description among Somali children. Dodds, Albert, and Lawrence also include the perspectives of Somali parents and guardians to verify the students' responses about school-related issues. The interviews with Somali parents and guardians address the fact that most Somali parents set their perspectives about school-related tasks according to their home culture and educational policy.

The book continues to bring up Muslim youth experiences in non-Muslim countries in chapter 12. Here, Chang-Ho Ji aims to explore the religiosity and self- well-being of U.S. Muslim youth. The study includes 336 Muslim youths between ages 18 and 20 who live in Southern California. More specifically, Ji also investigates the role of gender in religiosity and self-well-being among U.S. Muslim youth. Ji finds that U.S. Muslim youth who participated in his study are highly religious and relatively happy in their social lives in the U.S. Regarding gender factors, the results of this chapter show that female participants in Ji's study were happier than male participants and more appreciative of their lives in the U.S.

In the last chapter, chapter 13, Farah Ahmad presents the findings of a small-case qualitative study that discusses the experiences of home-schooling Muslim mothers in Britain and details how these mothers developed an Islamic educational curriculum by reflecting on their own experiences in British schools when they were young. The mothers in Ahmad's study carry similar characteristics in terms of religiosity and educational experiences in British schools. The educational experiences of these women also appear similar to their immigrant families' educational approaches. For example, through their narratives, mothers share how their parents lacked educational philosophies to explain controversial issues in Islam and relate Islam to daily life. The narratives presented in the chapter show how Muslim women have transferred their familial, educational, and social experiences into a cross-cultural religious identity in order to navigate the complexities of living in a non-Muslim country. These women share their views on how the Islamic educational curriculum that they follow in home schooling differs from traditional Islamic pedagogy and how it supports critical thinking in their children.

As a researcher interested in multicultural education in Islamic Schools and the education of Muslims in the U.S., I found that reading *Growing Up Between Two Cultures: Problems and Issues of Muslim Children* allowed me to re-conceptualize the education of Muslims in non-Muslim countries from different perspectives. The education of Muslim children in the U.S. and the development of their religious identities were discussed in several studies; however, there is a limited amount of research that connects Muslim education in non-Muslim countries to multicultural education, social justice, and culturally responsive teaching. However, each chapter in this book has an attachment at some point to multicultural education, social justice, intercultural competency, or culturally responsive teaching. I believe this side of the book is critical for showing the importance of understanding the issues and problems of Muslim children and youth, and their families, in non-Muslim countries and for cultivating non-Muslim teachers' cultural knowledge to provide more comfortable classrooms and schools for these children and

youth. The book consequently emphasizes the importance of having culturally responsive teachers in diminishing the educational problems of Muslim students and the challenges of public schools in non-Muslim countries.

Another strong perspective the book provides involves bringing together the experiences of Muslim youth and parents on what it is like to adjust within non-Muslim societies. Throughout the book, readers learn that many Muslim youth and families experience multiple acculturations in learning what it takes to be accepted by their local communities. The personal experiences, narratives, and stories represented in the book show that many Muslims living in the West practice acculturation even to adjust to different Muslim communities within Canada and the U.S. The book reminds readers that the social transformations and negotiations that Muslim immigrant families practice in the West require the synthesis of the social contexts such as race, class, gender, and nationality to adjust. This looks like McLaren's (1995) conceptualization of critical pedagogy as a way of social transformation:

> The overall project of critical pedagogy is directed towards inviting students and teachers to analyze the relation among their own quotidian experiences, classroom practices, the knowledges they produce, and the social, cultural, and economic arrangements of the larger society. (p. 231)

I consider *Growing Up Between Two Cultures: Problems and Issues of Muslim Children* to be a valuable source for teacher educators, prospective teachers, in-service teachers, researchers, school counselors, and graduate students, but more importantly for Muslim parents who deal with the issues of adaptation and formation of religious identity. I believe the book is successful in discussing the educational issues of Muslim children who are growing up between two cultures.

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