U.S. Arab/SWANA Diaspora's Technocultures of Consent: The Case of Online Dating Apps

Nadia Karizat
School of Information, University of Michigan
Pre-Candidacy Proposal

Advisor: Dr. Nazanin Andalibi

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Introduction

Social computing technologies play an important role in consent exchange and interpersonal consensual processes (Zytko, Im, et al., 2022). In the context of social computing technologies and understandings of consent, one might consider the interplay between individuals' various identities, *consent-related* beliefs and practices, *and* technology's features as culminating into, what I refer to as, *technocultures of consent*. Drawing inspiration from Kozinet's definition of technocultures (Kozinets, 2019)[1], I use the term *technocultures of consent* to describe the *understandings and practices of consent that are influenced, co-produced or expressed by interaction between technology and people*. Prior work has demonstrated the ways that cultural beliefs and technological features intertwine into technocultures that inform the behaviors of certain groups (Brock, 2012). In this project, I am particularly interested in *interpersonal* consent-related beliefs and practices that inform and shape relations and behaviors *between* people.

One context where technocultures of consent are particularly relevant are dating applications (e.g. Tinder, Hinge, Grindr). Dating apps differ from traditional dating websites by shortening the time between online contact to offline interaction (Wu & Trottier, 2022). And, unlike social networking platforms, their usage is driven by peoples' expectations for connecting with *strangers* for multiple purposes (Wu & Trottier, 2022) (e.g., finding friends, long-term romantic partners, short-term sexual partners). Within these many reasons a person might choose to use a dating app, dating apps have been shown to mediate consent to sexual behaviors and other interpersonal interactions, explicated by individuals' consent-related beliefs and practices (Zytko et al., 2021). As a result, dating apps are one site ripe for exploring technocultures of consent among social computing technologies, and a context where one can further consider the implications of human-computer interaction for preventing harms associated with the absence of consent and encouraging consensual, positive experiences.

Technocultures of consent for online dating apps are gendered (Duguay et al., 2020; Zytko et al., 2021) and racialized (Dietzel, 2022), echoing legal scholarship's finding of the gendered and racialized nature of interpersonal consent processes (e.g. granting consent, seeking

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[1] Technocultures are the culmination of "various identities, practices, values, rituals, hierarchies, and other sources and structures of meanings that are influenced, created by, or expressed through technology consumption" (Kozinets, 2019)

consent, judging violations of consent) (Gavey, 2019; Gotell, 2008) that increase the magnitude of nonconsensual harms for communities already marginalized by systems of racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and other intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality in the matrix of domination (Hill Collins, 2009). As a result, it is important to consider technocultures of consent among gendered and racialized communities as doing so will help to better understand the interplay between identity, technology and interpersonal consent.

The Arab and Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA)[2] diaspora in the United States, despite being considered 'white' by the U.S. government, has been feminized and racialized as "Other" (Naber, 2006; Said, 1995). Depending on an Arab/SWANA individual's perceived proximity to whiteness, as well as characteristics like religion, class, political beliefs, nationality, and experiences with discrimination (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007; Maghbouleh et al., 2022), their insider-outsider status to a (white) U.S. national identity is fluid and conditional (Maghbouleh, 2017; Naber, 2006), and riddled with a shared experience (to varying degrees) of racial-ethnic trauma (Awad et al., 2019). Gender, sexuality and race play critical roles in the racialization of the Arab/SWANA diaspora in the U.S., *and* the diaspora's negotiations to remain 'culturally authentic' while selectively integrating to access opportunities affiliated with the white U.S. middle class (Naber, 2012a). As a result, exploring the technocultures of consent that emerge across online dating apps among the U.S. Arab/SWANA diaspora might provide unique insight to the ways that gender, race and other intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1991) interplay with technologies to shape interpersonal consent-related beliefs and experiences. These insights have implications for individuals' safety, well-being and enactment of sexual agency.

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[2] For this paper, I aim to focus primarily on Arab/SWANA diaspora culture, cultural practices, and the ways culture and identity relates to experiences with online dating and consent, without ignoring how the Arab/SWANA identity has been racialized in the U.S context. Out of concerns to not further reify essentializing racial categories, the decision of 'naming' my target population was one I wrestled with greatly for this paper, recognizing the contested nature of naming a very heterogeneous group descending from multiple, often diverse, continents and countries. I choose to use the term Arab and SWANA (Cainkar et al., 2022) to respect the intra-ethnic diversity often conflated with "Arab" among the 22 countries in the Arab League (Samhan, 2014), as well as use SWANA as a designation that includes *"all of the Arab League countries and Iran, Turkey, and sometimes Armenia"* (Awad et al., 2021). I am aware that a faulty conflation with Arab often dismisses that *"there are Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinians, Iraqis, Kuwaitis, Yemenis, Saudi Arabians, Bahreinis, Qataris, Dubais, Egyptians, Libyans, Tunisians, Moroccans, Algerians, Sudanese, Eritreans, and Mauritanians; there are Maronites, Catholics, Protestants, Greek Orthodox, Jews, Sunnis, Shi'a, Druze, Sufis, Alawites, Nestorians, Assyrians, Copts, Chaldeans, and Bahais; there are Berbers, Kurds, Armenians, bedu, gypsies, and many others with different languages, religions, ethnic, and national identifications and cultures who are all congealed as Arab in popular representation whether or not those people may identify as Arab"* (Joseph, 1999). Arab, Arab American, and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) are popular terms in the literature to refer to this very heterogeneous group that I refer to as Arab/SWANA.

This paper aims to take a transnational approach in making sense of the online dating experiences of second- and future generations of Arab- and SWANA-Americans. A transnational approach moves beyond geographic boundaries, which means I will conduct analyses that treat the U.S. and SWANA regions as geographically unbounded, and consider the ways U.S. and Arab/SWANA- social, cultural and political histories converge to shape the gendered and sexual experiences of the Arab/SWANA diaspora in the U.S. (Naber, 2021). Through a guided reflective writing questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with self-identified second- and subsequent Arab/SWANA diaspora generations[3] in the U.S, this pre-candidacy project will explore individuals' online dating experiences with particular attention to consent-related behaviors, beliefs and experiences. In doing so, this project will illuminate the U.S. Arab/SWANA diaspora's technocultures of consent and discuss its implications for interpersonal consent, and technology more broadly.

Research Questions

1. What interpersonal consent-related practices, beliefs and behaviors emerge as part of the Arab/SWANA Diaspora in the United States' encounters with online dating apps? In other words, what are the U.S. Arab/SWANA Diaspora's technocultures of consent?

2. How are these technocultures of consent gendered and racialized[4], and what does this say about interpersonal consent, online dating apps and technology's design more broadly?

3. How do the design, language, expectations/norms of and experiences with dating apps shape understandings of interpersonal consent for the Arab/SWANA diaspora in the U.S.?

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[3] This study will focus on second-generation and future members of the Arab or SWANA diaspora. This includes individuals who are born in the United States, with at least one first-generation (immigrant) parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, etc. from an Arab and or SWANA country.

[4] By considering how technocultures of consent are gendered and racialized, I mean to explore the ways that race and gender are *salient* to consent-related beliefs and processes. So, an example of a gendered *and* racialized experience of consent might be Arab/SWANA women reporting experiences about being hypersexualized or exoticized by men on the platform that leads to assumptions by others that they give consent to certain sexual interactions *or* causes them to experience repeated unwanted advances inspired by stereotypes.

Literature Review

Consent

Consent has been increasingly discussed in Human Computer Interaction (HCI) and Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) literature by scholars hoping to understand the ways consent is exchanged, and consensual processes are experienced with social computing technologies (Zytko, Im, et al., 2022). Consent has been applied to data sharing (Lovato et al., 2022; Nissen et al., 2019; Seymour et al., 2022), interactions among users of online platforms (Duguay et al., 2020; Nguyen & Ruberg, 2020), online-to-offline interactions and harms (e.g. harassment, intimacy) (Chen et al., 2022; Döring et al., 2021; Furlo et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Zytko et al., 2020, 2021) and other kinds of relationships and interactions part of HCI more broadly (Im et al., 2021; Strengers et al., 2021; Una Lee & Dann Toliver, 2017). Due to the varied contexts and experiences in which consent can be relevant, there is no singular definition of consent consistently used in HCI and CSCW. However, values of safety, personal agency, and well-being are recurring themes salient in HCI and CSCW consent research (Im et al., 2021; Nguyen & Ruberg, 2020; Una Lee & Dann Toliver, 2017). A lack of a widely used definition for consent is also present across legal and feminist scholars, as well as sexual communication and sexual violence researchers (Beres, 2007). Beres notes that consent is often referenced 'spontaneously', relying on assumed definitions without clearly articulating what a scholar means specifically. As a result, consent has been conceived as a physical action, mental state, or both; as a morally transformative concept; as a state uninfluenced *or* shaped by the presence of coercion and force, etc. in these legal, feminist, sexual communication and sexual violence contexts (Beres, 2007).

Whereas a common-law 'no means no' consent standard assumes consent is given unless otherwise stated or forcibly resisted (Hilgert, 2016), an affirmative consent standard requires all parties in a sexual interaction to give 'free and voluntary' consent to an interaction (Gavey, 2019; Little, 2005). Affirmative Consent (Im et al., 2021) and the 'FRIES model of consent' (Planned Parenthood, 2016; Strengers et al., 2021) are two examples of consent frameworks that derive from sexual consent models *and* have been applied in HCI contexts. Affirmative Consent is "a precursor to interpersonal interaction designed to ensure agency and positive outcomes" (Im et al., 2021, p. 1). It emphasizes that one must ask and receive ardent approval prior to engaging in

each specific interaction with another person (J. Friedman & Valenti, 2008). The FRIES model of consent was an acronym[5] established by Planned Parenthood as a way to help guide consensual behaviors; embodying many similar qualities to affirmative consent (Planned Parenthood, 2016). Both Affirmative consent and the FRIES model share five similar qualities for consent: that consent is *freely given/voluntary, informed, enthusiastic/unburdensome, revertible/reversible, and specific* (Im et al., 2021; Strengers et al., 2021).

Supporters of an affirmative consent model argue that, compared to the 'no means no' consent standard, affirmative consent advances and asserts women's rights to sexual self-determination and autonomy, as well as equality; positioning women as having agency and an equal determination in their sexual relations and interactions with others (Gavey, 2019; Hilgert, 2016). However, Gotell argues that affirmative consent generates new neoliberal governed sexual subjects participating in a transaction-based sexual economy (Gotell, 2008). In other words, affirmative consent—while centering individual agency in efforts to prevent harm—perpetuates an individual responsibility for navigating transactions of consent (e.g. ask/receive, give/deny). Depending on someone's position in society, some bodies are rendered violable (perceived as having a likelihood or possibility to be violated). As a result, violence against certain groups comes to be expected or naturalized, and their personhood denied. Understanding the ways that gender, class and race impact the power relations salient to matters of consent and results in vulnerabilities is, as a consequence, dismissed in neoliberal discourses of responsibilization (Gotell, 2008). It is also important to note that much of consent literature speaks to sexual consent and its processes in a very heteronormative way in part due to the lack of consent literature that focuses on LGBTQ+ sexual experiences (de Heer et al., 2021). Queer communities' sexual experiences and engagement in consent processes challenges "the gender binary of male perpetrator and female victim and [shifts the] focus on existing power structures and dynamics, regardless of gender, gender expression, or sexual identity" (de Heer et al., 2021, p. 704). This shift motivates this study to make sense of individuals' online dating experiences and (non)consensual interpersonal interactions through a lens of power, not through essentialist notions of gender, sexuality, and identity.

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[5] FRIES stands for Freely Given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific, and was an acronym created by Planned Parenthood for teaching consent (Planned Parenthood, 2016).

Race, gender and class implicate the role of power and how it may shape consent-related processes and experiences. Gender, class and race impact power relations salient to matters of consent and results in vulnerabilities often dismissed in neoliberal discourses of responsibilization where what makes someone 'vulnerable' is their own responsibility or problem to manage, and any vulnerability is accredited with risk-taking (Gotell, 2008). The ability for giving or withholding affirmative consent is shaped by gendered power relations and gender or societal norms (Gavey, 2019). (Hetero)Normative sexual scripts position men as initiators of sexual activity and women as passive receptors responding to men's sexual wants, ignoring women as potential initiators, mutually initiated sexual interactions or the ways that who initiates may shift during an ongoing sexual interaction (Beres, 2007). Additionally, race and class intersect with gender to construct notions of *who* is deemed a rational actor and, therefore, shapes judgements of innocence, riskiness, propensity to commit harm or experience harm, etc. (Gotell, 2008). For example, Tillman et al. describe rape myths that position Black women as stereotypically sexually promiscuous, and therefore, unable to be sexually assaulted and experience violations of consent (Tillman et al., 2010). As another example, Aosved and Long established that there is a correlation between individuals with high levels of racist, classist, sexist, etc. beliefs *and* higher levels of rape myth acceptance—rape myths that position, for example, those from a lower socioeconomic status as at-fault for any sexual violence and nonconsensual interactions they experience (Aosved & Long, 2006). Altogether, these prior works demonstrate the ways in which identity, norms and power relations are integral to consent-related processes and interactions.

Prior work on consent across multiple contexts, as shown in this section, commonly signals, implicitly and explicitly, the following values as important to consensual interpersonal interactions: *Agency and Autonomy* (Bay-Cheng, 2019; Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Fahs & McClelland, 2016; Gotell, 2008; Im et al., 2021; Little, 2005; Zytko et al., 2021); *Safety and Trust* (Chen et al., 2022; Duguay et al., 2020; Gillett, 2021; Gotell, 2008; Stardust et al., 2022); *Equality and Respect* (Abboud et al., 2019; Gavey, 2019; Little, 2005; Reynolds, 2019); *Well-Being* (Albury et al., 2019; Bay-Cheng, 2019; Echevarria et al., 2022). Online dating is one context where these values are particularly relevant as dating apps *and* people's experiences with and mediated by them may reflect and/or conflict with values of consensual interpersonal

interactions (Aljasim & Zytko, 2022; Duguay et al., 2020; Filice et al., 2022; Phan et al., 2021; Pruchniewska, 2020; Zytko et al., 2021).

Online Dating Apps and its relation with Consent

Online dating apps can be thought of as a type of social matching system, one that "(partially) automate[s] the process of bringing people together"(Terveen & McDonald, 2005), around a variety of goals, such as finding short-term romantic partners, new friendships, and long-term partnerships (Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017; Zytko, Mullins, et al., 2022)**.** Consent is particularly relevant to online dating applications that can also be thought of as tools *"for the safe processes of exchanging consent to sex that [online dating apps] facilitate and encourage through design"* (Furlo et al., 2021, p. 1), as well as other interpersonal interactions, such as initiating conversation or friendship, planning an off-platform encounter (e.g. in-person date), etc. (Coffey et al., 2022). For example, Zytko et al. identified two computer-mediated consent processes: 1) consent signaling, where individuals assume or indicate consent to sex via the dating app interface, without any direct confirmation of consent before sexual activity occurs, and 2) affirmative consent, where individuals use the dating app interface to engage and normalize open and direct conversations about sex on and offline" (Zytko et al., 2021, p. 1). While some may be pessimistic about what dating apps mean for love (Bauman, 2003), prior work has found that people who use dating apps believe they have access to more dating opportunities and additional agency for meeting and pursuing possible partners for a variety of goals (Wu & Trottier, 2022).

Identity has been shown to shape online dating and consent exchange experiences, with disparate adverse impacts on marginalized groups. For example, prior work on computer-mediated consent to sex reveals a gendered experience of consent exchange: assumptions of consent and initiating sex with potential partners via consent signaling processes is frequently done by cisgender men, whereas affirmative consent practices were more common among those who identify as LGBTQIA+ (Zytko et al., 2021). Additionally, women and LGBTQIA+ dating app users have reported their efforts to discuss sexual consent with cisgender men online have often been misinterpreted as sexual advances and flirtation, resulting in unwanted interactions (Furlo et al., 2021). Race has also been demonstrated to impact consent-processes in online dating contexts. For example, Dietzel et al. finds that racialized men

who have sex with men (MSM) experience higher rates of nonconsensual sexual interactions in their usage of dating apps, attributed in part to sexual racism and race fetishization (Dietzel, 2022).

Design of online dating apps can also signal to users what interactions are expected in ways that enable or support (non)consensual interactions. Queer women experience harassment from men on dating platforms. However, formal avenues of reporting harms like harassment and sexually aggressive behavior are rarely used as doing so is thought of as being contradictory to the technoculture of apps, like Tinder, where queer women who receive explicit and sexually aggressive behavior from men perceive that type of behavior as expectations of the platform (Duguay et al., 2020). This is exacerbated by features of design, such as the design of Tinder's 'Report' button, that is obscured and difficult to locate. By the 'Report' button being *"hidden behind a nondescript icon with three dots"*, it establishes the perception that formally reporting others is not regularly used or needed by users (Duguay et al., 2020, p. 244). Duguay et al. argue that design choices like this reinforce *"tinder's toxic technoculture, doing nothing to support—indeed working against—queer women's continued agency and participation on the platform"* (Duguay et al., 2020, p. 244). Design, in this example, enables nonconsensual gendered experiences of harassment and hinders queer women's personal agency against unwanted interactions with cisgender men. Design features that *could* protect agency and against nonconsensual interactions are obscured and made to appear 'atypical'.

Online dating raises concerns for safety and harms, including those as a result of nonconsensual interactions. For example, women may experience risks such as privacy infringements, harassment and stalking—*"risks that can magnify if sexual or romantic advances are refused, or invitations for future meetings declined"*(Zytko et al., 2020, p. 2)**.** By not consenting to advances from other people or agreeing to future encounters, women are at increased risk for nonconsensual harms (e.g. harassment). To help prevent non-consensual online-to-offline harms women may encounter with online dating, Zytko et al. argue that the design of messaging interfaces can help women ``*retain agency over the risks that they subject themselves to by effectively predicting who they will enjoy a face-to-face encounter with"* (Zytko et al., 2020, p. 2). In this instance, recognizing that online dating experiences with consent and nonconsensual behaviors (like harassment) are gendered, design is re-imagined to provide additional support to women navigating online interactions to prevent harms; design considers

and responds to the gendered user (Bardzell, 2010). On the other hand, Gillett et al. found that platforms, including online dating apps, often frame harmful content and interactions as done by 'bad actors', emphasizing individuals and their behavior instead as opposed to systemic or structural factors (Gillett et al., 2022), such as sexism, misogyny and heteropatriarchy (Campbell, 2022). As a consequence, individuals are positioned as responsible for managing their own safety against 'bad actors' by using the platforms' provided tools to shape their experiences online according to their own safety goals (Gillett et al., 2022).

With an understanding of the ways in which identity and power shapes consent-processes and the experience of online dating, looking at the Arab/SWANA U.S. diaspora's online dating experiences and seeking to understand this community's technocultures of consent allows for a better understanding of the ways technology and consent are implicated by identity and power relations.

Gender, Sexuality and Race in the Arab/SWANA U.S. Diaspora

The Arab and SWANA diaspora in the United States share a long contested history of racialization, with their inclusion into 'whiteness' and lived experiences over time heavily shaped by social, political and geographic forces (Abdulrahim, 2008; Maghbouleh, 2017; Maghbouleh et al., 2022). The U.S. Arab and SWANA diaspora are legally classified as 'white' (Naber, 2006; Said, 1995), however, individuals lived racialized experiences as insider-outside to (white) U.S. national identity (Maghbouleh, 2017; Naber, 2006) exemplifies *racial loopholes* (Maghbouleh, 2017) that contribute to a shared experience, albeit to varying levels, of racial-ethnic trauma in the United States (Awad et al., 2019). Maghbouleh uses the concept of *racial hinges* to describe the ways racially liminal groups (Pekarofski, 2021), such as members of the Arab and SWANA U.S. diaspora, bend and shift across 'doors of whiteness', experiencing a type of racialization that highlights the boundaries of whiteness de jure *and* de facto (Maghbouleh, 2017). For example, Maghbouleh describes the ways that generations of Iranian Americans *"appear to socially and successively 'brown' over time rather than 'whiten'"*(Maghbouleh, 2017), sharing how second-generation Iranian Americans experience a stigmatized racialization growing up based on their inability to fit neatly within hegemonic whiteness (Maghbouleh, 2017). More broadly, the Arab and SWANA diaspora in the United States is often rendered invisible under de jure classifications of whiteness (Tehranian, 2008),

while simultaneously being 'browned' in their (de-facto) lived experiences (Bloodsworth‑Lugo & Lugo‑Lugo, 2008; Maghbouleh, 2017).

Within these constructions of race, the Arab/SWANA diaspora—not including those who are able to *and desire* complete assimilation[6], such as those who wish to avoid being perceived as a 'hyphenated American' or to be labeled "Arab" (Rowe, 2021)—engage in cultural authentication processes to navigate their position in U.S. society *and* relations with an imagined community and homeland with an imagined shared Arab and/or SWANA culture. Naber refers to the politics of cultural authenticity as a *"process by which middle-class Arab diasporas come to herald particular ideals as markers of an authentic, essential, true, or real Arab culture"* (Naber, 2012b). Naber argues that the politics of cultural authenticity may also be thought of as a selective assimilation strategy that brings to light two seemingly contradictory desires: wishes to maintain an authentic Arab culture by providing a way for establishing a sense of belonging and cultural connectivity with a distant homeland, *and* hopes to achieve the 'American dream" by providing a way to achieve acceptance, belonging and assimilation within a white U.S. middle-class (Naber, 2006, 2012b). By adhering to notions of respectability defined by white middle-class ideals (Naber, 2012b), the U.S. Arab *and* SWANA diaspora may work to prove their worthiness of acceptance similarly to members of other marginalized groups (e.g., Black Americans) in the U.S. who may engage in respectability politics in efforts to assimilate (Cohen, 2004).

One might consider ideas of cultural or ethnic authenticity as identity projects within a generational framework, where notions of authenticity are contested between different diaspora generations (Maghbouleh, 2010; Naber, 2012b). For example, second-generation Iranian Americans experience an inherited nostalgia, from their first-generation immigrant parents' stories and relationships, that shapes their practices of longing and belonging, such as clinging to symbols of Iranian History and popular Iranian music to establish a sense of cultural authenticity shared with other SWANA communities (Maghbouleh, 2010). Additionally, first-generation Arab immigrants are positioned as gatekeepers for managing and maintaining the authenticity of

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[6] Assimilation "implies a choice to fundamentally become American. Making this choice involve[s] stripping away particular attributes (language, dress, mannerisms, marriage practices), yet some elements of cultural behavior…have strategically been incorporated into their white American identities, or new amalgamations have emerged"(Rowe, 2021). Complete assimilation, in this context, accentuates the notion of the 'American melting pot', melting away one's differences into a single uniform (white) American identity (Lowe, 1996), as opposed to some form of multiculturalism where individuals are encouraged to practice essentialized versions of their cultural identity amidst many others(Naber, 2012b).

"Arab Culture" among the Arab / SWANA diaspora, while future generations—of which make up the population of focus in this study—are represented as individuals with the potential to continue or threaten cultural authenticity for the diaspora in the U.S.. The politics of cultural authenticity produces sets of rules that work to govern the lives of future generations of Arab (and SWANA) Americans, disproportionately and uniquely impacting women and queer members of the diaspora through the ways cultural authenticity is explicated by conceptions of a 'good Arab girl', commitments to a patriarchal nuclear family, and the presence of compulsory heterosexuality (Naber, 2012b). For example, for Arab American women, reputation and gossip—*kalam al-nas* (word of the people)—is centered on gender performance and sexuality, *and* the perception of one's family through her and other women family members' sexuality (Abboud et al., 2019; Naber, 2012b). Arab men's reputation, alternatively, is centered on his achievements and stature (Naber, 2012b). The implications of *kalam al-nas* within the Arab diaspora are heightened, where one's reputation and behaviors are set to not only reflect one's entire family *but* also the entirety of Arabs in the United States (Naber, 2012b). In the United States, the existence of an imagined Arab community—'*al-nas,* the people'—within the broader imagined America *"reinforces the implication of one's family within acts of transgression, cultural loss, and Americanization and thus expands the stakes placed on young adults' desires, actions, and behaviours"* (Naber, 2012b). Within these desires, actions and behaviors, matters of gender and sexuality are particularly salient.

Gender and sexuality are integral to idealized perceptions of Arab and SWANA communities, such as concoctions of Arabness and traditional sentiments of Americanness in the diaspora that work to distinguish Arabs from *stereotypical* Americans, generating an oppositional binary "us" and "them" (Albrecht, 2018; Naber, 2006, 2012b). Americanness is associated with non-normative sexualities and promiscuous women, and Arabness with *good* girls from *good* families who have *good* morals and sex within heterosexual marriages (Naber, 2012b). The politics of cultural authenticity, through this binary of "good Arab" and "bad Americans", works to police the bodies of single women *and* heightens the centrality of female sexuality to idealized notions of Arabness (Naber, 2012b). As a consequence, a desire to uphold an idealized, perfect image favoring virginity and premarital chastity may play a role in Arab American women's sexual decisions and sexual agency (Abboud et al., 2019). Similarly, the Iranian diaspora navigate their bodies and sexuality where sexual lives are organized across

notions of desirable femininity, such as valuing premarital chastity, *and* a woman's sexuality being strongly linked with her family's honor (Farahani, 2017). It is important to note that Arab and SWANA women in the U.S. are not unique in their need to *"negotiate tensions between ethnic/racial identity and societal gender and sexual norms"* (Abboud et al., 2019)*,* as tensions around sex, relationships and social norms exist for other non-Arab and SWANA U.S. subjects (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Rosenbaum, 2009) (e.g. individuals impacted by virginity pledges that may be promoted by Protestant and Catholic religious groups (Rosenbaum, 2009)). However, the politics of cultural authenticity (Naber, 2012b) complicate the ways the desires, actions and behaviors of second and subsequent generations of the Arab and SWANA diaspora—such as those mediated through online dating apps—are carried out, with perceived implications for themselves *and* the broader imagined community—*al-nas*—in the United States.

It is important to also consider the ways transnational modalities of power—the ways in which power is experienced or expressed across and between nations (Naber, 2012b)—shape Arab and SWANA diaspora's expressions of their desires, and behaviors because doing so allows one to better contextualize and situate these expressions. By understanding how these expressions of desire and behaviors are situated in a transnational landscape and influenced by power relations, one reduces the risk of further perpetrating analyses that are reductive and falsely attribute certain behaviors or cultural expressions as innate to a community or cultural identity. Instead, one can understand the contexts in which these expressions and behaviors manifest and shift across space and time. Conceptions of cultural authenticity are dynamic and ever-changing as the idealized Arab/SWANA culture within the diaspora is deeply intertwined with and shaped by transnational modalities of power, including U.S. Orientalist discourse, colonialism, imperialism, liberal U.S. multiculturalism, and race, gender, sexuality and class (Naber, 2012b). For example, Abdulhadi describes the ways that Arab anticolonial nationalists came to internalize European colonizer's victorian codes of morality and sexuality in the late 18th centuries, entrenching patriarchal and heteronormative national identities (Abdulhadi, 2010)—masculinist Arab heteronationalisms—that heavily characterize the diaspora's politics of cultural authenticity (Naber, 2012b). As another example, within U.S. Orientalist discourse that imagines and overstates the difference between 'the West' and 'the East' (Said, 1995), Arab and SWANA men are frequently depicted as prone to sexual transgressions and violence (e.g. rape), and women as both sexually oppressed or promiscuous and immodest (Said, 1995)—these

beliefs partly shape an idealized cultural identity that tries to differentiate Arabness or, more broadly, SWANAness from these orientalist narratives while consequently self-essentializing to rigid conceptions of gender and sexuality (e.g. a "good Arab girl") (Naber, 2012b). Naber refers to this process as engaging in cultural re-authenticity, developing an imagined true cultural identity *"as a reaction or an alternative to the universalizing tendencies of hegemonic U.S. nationalism, the pressures of assimilation, and the gendered racialization of Arab women and men"* (Naber, 2006, p. 88).

Within these contexts of identity projects among the Arab and SWANA diaspora in the United States *and* the salience of gender and sexuality, there are false assumptions both within and outside the diaspora that Arab- and SWANA-Americans do not (and will not) engage in premarital sexual behaviors (Abboud et al., 2015, 2019; Naber, 2006, 2012b), unaware or outright dismissing the reality that some Arab and SWANA Americans regularly engage in a wide variety of sexual behaviors throughout their lifetimes (Abboud et al., 2015, 2021; Abdolsalehi-Najafi & Beckman, 2013; Torbati et al., 2022). While neoliberal Western feminists position religion, mainly Islam, as in direct opposition to women's sexuality, religion by itself is not uniquely responsible for decisions around enacting sexual agency, with prior work finding that religion often intersects with other power structures involving gender, race and ethnicity and historical and political circumstances (Abboud et al., 2019; Naber, 2006).

Queer Arab and SWANA communities exist in both the SWANA region *and* its diasporas despite their frequent erasure from the Arab and SWANA diaspora's narratives (Gayed, 2022; Mansour, 2022; Naber, 2006). For example, queer Arab Americans have reported experiencing race-based fetishization and rejection in their dating experiences, alongside a general sense of alienation from both LGBTQ+ *and* Arab and SWANA communities due to the purported idea that queerness and Arabness are mutually exclusive (Mansour, 2022). Misperceptions of queerness as a 'Western' phenomena, the imposition of *"monolithic, monocultural versions of queer Western identity politics"* (Gayed, 2022) and compulsory heterosexuality integral to notions of cultural authenticity (Naber, 2012b) contribute to a contested inclusion/exclusion of queer Arab- and SWANA-Americans as part of the diaspora (Gayed, 2022; Mansour, 2022). This project aims to deliberately include the online dating experiences of queer Arab- and SWANA-Americans, not contributing to their erasure and, instead, aiming to highlight their experiences as a vital part of the diaspora.

To my knowledge, there has not been inquiry into the Arab and SWANA diaspora's dating experiences with and mediated by online dating applications, nor an understanding of this populations' understandings and practices of consent where intersectional identities (Gavey, 2019) may be of consequence. This study's focus into the online dating experiences of second- and future generations of Arab- and SWANA-Americans as a means to understand technocultures of consent will illuminate the interplay between identity, technology's features and consent-related beliefs and practices. It is important to note that this study's goal is not to discover and present the U.S. Arab and SWANA diaspora's technocultures of consent as a static, homogenous way of acting. Instead, this project will conceive of technocultures, and culture more broadly, as an outcome of multiple practices with shared or synchronized practices that can complement and challenge each other (Abu-Lughod, 2008), all coexisting under the reference *technocultures of consent*.

Methods

Data Collection

This study will include two phases of data collection. Prior to collecting any data, participants will review and sign an informed consent form (See Appendix D and E).

Phase 1: Questionnaire with Guided Reflective Writing Entries

The first phase will involve a questionnaire soliciting reflective writing entries on past experiences with and mediated by online dating applications. I will recruit ~40 participants who will be asked and consent to sharing up to 5 descriptions of their most memorable (whatever that means to them) interactions or experiences as mediated by online dating applications. These descriptions of memorable interactions or experiences will be used as artifact probes for further reflection. For each interaction/experience shared, participants will be asked to write a response to the following question: "What thoughts/feelings/emotions do you have looking back at this interaction/experience *today*?" The question is intentionally reflective and grounded in the present, as I know that 1) the amount of time that may have passed between when an interaction/experience occurred and this study might lead to recollection bias if participants were asked to report how they *had* felt/thought (Lazar et al., 2017), and 2) I want to prompt writing

entries that are contextualized within their broader (dating-related) experiences where reflection may have already occurred. All participants in this study should write 5 reflections. The writing entries will be dispersed to and collected from selected participants via Qualtrics. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B, along with the email with instructions for selected participants.

It is important to note that participants will be informed that the descriptions will be summarized/paraphrased (with care to remove any identifying information). Participants will be compensated a $25 Amazon Gift Card for their participation in the guided reflective writing entries.

As with any study, there is the potential for participants to submit abusive data (e.g. inappropriate screenshots or images) that I may encounter in my position as researcher. In order to protect myself from being adversely impacted by potential abuses throughout the data collection process, I would go into the study with the understanding that this is a possibility and have resources on hand to go to for immediate support if deemed necessary (e.g. UM's Sexual Assault and Prevention and Awareness Center [SAPAC]). While this may be a possibility, I think the likelihood of being sent inappropriate data is low since the participants for Phase 1 will be screened and primarily selected for this part of data collection, and doing so would eliminate their ability to receive financial compensation for their participation. As a result, I think the incentive to do harm would be low. The part of this study where potential may be higher is when individuals fill out the screening survey, however, there would not be the possibility for individuals to submit any photos or unformatted information. As a result, the possibility of sending abusive data to me through these channels is low. However, if there is a breach, as mentioned earlier, I intend to make use of SAPAC's resources for support.

Phase 2: Semi-Structured Interviews

In the 2nd phase of data collection, I will carry out semi-structured interviews. Participants will be invited to participate in a 60 to 90 minute interview over Zoom (video *or* audio call, depending on preference). Interview participants will be recruited *from Phase 1*'s participants; those who agreed to be invited for a follow-up interview to talk more about their online dating experiences. If not enough participants from Phase 1 want to participate in interviews, I will return to the initial potential participant pool (from the screening survey) and

reach out to individuals until 20 participants are interviewed. The one drawback from having to recruit outside of Phase 1's participants is I wouldn't be entering the interviews with prior mementos [shared in Phase 1] from the participant to ask specific follow-up questions about, optimizing the 60-90 minutes I'd have for the interview. However, I will make up for lost time with pointed questions that get to specific experiences and encounters early on in the interview protocol. Participants will be compensated a $25 Amazon Gift Card for their participation in the interviews. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix C.

Total potential compensation for participation in this project will be $50.

Recruitment

I will conduct purposive sampling, actively seeking out participants who are 18 years of age or older, live in the United States, self-identify as being part of the Arab or SWANA diaspora, but not a first-generation immigrant (born in the United States, with at least one first-generation (immigrant) parent, grandparent, great-grandparent and so on from an Arab and or SWANA country), and are active users of one or more online dating apps. I have commissioned a SWANA artist to develop digital art and graphics relating to Arab/SWANA online dating, and will display these on recruitment materials (e.g. flyers). I will post my call for participants on social media platforms including (but not limited to) Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with hashtags such as #SWANA, #MENA, and #OnlineDating. I will also directly reach out to local organizations and groups across the U.S. that are directed towards Arab and SWANA populations[7], requesting that they share calls for participants with their membership.

A screening survey will be attached to all recruitment materials and social media posts relating to recruitment. In addition to confirming eligibility requirements, I will ask questions relating to specific demographics within the U.S. Arab/SWANA community; this is an effort to intentionally have a variety of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds represented within this broad Arab/SWANA category. For example, I want to avoid having a participant pool that is 100% Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian, skewing the sample to the experience of Levantine Arabs in the U.S. Diaspora. Beyond working to ensure intra-ethnic diversity, I will work to

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[7] Organization I intend to reach out to, but am not limited to: SWANA Alliance Chapters, For The Binat, Center for Arab Narratives, Radius of Arab American Writers (RAWI), Mizna, The Queer Arabs Podcast, Iranian Diaspora Collective, Epsilon Alpha Sigma Sorority Inc. Chapters (Arab Sorority), Omega Beta Eta (Arab Fraternity), Cultural Organizations at Universities Across the United States (based on larger populations of Arab & SWANA diaspora in the surrounding area)

recruit participants with a variety of genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, etc. as these participants might provide insight into how technocultures of consent operate at the intersection(s) of race, gender and class. I will also use the screening survey to learn about online dating experiences from a variety of participants' experiences with *different* dating applications (e.g. Tinder, Hinge, Grindr, Her), to ensure that participants speak to experiences from a wide variety of dating apps, as different dating apps may embody different values and norms (B. Friedman et al., 2002), with implications for individuals' technocultures of consent. I would like to have at least 4 dating apps represented, with *at least* 1 dating app that markets itself towards queer individuals (e.g. Her, Grindr) to be able to oversample for queer Arab and SWANA experiences. Ideally, I would also ideally have at least 1 dating app that markets itself towards more long-term relationships (e.g. Hinge) and those that are more short-term (e.g. Tinder). In doing so, I increase the chances of learning about experiences along a variety of dating goals and social dating norms. The screening survey can be found in Appendix A.

Additionally, I will attempt to enter research partnerships with Arab/SWANA organizations in the U.S. who would agree to advertise or publicize recruitment materials for the study (with proper acknowledgement in any publications from this work). For example, I intend to work with the Center for Arab Narratives[8] who have established a process for researchers working with Arab/SWANA communities to have their study materials dispersed nationally across multiple sites and communities. This is particularly helpful as I do not want to have my research solely include participants from Southeast Michigan where there is a large Arab/SWANA-American population just because it would be easier to recruit within an ethnic enclave. I want to be intentional about recruiting across the country—including Southeast Michigan—to improve study heterogeneity. There is the potential that my participants will lack geographic diversity, with a largely Michigan or midwest sample due to large ethnic enclaves of Arab and SWANA folks in the Michigan and broader midwest region(s)(Arab American Institute, 2021). If this were to happen, this would certainly be a limitation of the study, as Arab and SWANA diaspora in different regions and, particularly those not living in ethnic enclaves, may have different lived experiences of racialization not captured by a sample concentrated within a single region. Alternatively, a potential unplanned benefit of this might be allowing me to get a deeper understanding of one sub-group within the Arab and SWANA diaspora—those

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[8] https://www.accesscommunity.org/health-wellness/can

living in the Midwest—where being part of an ethnic enclave is integral to their diasporic experiences.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, I will pair Clarke's situational analysis (A. E. Clarke et al., 2018) with Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) in efforts to better understand the Arab and SWANA diaspora in the U.S.' technocultures of consent and its elements and the relationships between them, as framed by participants *and* myself as researcher. My analysis process will be very iterative, with data collection informing data analysis and vice versa. Situational Analysis' attention to relationality by way of mapping human and non-human actors (e.g. situational maps, social worlds/arenas maps, and positional maps) (A. E. Clarke et al., 2018) will complement my goal to account for the complexity and multiplicities of the U.S. Arab/SWANA Diaspora's technocultures of consent, as well as enhance a transnational approach that takes account of the convergence of the U.S. *and* SWANA regions' social, cultural and political histories in which these technocultures are situated. Concurrently with mapping (A. E. Clarke et al., 2018), as part of the constructivist grounded theory approach, I will conduct open-(initial), followed by focused- and axial- coding (Charmaz, 2006).

Both situational analysis *and* constructivist grounded theory have a feminist commitment to reflexivity and subjectivity, with an understanding that the theories emerging from analysis are *"embedded in the historical, social, cultural, and situational conditions of their production"* (A. Clarke & Charmaz, 2023). Used together, situational analysis and constructivist grounded theory will allow me to both *"[map] the situation of inquiry and [analyze] basic social processes of action within"* (A. Clarke & Charmaz, 2023) the U.S. Arab/SWANA Diaspora's technocultures of consent.

Timeline

To see the below table in *timeline* form, <u>click here.</u>

Category	**Task**	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Research Design and Planning	**Project Ideation**	01/01/2023	3/31/2023
Research Design and Planning	**Establish Research Questions**	01/01/2023	2/15/2023

Reading	Read Literature and Related Works	01/01/2023	4/15/2023
Writing	Prepare Proposal Paper	03/01/2023	4/15/2023
Writing	Prepare Introduction Draft	03/01/2023	3/15/2023
Writing	Prepare Literature Review Draft	03/01/2023	4/7/2023
Writing	Prepare Methods Draft	03/28/2023	3/28/2023
Data Collection	Develop Screening Survey	03/31/2023	4/10/2023
Data Collection	Develop Questionnaire	03/31/2023	4/10/2023
Data Collection	Develop Interview Protocol	03/31/2023	4/10/2023
Research Design and Planning	Prepare and Submit IRB	04/10/2023	04/20/2023
Research Design and Planning	Test Data Collection Instruments (e.g. interview, screening survey,questionnaire)	04/15/2023	5/1/2023
Research Design and Planning	Apply for Funding	04/17/2023	05/01/2023
Research Design and Planning	Apply for Research Partnerships with CAN	04/17/2023	05/01/2023
Data Collection	Recruitment	05/01/2023	06/10/2023
Miscellaneous	Honeymoon (OOO)	05/27/2023	06/10/2023
Data Collection	Conduct Data Collection: Phase 1	05/17/2023	06/17/2023
Data Collection	Conduct Data Collection: Phase 2	06/17/2023	07/31/2023
Data Analysis	Conduct Data Analysis	06/01/2023	08/19/2023
Writing	Draft Writing	06/01/2023	08/31/2023
Writing	Draft Reviewing	07/01/2023	08/31/2023
Writing	Final Paper & Editing	08/31/2023	12/16/2023
Defense/Presentation	Create and Prepare for Defense	10/01/2023	12/31/2023

Financial Budget

Estimated Costs

Total Cost Estimated: $3904.75

Item	Estimated Cost	Total
Recruitment Art	3 art pieces X $50	$150
Participant Incentives 40 participants total, but 20 will participate twice	60 incentives X $25	$1500
REV Interview Transcription	$1.50/min X 70 mins X 20 interviews	$2100
CAQDAS Dedoose	$10.95/month X 5 months	$54.76

Funding Sources

Potential Resources	Amount to Request	Amount Received
Doctoral Research Fund		$2000
UMSI DEI Grants	$2000	
[to be determined]		
[to be determined]		

Appendix A: Screening Survey

Screening Survey

Please read the following paragraphs:

Thank you for participating in this screening survey. This survey's goal is to help find eligible participants for a questionnaire and interview study. The goal of this study is to better understand the online dating experiences of Arab- and Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) Americans.

Research Team:

Student researcher: Nadia Karizat, University of Michigan School of Information

Faculty Advisor: Nazanin Andalibi, University of Michigan School of Information

You are eligible to participate in this survey if you:

a) are 18 years of age or older; b) live in the United States; c) self-identify as being part of the Arab or SWANA diaspora [but not a first-generation immigrant] (born in the United States, with at least one first-generation (immigrant) parent, grandparent, great-grandparent and so on from an Arab and or SWANA country (e.g. Syria, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia)); and d) are an active user of one or more online dating apps.

This screening survey will take around 5 to 7 minutes to complete. If you are invited for the study, you will be invited to participate in part 1, a questionnaire. This questionnaire with reflective writing entries will take no more than 60 minutes in total. I will offer a $25 Amazon gift card for participating in the questionnaire study and helping us. You may also be invited to the interview part of the study to talk more about your online dating experiences. This interview will last about 60-90 minutes. I will offer an additional $25 Amazon gift card for participating in the interview part of the study.

1. **Do you currently use one or more online dating apps?** Yes/No (stop the survey if no)
2. **Do you self-identify as being part of the Arab or SWANA diaspora, but not a first-generation immigrant?** (born in the United States, with at least one first-generation

(immigrant) parent, grandparent, great-grandparent and so on from an Arab and or SWANA country)? Yes/No (stop the survey if no)

3. **Do you live in the United States?** Yes/No (stop the survey if no)

4. **What is your age now?** _____ (stop the survey if response is < 18).

[When the survey exists in one of the above criteria, the exit message will be: "We appreciate your interest and willingness to participate in this study. Based on your responses so far, it seems like you do not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for participation."]

Responses to this survey are private and confidential. I ask for your email address only so that I can get in touch with you if you are invited for the questionnaire and or interview study. If you are not selected to participate in either study, I will not keep your email address but I may use your de-identified responses to this survey in analysis. I appreciate your input.

1. **What online dating apps do you currently use? [Select all that apply]**
   a. Bumble
   b. Christian Mingle
   c. Coffee Meets Bagel
   d. Facebook Dating
   e. Grindr
   f. Her
   g. Hinge
   h. JDate
   i. Plenty of Fish
   j. Salams
   k. Tinder
   l. Other: [Please type in]

2. **What online dating apps have you used in the past, but not currently? [Select all that apply]**
   a. Bumble
   b. Christian Mingle

    c.   Coffee Meets Bagel

    d.   Facebook Dating

    e.   Grindr

    f.   Her

    g.   Hinge

    h.   JDate

    i.   Plenty of Fish

    j.   Salams

    k.   Tinder

    l.   Other: [Please type in]

3. **In the past, have you used DateMe, Peas in a Pod, or SoulDate?**

    a.   Yes

    b.   No

    c.   I used to but I don't now

4. **In 1 to 3 sentences, how would you describe your online dating experiences? [please type in]**

5. **How long have you used online dating apps (including breaks off the app)?**

    a.   Less than 3 months

    b.   6 months to 11 months

    c.   1 year to 2 years

    d.   More than 2 years

6. **Have you ever interacted with someone you met through online dating *off* the apps (e.g. in-person date, video call like FaceTime or Whatsapp Video, messaging on another social media platform)?** [yes/no]

7. **How would you describe your online dating goals currently?**

    a.   I'm looking for a long-term partner

    b.   I'm looking for a long-term partner, but I'm open to something more short-term.

    c.   I'm looking for something short-term, but am open to a long-term partner.

    d.   I'm looking for short-term fun.

    e.   I'm looking for new friends.

    f.   I'm still figuring it out.

g.   Other: [please type in]

8.   **What is your gender?** [please type in]

9.   **What pronouns would you like me to use to refer to you?** [please type in]

10. **What is your race (e.g. Black, SWANA/MENA, White, Asian, Mixed)?** [please type in]

11. **What is your ethnicity? (e.g. Armenian, Chaldean, Egyptian Coptic, Iraqi, Lebanese)** [please type in]

12. **What Arab and/or SWANA country) is your family from? (e.g. Syria, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia)** [please type in]

13. **Do you self-identify as Arab?** [yes/no/not sure]

14. **What is your sexual orientation?** [please type in]

15. **What is your highest education level?** (Some high school/High School/Some College/College/Some Graduate School/Graduate Degree)

16. **What best describes your current employment status?** (Employed full-time/Employed part-time/Out of work and looking for work/Out of work but not currently looking for work/Stay-at-home-parent/Student/Military/Retired/Unable to work)

17. **What was your total household income during the past 12 months?**
   a.   Less than $25,000
   b. $25,000 to $34,999
   c. $35,000 to $49,999
   d. $50,000 to $74,999
   e. $75,000 to $99,999
   f. $100,000 to $149,999
   g. $150,000 to $199,999
   h. $200,000 or more

18. **What is the best email address to contact you if you are selected and invited to participate in the study?** [please type in]

If you have any questions please feel free to contact this study's researcher, Nadia Karizat at nkarizat@umich.edu.

The University of Michigan's Institutional Review Board has determined that this research is exempt from IRB oversight.

Appendix B: Phase 1- Questionnaire for Reflections on Past Interactions and Experiences

Email to Send to Participant with Instructions

First Email for Informed Consent:

Hello,
Thank you for completing the survey to participate in a study about your online dating experiences as a member of the Arab and/or SWANA diaspora in the United States. You've been **selected to participate in the first phase of the study**: a questionnaire that asks you to **write reflections on five online dating experiences or interactions** that you choose to share by writing a brief description of the interaction/experience.
Before I send you the questionnaire, please sign the informed consent form. You can read and electronically sign the informed consent form here: **https://umich.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0cESJtxdXBUM5eK**.
Once I receive the signed consent form, I will send you the questionnaire within 24 hours.
Best,
Nadia Karizat

Second Email:

Thank you for submitting the informed consent form. As I explained before, you've been **selected to participate in the first phase of the study**: a questionnaire that asks you to **write reflections on five online dating experiences or interactions** that you choose to share by writing a brief description of the interaction/experience.

I am interested in hearing about moments that stand out to you as memorable, interesting or surprising during your time(s) on online dating applications. These moments may be memorable, interesting or surprising for a wide variety of reasons; for the good or for the uncomfortable, for the exciting or for the troubling. Whatever you feel comfortable sharing with me, I am grateful to hear from you.

As a thanks for your participation, **you will be sent a $25 Amazon gift card to your email within 1 week after submitting** the questionnaire**.** I will send periodic reminders to submit. If after reading this

email you are no longer interested, **please respond back to me as soon as possible to let me know your decision to not participate in this part of the study.** If I have not received a questionnaire in 14 days, I will assume you have chosen not to participate in this study.

Instructions for Phase 1:

1. **You should complete the questionnaire on Qualtrics. The questionnaire can be found here: https://umich.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dj2T1VIOPsEKM98**

2. **The questionnaire will ask you to answer the following questions for five online dating experiences or interactions** that you choose to share:

    1. **Please describe the interaction or experience in your own words.**

    2. **What dating app is most relevant to this interaction or experience?** For example, which dating app did the interaction/experience take place in or from which dating app did you first meet or encounter the other person(s) involved in the interaction/experience?

    3. **What thoughts/feelings/emotions do you have looking back at this interaction/experience *today*?**

4. At the end of the questionnaire, you will be asked if you would be interested in being contacted for a 60-90 minute interview to talk more about your online dating experiences? You will be reminded that participants invited and scheduled for an interview will receive a $25 Amazon Gift Card following the completion of the interview.

Some important things to note:

1. **If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at nkarizat@umich.edu with [Arab/SWANA Online Dating: Your First Name] in the Subject Line.** I will get back to you within 48 hours.

2. **Anything you share with me will remain confidential, and any identifying information will be anonymized.**

3. **You can share experiences or interactions that occurred at any point during your usage of online dating apps.** This means an experience or interaction that happened yesterday, last month, or even two years ago is of interest to me. As long as you feel it is memorable or it stands out to you in some way, I want to hear about it.

4. **Completing this survey should take you no more than 60 minutes in total.** I appreciate any and all time that you spend sharing your experiences with us.

5. **I have resources on hand to support you, particularly those who may be sharing difficult or uncomfortable experiences with me.** If you'd like resources, please let me know.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

"Hi, my name is Nadia Karizat and I'm a PhD Student at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I'm here to understand your experiences with online dating, on-and-off the apps. This interview will take about 60-90 minutes, during which time we'll go through some questions.

A couple of things before we start. I will take your comments to be confidential and any quotes used from this interview will be anonymized. This interview is entirely voluntary on your part, and I appreciate your participation – if for any reason you want to pause or end our conversation or don't feel comfortable answering certain questions, please let me know. Do I have your permission to record this interview? [wait for them to consent]

Do you have any questions for me? All right, then, let's proceed."

[Warm-Up]

1. Can you tell me a little bit about which dating apps you've used? What made you choose those apps specifically?
    a. Are there any dating apps you used to use but don't anymore? What caused you to stop using [dating app]?
    b. Which dating apps do you currently use?
2. If you could describe your online dating experience in a couple words, what would you say? Why?

[Perceptions, Goals, and Intentions]

3. Can you tell me a little bit about when you first started using dating apps?

   a. What was your reason for beginning to use dating apps?

   b. How have your goals or reasons for use changed over time?

   c. Currently, what are you looking for or why do you use online dating apps?

4. How has your perception of online dating apps changed since before you first started using them?

5. If you feel comfortable, could open up your bio on one of the dating apps you currently use and tell me what it says?

   a. Why did you choose that bio?

6. Can you describe a couple of the photos you chose for your dating profile? Why did you choose those photos?

7. When people look at your profile, what do you want them to take away from it? Tell me more about that.

   a. What do you think other people think when they look at your dating bio?

8. Do others in your personal network know that you use online dating apps?

   a. How did they find out?

   b. How do you feel about others knowing you use dating apps?

   c. Do you have any concerns about certain people knowing you're involved with online dating?

      i. [If yes] What are those concerns and who are you concerned about—why? Does that impact your behavior on the app or in your personal life in any way?

[On-App vs On-to-Off App Interactions]

9. What are the ways you interact with people on the apps?

   a. If you had to describe it, who do you think you typically interact with?

   b. How do you decide whether to interact with somebody or not?

   c. Have you ever had an interaction with somebody on the app that you would've rather not interacted with? Can you tell me about that (those) specific interaction(s)?

10. What are the ways you interact with people you've met through online dating apps outside of the apps themselves?

    a. [Follow-up] For example, have you ever met up with someone for an in-person date or chatted with someone on a separate social media account that you met through online dating?

    b. How did your interactions with others move off the app?

    c. Have you ever engaged in intimate behaviors with someone you met through a dating app?

        i. [Follow-up] For example, have you ever hugged or kissed someone you met through the apps? Have you ever engaged in sexual behaviors with someone you met online?

        ii. If you feel comfortable, would you be open to telling me about a positive intimate experience you've had with someone you met through online dating?

        iii. If you feel comfortable, would you be open to telling me about a negative or uncomfortable intimate experience you've had with someone you met through online dating?

11. Did someone you met through online dating ever try to interact with you either on or off the app in a way that you did not like? Tell me more about that.

    a. What was it about that interaction you didn't like?

[Interpersonal Positive and Negative Interactions]

12. Can you tell me about a specific interaction or experience you had with someone you met through online dating apps that is most memorable to you—that stands out from the others? [may prompt with asking about specific interaction/experience shared in the journal entries].

13. Can you tell me about a positive interaction you've had with someone through online dating apps?

14. If you feel comfortable, would you be open to telling me about a negative interaction you've had with someone through online dating apps?

15. This section will be where I ask follow-up questions to specific interactions/experiences shared and reflected on in Part 1 of the study. This will involve preparatory work personalized to each participant.

a.   Examples that might be asked here:

    i.   In [X example], you mentioned that you tried to report [Y behavior] because it made you feel [negative emotion]. Can you tell me more about that?

        1.   [Follow up] What did you do specifically to report [Y behavior]? Tell me about what happened after that.

        2.   How do you feel about the outcome of that situation?

        3.   Do you think that experience has shaped the ways you use and engage with dating apps and people on dating apps? If so, how?

    ii.   In [X example], you shared that [person 1] made you feel really [positive emotion] in the ways that [pronoun] interacted with you on the app. You specifically mentioned [Y behavior].

        1.   Can you tell me more about that? Why do you think [Y behavior] caused you to feel [positive emotion]?

        2.   Have you had other experiences on the app that have made you feel [positive emotion]? How were they similar to this experience? How were they different?

    iii.   In [X example], you mentioned that you felt unsafe after an experience of [negative behavior] from [multiple people], and that this then caused you to [defensive behavior].

        1.   Can you tell me more about the other ways you've reacted or responded to feeling unsafe through experiences with online dating app experiences?

        2.   What resources or forms of support did you look for to cope with this experience? What made you decide to seek out those types of support?

            a.   Do you feel that the dating apps do or do not support you in navigating safety concerns? Tell me more about that.

[Values]

16. Have you had any experiences with online dating where issues of safety and trust were salient to you (Safety/Trust)?

    a. Can you tell me a specific example?

17. Have you had any experiences with online dating where you did or did not feel in control (Agency/Autonomy/Enablement)?

    a. Can you tell me a specific example?

18. Have you had any experiences that you think had an impact on your well-being? For example, your physical, mental, or emotional health (Well-being)?

    a. Can you tell me a specific example?

19. Have you ever had any online dating experiences where you felt you were or were not treated with respect as a human being (Equality and Respect)?

    a. Can you tell me a specific example?

20. Have you ever had an experience with online dating where you sought support or confided in someone (Peer Support)?

    a. Can you tell me a specific example?

21. Have you ever had any experience using online dating apps where you felt like the app was particularly helpful or supportive of your wants and goals (Collaboration)?

[Arab and/or SWANA Identity]

22. Do you feel that your identity as a [insert self-identified identity from screening survey] has shaped your experiences with online dating? If yes, in what ways?

    a. [If no, follow up] Have you ever thought about your race or ethnicity while using an online dating app or engaging with others on-and-off the apps?

23. Do you feel your gender or sexuality as a [insert gender/sexuality from screening survey] has shaped your online dating experiences? If yes, in what ways?

    a. [If no, follow up] Have you ever felt your gender or sexuality mattered when you were using the apps or interacting with others?

24. Do you feel your socioeconomic status has shaped your online dating experiences? If yes, in what ways?

a. [If no, follow up] Have you ever felt your socioeconomic status mattered when you were using the apps or interacting with others?

[Closing]

25. What would you say has been the most surprising or unexpected thing you've found about online dating apps?

a. What's been the most surprising or unexpected thing you've found about online dating generally?

26. How would you define consent[9] between individuals?

a. Given your definition, can you tell me about how you think consent is understood in the online dating context?

b. How do you think consent *should* be understood, practiced or treated? Tell me more about that.

27. Do you have any questions for me before we end today?

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[9] This will be the first time I say the word 'consent' aloud, unless mentioned and engaged with by the participant earlier in the interview—to not trigger anticipated responses from participants.

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for Interview Study

Consent to be Part of a Research Study

Project Title: Online Dating Experiences of Arab and SWANA Diaspora in the U.S.
Principle Investigator: Nadia Karizat, PhD Student, School of Information, University of Michigan
Faculty Advisor: Nazanin Andalibi, PhD, School of Information, University of Michigan

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in an interview study. In order to participate, you must: **a)** be 18 years of age or older; **b)** live in the United States; **c)** self-identify as being part of the Arab or SWANA diaspora [but not a first-generation immigrant]. This means you were born in the United States, with at least one first-generation (immigrant) parent, grandparent, great-grandparent and so on from an Arab and or SWANA country (e.g. Syria, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia); and **d)** be an active user of one or more online dating apps.

Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Important Information about the Research Study

Things you should know:

- The purpose of the study is to understand your online dating experiences.
- If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete an individual interview that will be audio-recorded and transcribed (but not video recorded). The interview will occur over video or voice call of your choice.
- The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes.
- Risks or discomforts from this research include potential discomfort discussing your online dating experiences. There are no obvious physical, legal, financial, or economic risks associated with participating in this study.
- There are no direct tangible benefits to participating in this study. However, your participation will help build an understanding of Arab- and SWANA-American dating experiences, and serve as a starting point for future research on this population's online dating experiences, beliefs and behaviors.
- Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You don't have to participate and you can stop at any time with no penalties.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why am I doing it?

This study aims to understand the online dating experiences of Arab- and SWANA-American populations within the United States. SWANA stands for Southwest Asian and North African, commonly referred to as Middle Eastern and North African (MENA). By exploring the online dating experiences of the Arab and SWANA diaspora in the U.S., I hope to gain insight to the ways that gender, race and other intersecting identities interplay with technologies to shape online dating experiences, and to better understand implications for individuals' safety, well-being and agency.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete an individual interview that will be audio-recorded and transcribed (but not video recorded). The interview will occur over video or voice call of your choice. The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes.

How could you benefit from this study?

There are no direct tangible benefits to participating in this study. However, your participation will help build an understanding of Arab- and SWANA-American dating experiences, and serve as a starting point for future research on this population's online dating experiences, beliefs and behaviors.

What risks might result from being in this study?

There are no obvious physical, legal, financial, or economic risks associated with participating in this study. The psychological effects on you will be no greater than the effect of having a conversation about your dating experiences. If you feel uncomfortable at any time during the session, you may stop the interview or skip any questions at any time that you choose with no penalty.

How will I protect your information?

We plan to publish the results of this study. To protect your privacy, I will not include any information that could identify you in any way in reports or publications resulting from this study. To minimize risk of breach of confidentiality, all participants and their data will be given pseudonyms or participant numbers for recording and reporting purposes. Moreover, only the research team and transcribers who are bound to a confidentiality agreement will have access to the conversations. The recording of the interview and subsequent transcription will be kept on a secure U of M server. Data collected in this study will be retained for potential comparative research studies. A summary of the study's results will be made available to you upon request.

What will happen to the information I collect about you after the study is over?

We will only need your email address, and if you choose to share your name, to schedule the interview and to send you the honorarium. I will not collect any other personally identifying information.

How will I compensate you for being part of the study?

Upon your completion of this study, you will receive a $25 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation for your time and sharing your experience with us. This will be emailed directly to you at the email you provide me with while setting up the interview.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

Participation in this research study is at no cost to you.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is totally up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be involved in part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have questions about this research, you may contact the student researcher of this study:

Nadia Karizat, PhD Student
School of Information, University of Michigan
Email: nkarizat@umich.edu

The University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board has determined that this research is exempt from IRB oversight.

Your Consent

By clicking on the SUBMIT button you acknowledge that you have read this information and are willing to participate in this interview study. You are also giving permission to me to audio-record the interview and what you share with me during the interview. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without any penalty. Upon receiving your submission, I will contact you with the email you enter below to set up a time for the interview.

[Check Box] I have read this consent form and agree to participate in this study.

E-mail address:
[SUBMIT]

Consent to be Contacted for Participation in Future Research (Optional)

*I give the researchers permission to keep my email address to contact me for potential future research projects related to this current project. **This is NOT required to participate in this study.** You can click NO if you do not wish to be contacted for follow-up studies.*

*YES*_____   *NO*_____

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form for Questionnaire Study

Consent to be Part of a Research Study

Project Title: Online Dating Experiences of Arab and SWANA Diaspora in the U.S.
Principle Investigator: Nadia Karizat, PhD Student, School of Information, University of Michigan
Faculty Advisor: Nazanin Andalibi, PhD, School of Information, University of Michigan

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a questionnaire that'll ask you to reflect and write on five online dating experiences. In order to participate, you must: **a)** be 18 years of age or older; **b)** live in the United States; **c)** self-identify as being part of the Arab or SWANA diaspora [but not a first-generation immigrant]. This means you were born in the United States, with at least one first-generation (immigrant) parent, grandparent, great-grandparent and so on from an Arab and or SWANA country (e.g. Syria, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia); and **d)** be an active user of one or more online dating apps.

Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Important Information about the Research Study

Things you should know:

- The purpose of the study is to understand your online dating experiences.
- If you choose to participate, you will be asked to submit a questionnaire on Qualtrics with written responses.
- The questionnaire will take no more than 60 minutes, and should be completed all at once.
- Risks or discomforts from this research include potential discomfort discussing and writing about your online dating experiences. There are no obvious physical, legal, financial, or economic risks associated with participating in this study.
- There are no direct tangible benefits to participating in this study. However, your participation will help build an understanding of Arab- and SWANA-American dating experiences, and serve as a starting point for future research on this population's online dating experiences, beliefs and behaviors.
- Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You don't have to participate and you can stop at any time with no penalties.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why am I doing it?

This study aims to understand the online dating experiences of Arab- and SWANA-American populations within the United States. SWANA stands for Southwest Asian and North African, commonly referred to as Middle Eastern and North African (MENA). By exploring the online dating experiences of the Arab and SWANA diaspora in the U.S., I hope to gain insight to the ways that gender, race and other intersecting identities interplay with technologies to shape online dating experiences, and to better understand implications for individuals' safety, well-being and agency.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to write reflections on five online dating experiences or interactions that you choose to share through writing a brief description of the interaction/experience that captures the interaction/experience.
This will take no more than 60 minutes to complete.

How could you benefit from this study?

There are no direct tangible benefits to participating in this study. However, your participation will help build an understanding of Arab- and SWANA-American dating experiences, and serve as a starting point for future research on this population's online dating experiences, beliefs and behaviors.

What risks might result from being in this study?

There are no obvious physical, legal, financial, or economic risks associated with participating in this study. The psychological effects on you will be no greater than the effect of having a conversation about your dating experiences. If you feel uncomfortable at any time during the session, you may discontinue participating in the questionnaire at any time that you choose with no penalty.

How will I protect your information?

We plan to publish the results of this study. To protect your privacy, I will not include any information that could identify you in any way in reports or publications resulting from this study. To minimize risk of breach of confidentiality, all participants and their data will be given pseudonyms or participant numbers for recording and reporting purposes. Moreover, only the research team who are bound to a confidentiality agreement will have access to the conversations. The written reflections and descriptions shared with researchers will be kept on a secure U of M server. Data collected in this study will be retained for potential comparative research studies. A summary of the study's results will be made available to you upon request.

Anything you share with me will remain confidential, and any identifying information will be anonymized.

What will happen to the information I collect about you after the study is over?

We will only need your email address, and if you choose to share your name, to send you the questionnaire and to send you the honorarium. I will not collect any other personally identifying information.

How will I compensate you for being part of the study?

Upon your completion of this study, you will receive a $25 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation for your time and sharing your experience with us. This will be emailed directly to you at the email you provide me with while setting up the questionnaire.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

Participation in this research study is at no cost to you.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is totally up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be involved in part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have questions about this research, you may contact the student researcher of this study:

Nadia Karizat, PhD Student
School of Information, University of Michigan
Email: nkarizat@umich.edu

The University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board has determined that this research is exempt from IRB oversight.

Your Consent

By clicking on the SUBMIT button you acknowledge that you have read this information and are willing to participate in this questionnaire study. You are also giving permission to me to read your written responses and what you share with us in the questionnaire. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without any penalty.

[Check Box] I have read this consent form and agree to participate in this study.

 E-mail address:
[SUBMIT]

 Consent to be Contacted for Participation in Future Research (Optional)

I give the researchers permission to keep my email address to contact me for potential future research projects related to this current project. **This is NOT required to participate in this study.** *You can click NO if you do not wish to be contacted for follow-up studies.*

*YES*_____   *NO*_____

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