COUNSELING
and
PSYCHOTHERAPY
with
ARABS and MUSLIMS

A Culturally Sensitive Approach

MARWAN DWAIRY

FOREWORD BY PAUL B. PEDERSEN

TEACHERS
COLLEGE
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Arab/Muslim Families in the United States

KHAWLA ABU-BAKER

Historically, the development of the identity of Arabs living in the United States has been influenced by many factors: (a) the reason for migration; (b) the type of relationship developed with mainstream Americans; (c) the official stance of American legislation toward Arab immigrants; (d) political developments in the Middle East; (e) the Islamic revolution in Iran (Abraham, 1983; Naff, 1983, 1985); and, most recently, (f) the terrorist events of September 11, 2001 (Bonnie & Hasan, 2004; Ibish, 2003; Zogby, 2001). Some of these factors reflect the interrelationship between immigrants and the American context, while others reflect the relationship between immigrants and the Middle Eastern context.

Very little has been written about the mental health of Arab immigrants in the United States (Abudabbeh, 1996; Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993; Meleis, 1981; Meleis & La Fever, 1984). However, it is believed that Arab Americans as a group, are misunderstood, misrepresented, and stereotyped (Jackson, 1997; Suleiman, 1988), with the result that they do not receive the right treatment in therapy (Erickson & Al-Tamimi, 2001).

CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The census of 2000 indicated that about 3.5 million Americans are of Arab descent. Also according to the census data, more than 80% of Arabs are U.S. citizens and 63% were born in the United States (El-Badry, 1994; Arab American Institute [AAI], 2005). Half the Arab immigrants are Christian and half are Muslim (AAI, 2005).

It is estimated that there are 8.5 million Muslims in America (Institute of Islamic Information and Education, 2005). While Arabs immigrated from the Middle East, Muslims immigrated from about 80 different countries. Unlike Arabs, non-Arab Muslims belong to a variety of ethnic groups and nations,

originating mostly in South Asia, Indonesia, and Iran. Thus they speak many different languages. The first immigrant Muslims arrived in America as slaves from Africa. The reasons for the recent mass Muslim immigration are: (a) ethnic persecution, such as in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya; (b) religious persecution, such as the Hindu-Muslim conflicts in India; (c) Islamism, such as in Iran, Sudan, and Pakistan; (d) anti-Islamism, in countries where the lives of individuals and groups are threatened by extremists; and (e) civil wars, such as in former Yugoslavia (Pipes & Duran, 2002).

Although concentrated in 11 states, Arabs live in all 50 states; however, the overwhelming majority, about 94%, live in major metropolitan areas such as Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Detroit. The Arab Americans are younger than any other ethnic group, with more than 30% of the whole population being under 18 years old. They are among the more highly educated immigrants: 40% of the Arab American population have at least a bachelor's degree, and 17% have a postgraduate degree. These percentages are twice those found among the American population as a whole. The average income of Arabs is higher than the American average ($47,000 per annum compared to $42,000). Most of the adults, about 64%, are part of the labor force: 88% work in the private sector, and the rest are government employees. However, Arabs tend to hold different occupations in different cities. El-Badry (1994) found that among those who reside in Washington, D.C., and Anaheim, California, 23% are executives, while 18% of Houston's Arab residents are professionals. Cleveland's Arab residents work mainly in sales; in Bergen-Passaic, New Jersey, and in New York City the emphasis is on administrative jobs.

THE WAVES OF IMMIGRATION

By the end of the nineteenth century, Arabs had started to immigrate to the United States, driven by curiosity, a sense of adventure, famine, political events, and religious and cultural considerations (Naff, 1985). The course of their immigration is divided into three major waves which took place over a period of about a century.

1. The first wave, from 1880–1914, consisted mainly of Christians, who emigrated from what is now Syria and Lebanon for political, economic, and religious reasons (Kayal, 1983; Khalaf, 1987; Naff, 1985). This group integrated into the mainstream society and economy. They westernized their names, learned English, and adopted the American lifestyle (Halaby, 1987; Suleiman, 1987).
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in the Middle East caused an increase in Arab immigration to the United States. These immigrants made their ethnic and political identity their main concern (Zogby, 1990), preferring to reside in "Arab ethnic ghettos" where several Arab families lived in the same building or neighborhood. This wave created concentrated Arab neighborhoods such as in Dearborn, Michigan, where the immigrants tried to duplicate the natural life of their home countries (A. Farag, personal communication, February 1997).

3. The third wave started after the Arab defeat in the 1967 war between Israel and the Arab world and came to a halt after September 11, 2001. These immigrants were escaping political instability and searching for better economic opportunities (Abraham, 1995; Naff, 1983). The last immigrants to arrive in the United States as a national group consisted of Iraqi immigrants from Iraq after the Iraqi-Iranian war in the 1980s and the Gulf war in the mid-1990s (Kira, 1999). In comparison with other immigrants and the regular population, this group of immigrants suffered from a high rate of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse, as well as a high rate of somatization (Jamil et al., 2002).

The First Wave

Ninety per cent of the first wave of immigrants were Christian. Living in the Arab world, Christians were typical Middle Eastern people, whose traditions and culture were very similar to that of the Muslim population. However, they were distinguished by their religious, economic, and political links with the West, as a result of their openness to the Christian civilization, especially in Italy, Greece, and France (Kayal, 1983). During the Ottoman era, they were discriminated against as a religious minority; moreover, they were sought out and massacred in some villages. After the year 1850, Arabs developed an unrealistic picture of the wealth of the new countries in the Americas from stories told by European merchants (Suleiman, 1987) and by a few Arab immigrants who returned home to tell about their adventures. The Chicago fair held in 1893 and that of Saint Louis in 1906 also encouraged merchants and others to migrate (Khalaf, 1987). In migration, the educated and intellectual groups found an escape from the repressive political atmospheres.

Christian peasants, merchants, and intellectuals from Syria and Lebanon started arriving in America in 1869 at the rate of 2 persons a year; by 1913 the rate of immigration had risen to about 9,200 persons a year (Khalaf, 1987). The motive of those who fled their country of origin for economic reasons was to amass wealth in the United States and return home. As the economic and political situation in their homeland worsened due to high taxes and conscription in

the army of the Ottomans, Christians and Muslims considered immigration as a solution for all their problems (Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1985). Today, immigrants from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine make up the majority of immigrants from Arab countries; however, all Arab countries are represented in the mosaic of Arab immigrants (McCarus, 1994; AAI, 2005).

In the Middle East, Islam is a lifestyle for Arab individuals (Abu-Baker, in press; Lovel, 1983; Patai, 1983). However, many Arabs, especially the Christians, grasp the depth of the influence of Islam on their daily life only after they immigrate. Then they become more traditional and/or religious than they used to be in their home country. This tendency is a reaction to the intense influences of the acculturation they experience. They try to reflect their appreciation of their own norms by focusing on maintaining the traditional structure of the family. Arab families are expected to treat parents with sacred respect and revere their elders and take care of them when in need; they expect unchallenged obedience from women and children, abstain from sex outside wedlock, and maintain segregation between the sexes. The main building block of society is the family, not the individual. Arabs identify themselves by their ties to their extended families, who are expected to provide all economic, political, social, and psychological support to their members. In this kind of family, individuals are required to put the family's interest before their own, and when they do not, they either are accused of selfishness or struggle with self-blame.

Most of the first immigrants were men. Lebanese immigrants tended to go back to Lebanon to marry and return to the United States with their wives. Immigrants from other Arab countries remained unmarried for the most part, especially Muslims who found it difficult to marry Christian women because of religious intolerance and the local attitudes against the Middle Eastern immigrant group (Bilgé & Aswad, 1996). The 1990 census data indicate that 54% of Arabs in America are men, compared to 49% of the total U.S. population (El-Badry, 1994).

While in the Middle East, Christians survived as a minority by virtue of nurturing their congregations. In the United States, with its Protestant majority, orthodox Christians once more felt that they were in the minority. As a result of their small number, Syrian Eastern Orthodox assimilated with Roman Catholics. Also Malketes and Maronites, who belonged to the Eastern Orthodox Church, surrendered their autonomy to the Roman Catholic Church. In some cases, Syrian Eastern Orthodox established some parishes with other immigrants from Greece and Russia. Very few ethnic Eastern parishes exist today in the United States (Kayal, 1983).

Later Waves

The second wave of immigrants emphasized their nationalism rather than their religion. This immigration occurred immediately after World War II, which,

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together with the establishment of Israel in 1948, caused turmoil in the Arab world. Palestinian immigrants who were forced into exile from their homeland sought to immigrate to the United States. Other groups from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq immigrated for political, economic, and mobility reasons. These groups were composed of people who already had capital and college degrees or wanted to acquire them. They were ethnically conscious and politically vocal, a tendency that helped them gradually to become a visible minority in the United States (Zogby, 1990).

The difference in the ethnic and political conscience of each wave of immigrants reflects the change in the geopolitical map in the Arab World. For example, at the time of the first wave of immigration, Arab countries were ruled by Ottomans, who were Muslims but not Arabs. Thus they encouraged an Islamic identity rather than a nationalist one, since they themselves were a minority in the region. During World War I, the political map of the Arab World changed and with it the borders of some countries. For example, people who lived in what is known today as Syria and Lebanon all called themselves Syrians during the Ottoman period. After the British and French occupation of and mandate over the area, what is known today as Syria, Lebanon, and Israel was called Larger Syria (Kayal, 1983). After World War II, Arab countries gained their independence from foreign regimes and soon national and pan-Arab movements emerged. A new sociopolitical Arab identity developed, especially in Egypt, under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser. People who migrated to the United States after this period came with a crystallized ethnopolitical identity (Abraham, 1983; Abraham, Abraham, & Aswad, 1983; Naff, 1983).

THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE AMERICAN SYSTEM

When Arab individuals immigrate to improve their own individual life conditions, they are expected to support other family members who follow in their footsteps.

In one example, Fareed, a garage mechanic, summarized the circumstances that influenced his decision to immigrate:

> Everything went wrong. After 1967 you could not find good jobs [in Jordan] because of the Palestinian refugees who had been expelled from the West Bank. The doors were closed in my face. I worked for 15 hours a day, but by the end of the month I had no money to feed my children. Then I realized that I had no way to make a living in my country. I decided to follow my brother Shareef, who has become a rich professor in America.

Thus Fareed followed his brother Shareef to the United States, following the pattern of Arab immigration whereby a "family chain" is formed. The al-

ready settled immigrants help settle their relatives and friends and people from the same village or neighborhood, who in turn help other friends and relatives. This pattern of migration was established by the first wave of immigrants, who settled in communities with village and religious ties, restructuring some of their homeland relationships (Abraham, Abraham, & Aswad, 1983; Conklin & Faires, 1987; Naff, 1985).

After immigration, Arabs seek to live in communities with other Arabs. However, they work within the American system and send their children to American schools, both public and private. These encounters create challenges for individuals and tension within families. Regarding mastery of culture and language, the immigrants may be divided into two major groups: the academic immigrants who are more acquainted with American culture and language, and the workers who for the most part ignore both. Daily life in America seems so strange and different from life in the societies of origin that many parents minimize their encounter with the social life of the Americans.

Some of the problems that face Arabs and Muslims in the United States relate to the fact that they are now living in a non-Islamic country. Many Islamic religious laws and restrictions do not suit the rhythm of American daily life. For instance, Muslims have to pray five times daily at prescribed times; religious Muslims find it difficult when schools and workplaces do not consider this need. Another important issue is the Islamic dietary laws which forbid the consumption of pork and alcohol, and all foods containing them; eating improperly slaughtered meat is also forbidden (Haddad, 1983). Economically, religious Muslims abstain from receiving loans on which they have to pay interest, since this is considered a sin in Islam; thus they are not able to buy houses or start new businesses in the United States because they are not able to borrow interest-free money (Noorzoy, 1983). Finally, adult Muslim women have to observe a strict, modest dress code. They cover their body in accordance with the degree of their religious fundamentalism and their traditional background (Haddad, 1983).

From the mental health point of view, many aspects of the encounter with the American system cause stress; some of these issues will be discussed in the following sections.

Difficulties with the Language

When they arrive in the United States, even educated people find the effort to master the English language and the American dialect, as most Americans expect foreigners to do, very stressful. Many people therefore feel handicapped and experience a decrease in their self-esteem, something they had never experienced in their home country. In their country of origin they had been perceived by themselves and others as experts in English. People who fail to learn English

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in the United States are unable to acquire a driver's license, since they cannot understand the written exam or read the street signs. They are also unable to understand American TV or answer phone calls or use the phone to arrange their business. Those who do not know the language are not able to read the ingredients on the merchandise. Failure to master the language will lead to failure in the citizenship test, causing the family's expulsion from the country. Their degree of mastery of the English language determines whether Arab workers are able to work directly with Americans or not (for instance, working in the kitchen or with clients in a restaurant). For women who have no previous knowledge of English, this ignorance leads to isolation from American life, to being closed within the Arab cultural ghetto, and to total dependence on husband and children in all encounters with the host country. For immigrants, therefore, proficiency in English is the first step toward regaining self-esteem and experiencing relief from the continuous tension. English is also needed for communication purposes, for passing the citizenship test, and for maintaining an active life. Although the work environment may enable the immigrant to learn the language, most immigrants think that they have to master the language before progressing further.

Legal Status

Before September 11, 2001, many Arab/Muslim immigrants arrived in America on a tourist visa, decided to stay, and then had to try to gain legal status. Lack of legal status influences the mental health of the illegal immigrant families and their families back home, as well as the type of work adults may do. Subsequently, it impacts the families' lifestyle and well-being. Most illegal immigrants moved to America to join other family members, friends, or relatives. A few Arab immigrants use marriage, either real or fictitious, to gain permanent status in the country. Others pay immigration lawyers substantial amounts to gain permission to work and attain permanent status. When illegal immigrants marry women from other Arab countries, these wives live in the United States as illegal citizens. They are not allowed to give their husbands or children the right to citizenship status in their home countries. In cases where abusive husbands divorce their wives against their will (a religious ceremony which is not filed in the American system) and kidnap their children, these women are left without any ability to file complaints to the authorities against the ex-husbands, since they lack legal citizenship. In other cases, parents leave some or all of their children in their home country to convince the authorities to issue a tourist visa to the United States. Upon their arrival in America, they start trying to gain their permanent status. A couple who arrived with their 3-year-old boy has not been able to see the daughter, who was 10 months old when they left her behind in their home country, for the last 4 years. Meanwhile, they both work to cover

legal expenses. Many illegal immigrants live with the feeling of being besieged; since they would not be able to reenter the United States, they are unable to visit their home country, sometimes for the rest of their lives.

Work

Illegal Arab/Muslim immigrants are not able to find jobs in their professions since they lack the proper documents. This causes a lessening of their social and professional status. They are forced to work in the family business and accept minimum wages. As a direct result, they have to work an average of 15 hours a day, which in turn creates family tension and frustration. On the other hand, wives who are left alone with their children feel lonely and frustrated, and lose the sense of companionship in their marriages.

Families who immigrate gradually as nuclear families and then gather together in the United States as an extended family establish family businesses into which several brothers and/or brothers-in-law invest all their collective capital and divide the labor among themselves. In cases where the business succeeds, all family members benefit from the common effort and the family-based business. However, when all the adults are experiencing severe tension caused by the immigration adjustment, working together becomes an emotionally charged activity. In cases of financial problems, such as crippling debts or business bankruptcy, all extended family members suffer without having an outside safety net.

Social Status

Survival needs in the host country often force immigrants to work in jobs very different from their professional training, a situation which deprives them of the social status they had in their homeland. These people feel ashamed and humiliated by the work they do. In order to save face, they prefer to reframe the type of jobs they do, telling others that they work as a "supermarket manager" or a "business accountant," respectful professions that enable immigrants to claim a higher status. One couple who immigrated to the United States in the hope of curing the wife's infertility was very rich and had belonged to the upper class in Jordan. Back home the husband had worked as an airplane mechanic; in the United States the only work he could find was in a grocery store. The wife had been a high school teacher in Jordan, but in the United States became a baby sitter, helping with the housekeeping. Both concealed their jobs from their family of origin in Jordan.

Anonymity in America is a psychological as well as a social situation which is alien to the traditional lifestyle in small communities in the Arab countries; there it is enough to mention one's last name to gain respect and preferential

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treatment, while in the United States one must follow another path to better social status, such as education, work, and wealth. For example, two sisters, who belonged to a sacred clan in Morocco with genealogy going back to the prophet Mohammad, were frustrated by the fact that in the United States they belonged to the lower class. Poor immigrant Arab men asked for their hands in marriage, making them feel that they had been deprived of their former social status. They were told, "If you want to stay here, you have to understand the new social conditions; otherwise, go back home."

Although the standard of living in America is much higher than in most countries in the Middle East, people measure themselves by both their social status back home and their actual social status in America. Whether their status is legal or not, in the first few years in their new country immigrants may feel a decrease in their social status that affects their mental health. Career women in particular feel the status change and suffer deeply from it. They are not able to work in grocery stores as men do. And usually they have small children whom they cannot put in day care because they do not have the financial ability.

Families who live in poor neighborhoods and send their children to public school often prohibit their children from socializing with other American children, because they believe that poor Americans have very low social values that may influence Arab children, leaving them with bad manners.

Social Life

The structure of the family's relationships, the type of work the adults do, and the distance between households all determine the type of social life a family enjoys. Arab people in the Middle East have a very tightly knit social life. They often meet with family members and neighbors on a daily basis. In the United States it is difficult to continue this custom because of the long distances and protracted work hours. Arab children are completely isolated from peer social life and from after-school activities. Arabs therefore look for ways to meet more often, such as moving to live together in the same neighborhood and meeting at an Islamic center once a week for daylong activities. Extended families who immigrate together face fewer problems regarding their social life than others, and their children keep each other company. The individualistic lifestyle is very strange to the interdependent Arab society. In America, Arabs see the lack of an active social life as a personal failure, since individuals who keep themselves aloof from social life are believed to have psychological problems. Loneliness is the primary feeling described by women who immigrated without their extended families, especially during the first year.

Moslem women who take their children to an Islamic center to learn Arabic and religion meet each Saturday for about 4 to 6 hours. Women tend to socialize in accordance with family or regional ties. For many women, especially those

who live within extended families, the weekly visit to the Islamic center is the only social activity they have to enjoy. Other immigrants may find a refuge for social meetings in Arab organizations, clubs, or societies. Such organizations organize cultural events and invite singers and lecturers from the Arab world.

Part of the social life of Arab immigrants is accepting guests from their home countries as visitors. The average duration of each visit varies between 2 weeks and 3 months, while some guests may stay up to 6 months. During such visits all their friends in the community pay visits to the family and invite them with their guest to a feast. These visits are opportunities to refresh the children's Arabic language, norms, and values.

Tension Between Spouses

Women who immigrate from the Middle East or other Muslim countries to marry immigrant men have high expectations of living in the United States. However, when these couples face the real challenges involved, most women feel betrayed. They look to their husbands to fulfill their promises of a dream life in America. Couples who immigrated according to a mutual decision share their immigration problems better than others because the immigration challenges become a family project that the couple has to work on together. A major problem is the long hours the husband, or both husband and wife, must invest in their new jobs and new responsibilities, which leave them with no energy or time to support each other as a couple.

Inhibition of Interfaith or Intercultural Marriages

Parents control their teenage children's behavior and relations, discouraging social or intimate relations with non-Arabs. Even Christian Arabs who felt themselves to be a minority in the Middle East feel more Arab than Christian in the United States. This group also prefers their children to marry Arab rather than non-Arab Christians. Marriage between Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims (Indian or Chinese for instance) is also discouraged. Religious centers and Arab organizations offer opportunities for parents and individuals to look for a good matrimonial match. With all the restrictions that exist, it is more often that Arab men marry outside the faith and culture than Arab women.

Teenagers

Teenagers who try to imitate their American peers face constant correction of their conduct; parents try to efface all non-Arab behaviors and norms. Boys and girls experience ongoing arguments with their parents regarding their rights, especially when they compare themselves with American teenagers. In response,

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parents forbid any out-of-classroom encounters with American children in an attempt to minimize the influence of American culture on them (Barazangi, 1996; Swanson, 1996). Furthermore, they send their children to Islamic centers or to Christian Arab congregations to learn Arabic and religion, either on a daily basis or for a few concentrated hours on weekends. Parents, community centers, and religious centers are enlisted to help isolate children from American culture and to influence their socialization in congruence with the ethos of Arabic and Islamic cultures. An ultimate tool parents use to control teenagers who rebel against their norms is sending them back to their extended family in their home-land for an unlimited time to "fix" their behavior. To persuade young Muslims to marry within the faith, parents send their children to their home countries to meet their relatives almost every summer, and encourage socializing in the Is-lamic centers and summer camps. In addition, imams mediate between single men and women; and the community encourages marriage advertisements.

THE COLLECTIVE SELF

External events in the Middle East, internal events and the experiences of Arab immigrants during the process of acculturation, and political events in the world all combine to form the self-identity of Arabs in America. The sense of a collec-tive self has undergone a major shift since the terrorist attack on the United States in 2001 by Bin Laden's followers, and is reflected in the activities of Arab organizations.

Before September 11, 2001

People who immigrated from what is known today as Syria and Lebanon were called by immigration authorities either Syrian, Turk, Ottoman, or Armenian (Khalaf, 1987; Suleiman, 1988). After World War I, immigrants of the first wave debated whether to go back "home" or to make America "home." Some Arab voices started writing, in their established newspapers, about the necessity to assimilate and stop living, behaving, and feeling as outsiders of the American society (Halaby, 1987; Suleiman, 1987, 1994). Arabs started expressing and discussing their suffering regarding the American mainstream rejection and dis-crimination against them (Conklin & Faires, 1987; Halaby, 1987). Abraham (1995), Fa'ik (1994), Halaby (1987), Nobles and Sciarra (2000), and Stockton (1994) highlight the discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice that were estab-lished and expanded by the American media against Arabs and Muslims. The broken English and poor appearance of the pioneer Arab pack peddlers in the late nineteenth century, and the Arab-Israeli wars in the twentieth century are some of the main reasons for the rapidly growing prejudice.

After World War I, Arabs, feeling rejected by and isolated from the American institutions and mainstream citizens, started to reconstruct their own ethno-religious institutions. The Christians established parishes and organizations on the basis of religious affiliation. They also founded institutions, mainly on the basis of homeland geopolitical gathering (Kayal, 1983). Arab media always prospered among Arab immigrants. Between 1898 and 1929, a total of 102 Arabic-language newspapers and periodicals came into existence, but few have survived. Some English-language newspapers also developed, serving second generation immigrants (Halaby, 1987). These newspapers helped connect immigrants to events in the Middle East and influenced the Arabs living in the West to maintain the Arabic language, to discuss the communities' concerns, and to criticize Arab or Western politics. It is common today to find Arab newspapers divided into two sections, one in Arabic and another in English, addressing the different needs of the community.

After the 1967 war between Israel and the Arab countries, large numbers of highly politicized immigrants arrived in the United States. They soon established their own newspapers, magazines, and television and radio shows. Arabic theaters for adults and for children were also established (Halaby, 1987). The goal of this wave of media and theater was to teach, crystallize, and maintain Arab identity in America among Muslim and Christian immigrants.

Barazangi's (1996) research conclusions about the identity of Arabs in North America showed that 82% of the parents in the sample identified themselves mainly with their home country. Eleven percent identified themselves with pan-Arabism notions, and 6% with Islam. When the interviewees were asked how they introduce their identity to non-Muslims, 11% answered "Arab"; the majority answered "American"; and no one answered "Muslim." When children were asked about their identity, 35% identified themselves as being of Arab origin and 29% as Muslim; 18% identified themselves with their home country; and 18% responded "none of the above."

Despite the fact that Arab people in the United States identify themselves as Arabs, "Awlad 'Arab-Children of Arabs," or by the country they migrated from, such as Syrians or Lebanese (Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1985), political and community leaders coined the concept "Arab American" in the early 1980s, which identified all immigrants from the Arab-speaking world. Many organizations have been established around the concept (Zogby, 1990).

Arab identity in America was also influenced by their rejection by American mainstream society. As a result of the media's evoking stereotypes against Arabs and Muslims in the United States, especially after World War II (Abraham, 1995; Bilgé & Aswad, 1996; Stockton, 1994), Arab immigrants were marginalized from political and social integration into the mainstream of society. They soon realized that the only way to exist was within cultural and/or physical ghettos. This reaction was strengthened by family and community life in most

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Islamic and Arab groups (Abraham, 1983). Muslims started utilizing functions of Islamic institutions such as mosques and Islamic centers for teaching the Arabic language and the religion of Islam. Immigrants from previous genera- tions also supported this tendency (Haddad, 1983).

After September 11, 2001

Arabs and Muslims have reported an increase in prejudice and discrimination encounters with white Americans since September 11, 2001, a new circumstance which has had a direct influence on their self-esteem and mental health. Arab women who wear traditional dress have become afraid to appear veiled in pub- lic. Some Arabs were hurt by what were recognized as "hate crimes" (Ibish, 2003; Zogby, 2001). Immediately after the attack on the World Trade Center, Arab Americans expressed their worry about the discrimination against them, and reported that they or others whom they knew had experienced the discrimi- nation directly (Zogby, 2001). It was reported by the Arab American Anti- Discrimination Committee (ADC) that 700 violent acts were committed against Arabs during the 2 months after September 11. The succeeding year the ADC reported a 400% increase in employment discrimination. After analysis of preju- dice research literature, Bonnie and Hasan (2004) concluded that a mediated relation between psychological distress and discrimination experiences exists. In their study, they found that 53% of the sample was treated in a discriminatory manner for being of Arab descent; 47% experienced racism against them; while 46% experienced being called racist names. The researchers concluded that it is important for therapists who work with Arab clients to be aware of the effect of discrimination on psychological well-being and to find ways to ease the situa- tion, either in the clinic or via the proper organizations.

Arab Organizations

Since the attack in 2001, Arabs and Muslims in the United States have under- stood that they have to change the prejudices against them. To reach that goal they are using religious, national, ethnic, professional, and political Arab and/or Islamic organizations, professional Web sites dedicated to introducing Arabs or Islam in a positive manner, and Arab satellite TV stations broadcasting in En- glish for the American audience.

These organizations have a long history; Arabs learned long ago that the best way to face the sociopolitical life in the United States is as a group via organizations. This tendency was responsible for the shift from a guiding princi- ple of self-imposed distancing from the host country to a strategy of participat- ing as equal citizens. Various ethnic religious organizations were established to organize the meeting of immigrants under the same roof. An Islamic association

was established in Highland Park, Michigan, in 1919 and in Detroit, Michigan, in 1922. The Young Men's Muslim Association was established in Brooklyn, New York, in 1923, and the Arab Banner Society in Quincy, Massachusetts, in 1930. The first mosques were built in Detroit in 1919 (Abraham, 1983), in North Dakota in 1920, and in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1934. In 1954 the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., was opened to serve Muslims who resided in the area, as well as Muslim diplomatic corps who lived and worked in the capital (Haddad, 1983). In 1983 Haddad estimated that there were about 400 mosques and Islamic associations in the United States, while 8 years later Pristin and Dart's (1991) estimate was between 600 and 900 mosques. Haddad explains the source of the mosques: "Because Islam does not have a hierarchical structure in which organization is imposed from above, these institutions were of necessity begun by individuals at the local level; participation in them remains optional" (p. 68).

Among other organizations, there are those established by Muslim students such as the Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA), which emphasizes the pan-Arab notion that rejected the religious divisions among Arabs, since its ideological essence emphasized the Arab nationality over other kinds of identities, such as citizenship or religion. The Muslim World League began in Mecca, Saudi Arabia; however, since 1974 it has served as a nongovernmental representative in the United Nations and consultant to UNICEF and UNESCO. All organizations and associations work toward propagating Islam (*da'wah*), publishing Islamic magazines and studies, organizing and sponsoring conferences, organizing pilgrimages (*haj*) to Mecca, sponsoring the building of new mosques, and maintaining the salaries of the religious leaders (imams) brought to the United States from the Arab world (Haddad, 1983). After Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism, Bilgé and Aswad (1996) believe that Islam is becoming a significant fourth religion in the United States. It is important to conceive of all the above organizations as components of the support system, established by previous immigrants to foster identity and provide sociocultural needs for themselves and future immigrants.

Since 1967, several national Arab American organizations have been established, mainly by founders who came with the second wave. These organizations served as political movements and "created a cultural bond across the immigrant generations" (Zogby, 1990, p. ix). Among these organizations are the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), and the Arab American Institute (AAI). There are also several national professional organizations such as the Arab American Medical Association (AAMA) and Arab American Business and Profession Association (AABPA). A wider list of Islamic organization in the United States is available in Waugh, Abu-Laban, and Qureshi (1983). Since September 11, 2001 organizations in the United States and in the Arab World try to ameliorate their reputation and role both in the United States and around the world.