

**A STUDY OF ACCULTURATION OF AN ARAB-MUSLIM
COMMUNITY IN DEARBORN**

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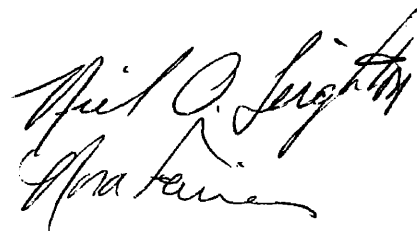
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Handwritten signatures of Neil O. Leighton and Nora Faires. The signature of Neil O. Leighton is written in cursive and is positioned above the signature of Nora Faires, which is also in cursive.

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CHAPTER I

ARAB- AMERICAN BACKGROUND IN PERSPECTIVE.

The history of America has been that of absorbing many peoples. But in comparison to other immigrant groups the number of Americans of Arab descent is small. While the Europeans were coming to the United States in large numbers, the Arab world lived in relative political and intellectual isolation imposed by Ottoman domination.

In fact, as stated in the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, Arabs did not come to America first; rather, the Americans went to the Arabs-both as missionaries and as tourists in 1820. Soon afterward, a number of Catholic and Protestant missions and schools sprung -up throughout the area that is now Lebanon and Syria. The American University of Beirut, formerly the Syrian Protestant College, continues to operate to this day, attesting to the influence of the early missionary presence. In addition, the Protestant missionaries started to convert the "infidels" of the Levant to Christianity, and translated the Christian Bible into Arabic.

As tourists, Americans visited the religious sites in Jerusalem and throughout the Middle-East. Marc Twain who was one of the visitors in 1867, wrote in Innocents Abroad, that "the Arabs he happened upon reminded him much of Indians, watching the innocents' every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly Indian, and which makes a white man so nervous,

and uncomfortable and savage that he wants to exterminate the whole tribe." " These people are naturally good-hearted and intelligent". he goes on to say," and with education and liberty, would be a happy and contented race." (Harper's Magazine 1991:57)

Despite the impact of American missionaries and tourists, few Arabs emigrated to the United States prior to 1900 , and, of those who did, very little is known. Nomenclature is one problem; statistics is another. Official statistics are clearly distorted. In immigration records until 1899 and in census records until 1920, all Arabs were recorded together with Turks, Armenians, and others, under "Turkey in Asia". After 1920 the increase in their numbers warranted the separate classification "Syria", but religious differences were not noted. Official records have been slow to keep up with political changes; until recently for example, non-Syrian Arabs might be counted as "other Asian" and North African Arabs as " Other African". Since 1948 the Palestinians, who account for much of the post-World War II Arab immigration, have been classified simply as refugees, or as being from Palestine or Israel, or as nationals of the country of their last residence. (Naff 1988:128)

Fortunately, something is known about two men who are allegedly the first Arab immigrants to the United States; Antonio Bishallany and Hadji Ali, than was commonly recorded. Bishallany came to America as a missionary. He left Salima Lebanon in 1854, carrying letters of introduction from American missionaries he had befriended in his country. He lived in New york for two years

before he contracted tuberculosis and died. He was buried in Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery by friends who had engraved a lion, a serpent and lamb on his tombstone to symbolize his courage, wisdom and gentle disposition. In 1954, Arab communities across the U.S. celebrated the centennial of the arrival of Bishallany. (Arabs in America. An essay (AAUG) p.275) Hadji Ali, was invited by the United States Army to test the usefulness of camels for the purpose of transportation and communication in the arid regions of the Southwest. He arrived in the United States in 1854. Although the venture met with success, the project was abandoned when the Civil War broke out. Hadji Ali, who was nicknamed "Hi Jolly", remained however, prospecting for gold, marrying an American girl and raising a family. In his later years, he traveled throughout the southwest, telling stories of the camels and the caravans. He died at the age of 73, and his tomb—a camel perched atop a pyramid—is in Quentiza, Arizona. (Ibid., p.276)

Between the arrival of these two earliest settlers and the first important wave of Arab immigrants in 1900, what may have sparked Arab migration to the United States, was the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. This event, a celebration of America's centennial, included exhibits from all over the world. The Ottoman sultan send his subjects to exhibit their native arts and crafts in the Turkish Pavilion. In the process, they got their first taste of American wealth. Returning home attired like Americans, and wearing gold jewelry, was the best proof that immigrants could find instant wealth in America. They told their compatriots about job

availability in booming towns. Their success stories inspired hundreds of ambitious men and women especially those from farms and villages to make the trip. By the 1890s, groups of up to 200 people from single towns or villages traveled to the New World together. (Naff 1988:34)

The most evident reason for migrating was economic in nature. The aridity of the soil in the Middle East and the lack of industrialization, especially in Lebanon, had created a long-lasting problem of widespread poverty. In addition, when the Suez Canal opened in 1869, establishing accessible trade routes to the Orient, The Middle Eastern silk industry faced new competition that eventually caused depressed conditions. The previous factors as well as political repression and religious persecution, motivated the migration of thousands of Syrians and Lebanese. Both Muslim and Christian Arabs emigrated from the Middle East; although prior to 1900, ninety per cent were Christians. (Miller 1976:264)

The Muslims feared that they would be unable to maintain their traditions in a Western Christian society. Islam they felt, would face problems in America. It would be hampered by American civil laws which are different from Islamic laws governing divorce, alimony, child custody and support, marriage etc. Islamic law is derived from the teachings of the Quran, which defines God's way for mankind. Consequently by living in the United States, the Muslims would have to abide by American law which is in contradiction with the will of God. In addition, the Muslims saw American culture as overindulgent and materialistic in contrast to

Islamic ideology .

The first major waves of Arab immigration took place in the periods of 1900-1912 and 1930-1938. During those years approximately 250,000 Arabs, mainly of Syrian and Lebanese origin, settled in the United States.(ibid.,) The early immigrants were not well-educated, and they often struggled hard to achieve financial success in grocery stores, as peddlers, and later in restaurants and real estate. They came intending to stay in the United States only temporarily, hoping to make their fortunes and to return to their native village where they could lead lives of relative ease. Few, actually, returned to their homeland.

The first wave of immigrants scarcely perceived of themselves as being Arabs; Arab nationalism was in its beginning stage, and their identities lay within their cities of origin or religious affiliations.

A second wave of immigrants followed the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Though U.S. immigration statistics list only 4,806 strictly "Palestinian" immigrants from 1948 to 1967, tens of thousands more immigrated from other lands of first refuge. Some came directly from the newly created Israel;(to escape being treated like third-class citizens), some after spending time in exile or in camps in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and the Jordanian-occupied West Bank.(Orfalea 1988:140)

Although the first wave of Arab immigrants came to the United States for economic reasons, the second wave would not have come had it not been for the political deterioration in their country.

The Arab immigrants who have arrived in the United States since World War II differ in many important ways from those who came earlier, but they share some of the same motivations. They too had planned to make money and return to their native land. But this is where the similarities end. Unlike their predecessors who were farmers and uneducated in their homeland, the new immigrants had college degrees or were intending to get them in this country. Also unlike the first wave of arab immigrants who were Christians, the newcomers were Muslims.

Even at this stage, affiliations were based on religious or regional identification. Pan-Arabism was in its infancy, and there was still no feeling of being Arab-Americans.

The period between 1967 to the present, is considered to be the third wave of Arab immigration to the United States. The 250,000 Arab immigrants from 1967 to 1985 shared much with those who came from 1948 to 1966. They were mostly Palestinians and professionals. (ibid., p.170)

What differentiates third wave immigrants from second wave immigrants is the fact that third wave is much larger than the second. Also those immigrants were not only fleeing Israeli aggression but also intra-Arab warfare. Those Iraqis, Lebanese, and Syrians, were not just leaving situations that had been shaken by change of rule, or new economic structures, as in Nasser's Egypt, they were leaving societies destroyed by great violence. (Orfalea:1988:177)

A 1994 article in American Demographics states that the 1990

census found 870,000 Americans who list an Arab country among their top two ancestries. Many feel that the census is too low. As stated earlier, prior to 1920 the census records were inconsistent. Consequently, some say there are close to three million Arab-Americans in the United States.(p.25)

Immigrants coming from Arab nations still represent less than 3 percent of all immigrants coming to the United States, but their numbers are growing. In 1992, more than 27,000 people from Arab nations immigrated to the United States-68 percent more than those who came ten years earlier. These figures do not include Palestinians migrating from Israel or from the occupied territory. Among the 78,400 immigrants who arrived between 1990 and 1992, 17,500 are from Lebanon. That is more than one in every five recent Arab immigrants. People from Egypt (13,300) and Jordan (12,700) each account for about one in six Arab immigrants. Those coming from Syria (8,700) ranked fourth, accounting for one in nine recent arrivals. And Iraq (7,400)ranked fifth, making up less than one in ten immigrants.(ibid., p.30)

The fastest-growing Arab-immigrants group is from Sudan. While they accounted for only 675 immigrants in 1992, that's nearly nine times more than the number that arrived ten years earlier. The number of people coming from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen all grew more than fourfold between 1982 and 1992. But the largest of these rapidly growing segments, people from Yemen, accounted for just 2,100 immigrants in 1992. They were fewer than 600 immigrants from Saudi Arabia, fewer than 200 from

the United Arab Emirates, and 59 from Qatar. Other nations that have at least doubled the number of immigrants that they send to America include Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain, and Kuwait.(ibid.,)

As with many other minorities, Arab Americans are a geographically concentrated group. Over two-thirds live in ten states; one-third live in California, New York, and Michigan. They are also more likely than other Americans to live in metropolitan areas. Thirty-six percent of Arab Americans live in ten metropolitan areas led by Detroit, New York, and Los Angeles-Long Beach.(ibid.,p.25,26)

Among the ten largest Arab-American metropolitan areas, Arab Americans have above-average incomes in all but Detroit and Anaheim. Following Washington D.C., the wealthiest Arab-American households are in Boston, Bergen-Passaic New Jersey, and Los-Angeles-Long Beach.(ibid.,)

Alix Naff documents that, between 1965 and 1976, 15 percent of Arab immigrants to the United States were professional and technical workers. This Arab "brain Drain" averaged about fifteen percent of Arab immigrants- from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. But the majority were once again Palestinian, entering the United States under the terms of the professional-preference clause in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.(Abraham 1983:24) On September 16, 1983, Middle East International reported that half of all Arab science and engineering PH.D.s had left the Arab world.(ibid.,)

One characteristic common to most Arab-Americans was a profound respect for education. The elder generation made many sacrifices to ensure the best education for their children; and a high proportion of second and third generation Arab-Americans entered the medical, legal or educational professions.

Arabs in general have been known to value intellectual advancement. Mathematics, optics, engineering, architecture, medicine, philosophy, veterinary medicine, astronomy, commerce and travel, are Arab contributions to Western Civilization.

Some of the Americans with Arab heritage who contributed to this nation include innovators in science and medicine like Dr. Michael DeBakey, the pioneer heart surgeon; Professor Elias Corey, winner of the 1990 Nobel Prize for chemistry, Dr. Farouk El Baz the geologist who participated in the planning and evaluation of NASA's Lunar Orbiter missions; and Christa McAuliffe the astronaut who perished aboard the Challenger.

In politics we find James Abourezk (former Senator from South Dakota); Victor Atiyeh (former Governor of Oregon); Nick Rahall and Mary Rose Oakar (Congresspersons) George Mitchell (Senate Majority Leader); John Sununu (White House Chief of Staff and former Governor of Massachusetts); Donna Shalala (President Clinton's Secretary of Health and Human Services); James Zogby (Vice President of the Rainbow Coalition); Helen Thomas (Dean of the White House press corps). and most recently Spencer Abraham who ran for the U.S. senate and won.

In academia, famous Arab Americans include, the late Philip

K. Hitti, a renowned scholar and professor at Princeton University; Edward Said a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University; radiologist Zuheir Mujahed teaches at Cornell University Medical School; George Atiyeh heads the Near East section of the Library of Congress; and Afaf Meleis is a dean of the School of Nursing at UC Medical Center in San Francisco. Another well-known Arab-American is consumer advocate Ralph Nader.

Perhaps the best known Arab-American writer is Khalil Gibran who came to the United States from Lebanon in 1894 when he was twelve years old. His educational experiences both in this country and Lebanon produced a uniquely bi-cultural and bi-lingual writer. The famous statement of President J.F.Kennedy "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country", was taken from the book Mirrors of the Soul by Khalil Gibran.

Dr Michael Shadid has made great contributions toward the establishment of co-operative hospitalization; and Vance Bourjaly has written novels that rank him among the important creative artists in the United States.

The 1990 census data shows that in general, Arab Americans are better-educated than the average American. The share who did not attend college is lower than average, and the share with master's degrees or higher is twice the average. Sixty-two percent of Arab Americans have been to college, compared with 45 percent of all Americans. Because a larger than average share of Arab Americans are highly educated people of working age, their work force rates are high. Eighty percent of Arab Americans aged 16 and older were

employed in 1990, compared with 60 percent of all American adults. (American Demographics/1994:25) (Graph Appendix C)

A majority of this educated elite are united in one organization. The Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG)- a national organization that is seeking to strengthen the bonds of understanding and friendship between the American and Arab peoples. The AAUG is also interested in the dissemination of accurate scientific, cultural and educational information about the Arab world; as well as finding a way by which Arabs in the homeland can find for alternatives to enable them to shape the future of their society.

As demonstrated, a sizable percentage of Arab-Americans today are professionals and intellectuals with high achievements. Unfortunately, Americans have been conditioned to view them as long-robed desert dwelling wandering Bedouins. The other myths that are perpetuated about them is that they are extremely wealthy, barbaric and uncultured, and they revel in acts of terrorism. Those stereotypes still prevail, but are refuted by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee that combats stereotyping of Arabs in the media and discrimination against Arab-Americans in employment, education, and political life.

CHAPTER II

THE ASSIMILATION OF ARAB-AMERICANS ON A NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL.

The first wave of Arab immigrants who came to the United States, became quickly assimilated. This is the reason for the scarcity of data. They adjusted to the American concept of "the melting pot". This was due to several factors: As stated previously, the early immigrants were not well-educated and they often struggled to achieve financial success in grocery stores, as peddlers, later in restaurants, and real estate. As peddlers, they learned English quickly through constant contact with native born Americans. Since language is the first agent of assimilation, this hastened acculturation.

When it came to religion, Christian Syrian churches were very few and far apart. Many communities went more than a generation without one. Some attended "American" churches, both Catholic and Protestant. If they were lucky enough to have a church, the newcomers Americanized several aspects of the service thus promoting assimilation.

The Muslim minority encountered even more problems. Although Muslims have no priesthood and can pray almost anywhere, the Imam (a religious leader) and the mosque are central to the believers to reinforce Islamic religion and the Arabic language. Mosques were almost non-existent in the United States; consequently, the newcomers lost the use of Arabic as well as their religion. Many

adopted Christian names, married non-Muslims and moved away from their small community.

In addition, the first wave of Arabs scarcely perceived of themselves as being Arabs; and Arab nationalism was in its infancy. Preserving their Arabic culture was not very important; succeeding in this country was. The restriction on immigration after 1924, also encouraged assimilation. There were no newcomers to reinforce their traditional values. "If political and economic events had not reactivated Arab immigration and an interest in Arab culture, Arab-Americans might have Americanized themselves out of existence". (Abraham 1983:23) In other words had it not been for the occupation of Palestine in 1948, the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, and the various political disruptions and wars in Lebanon, Iraq and North and South Yemen throughout the 70s and 80s, Arab nationalism, cultural, religious, and linguistic bonds with the Arab world would have disappeared.

Unlike the early Arab immigrants who over time have acculturated and assimilated, the post 1967 immigrants in the city of Dearborn Michigan, are largely unacculturated and unassimilated into mainstream American society. The previous generations of immigrants came here seeking economic opportunities. Many of the newcomers do not feel they are immigrants, but refugees escaping car bombs and "free-lance" militia. They often view their stay here as temporary. Their attitude toward assimilation is often hostile.

Many of the original Arab Muslim immigrants have moved to

this area when the Ford Motor Company lured many laborers by paying the unprecedented wage of five dollars a day for eight hours of work. The "five dollar" day was put into effect at this plant on January 12, 1914. The announcement declared that any worker at the plant would be paid five dollars per day, regardless of his color, religion, or original nationality. Although few Arab-Moslems came to the United States before 1914, the announcement was a basic factor of increasing their number. In addition, the non-discrimination policy applied by Ford, played an important role in attracting the Arab-Moslems. (Wasfi 1965:79,80) In the 1920s, as Ford expanded its operation from Highland Park, Dearborn's south end became the entry-settlement point for a vast influx of immigrants.

Many of those pioneers sent letters to their relatives and friends urging them to migrate to Dearborn. The latter heard of prosperous relatives who labored in factories or bought small stores and lived in enclaves preserving old-country culture. Of course the money they had been receiving from the United States convinced them that America was the land of opportunity. Pulled by this promise and pushed by the grim reality of their lives, immigrants created a "chain migration" from the Middle East to Dearborn that remains strong today. The first flow came in the period between 1918 and 1922, to work in the Rouge plant. The second flow of immigrants came to the community between 1930 and 1934. (Wasfi 1965: 81)

Many of those settlers have moved on, readily assimilating in

American society. They have become doctors, lawyers, and politicians. They have moved to Grosse Pointe and to Bloomfield and Farmington Hills. But for the second wave-most of whom live in the south end and the east side of Dearborn, assimilation has been much harder. Most Arab Muslims of that area, have resisted being incorporated into the dominant American culture and assume its values and social system. In short, they have been unwilling to be part of the "melting pot".

In my thesis I will attempt to analyze the profile of that community by exploring its acculturation, and by investigating such factors as to how this community retained many aspects of Middle East culture, such as preserving its own language, religion, communal institutions and ancestral culture. I will also examine the extent to which the environment of their host country has affected Arab immigrants traditional values. Most important I would like to offer some insights into a people and the problems they face as they deal with the clash of their culture with that of America.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The largest concentration of Arab Muslims in North America, 18,000 people- is found in the city of Dearborn, Michigan. By the 1960s, the south end had become half Arab with several villages having more people here than the Middle East. By the 1980s, because of the fluctuation in the automobile industry, east Dearborn's Arab community was no longer confined to the South end. A new influx of immigrants arrived, due to the Lebanese Civil War and the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. This triggered a new inflow of immigrants to the area surrounding Warren Avenue in east Dearborn. In a short period of time this area had become three times as large as the South end community. (Ahmed. East Dearborn- Passport To The World- May 1994)

This enigmatic subculture of Arab Americans is the topic of my study. The residents of this community share a common geographical origin, the Middle East, a common religious faith, Islam; a common location, the East and the Southend of Dearborn; they also share a common working class status, and a common language, Arabic.

When I embarked on this project in the spring of 1994, I soon realized that the material on this subject was very scarce. Compared to other ethnic groups, Arab-American literature is almost non- existent. No recent material concerning this subject is available. Consequently, to update what was available, I had to turn first to newspapers such as the Detroit Free Press, the

Detroit News and other publications. Secondly, I had to gather my own data through observation, field interviews, and unstructured interviews.

As an observer, I walked and drove around neighborhoods where Arab-Americans reside, went into stores, bakeries, restaurants, a bank with a complete Arabic staff, I also attended an Arabic cultural program sponsored by ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) and the Detroit Institute of Art.

I felt that a point of focus would be appropriate to analyze in detail the mechanism of acculturation. Consequently, women in the Dearborn community were selected to be the center of interest.

As a field interviewer, I interviewed forty women whom I had met at the ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) center in Dearborn. The majority I interviewed came to the center to attend English classes. The others worked at the center. I also interviewed a few women in their homes. The majority of my questions, and their results, (these are presented in Appendix A, and B) dealt with acculturation. Unstructured interviews also helped my research .

I chose women because they were both representative and more easily accessible than men. They graciously accepted my "stepping into their private lives". Initially, they were somewhat uptight, but they gradually relaxed and became less reticent about discussing various aspects of their lives. My interviews were focused, but at the same time conversational. We talked about other things too, although I guided the conversation toward the

questions that I needed to ask.

20 percent of the women I interviewed were Palestinians, 40 percent were Lebanese and 40 percent were Yemeni.

Acculturation as described by Marden and Meyer in Minorities in American Society ", is one of the sustaining processes whereby minorities are incorporated into the dominant culture. The term, when used to define a process, refers to the changes in individuals (and, if sharing the same experiences, groups of individuals) whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture". (p.35.)

My data proved that the Dearborn Arab-American community is only slightly impacted by the American culture. In large measure the immigrants are insulated from the larger American society. Living in Dearborn enables them to cushion the shock of adjusting from a rural to an urban and from a foreign to an American society. Most of their hometown religious and social practices are continuing without an appreciable break.

The factors which contribute to their unacculturation and which I will develop in my study are: the environment of the community, a large close knit family, the importance of an extended family, considerable social interaction among Arabs, religion as a basis of unity in the community, and the prevalence of Arabic language. These Arab-Americans have developed an "ethnic enclave" which insulates them from the larger American society. In short they have separated themselves in this "ghetto like" surrounding, keeping their contact with the Americans to a minimum.

CHAPTER IV

PHYSICAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNACCULTURATION OF THE ARAB- MUSLIM COMMUNITY

A. Arabic Environment.

The Southend.

If you take a walk through the streets of Dearborn, a south-by-southwest suburb of Detroit, you will see a little bit of the "Middle East in the Middle West". Many immigrants who come from the old country, find everything they need concentrated in one area. They are surrounded by familiar things which give them the assurance that they are not too far from their homeland. One can say that Dearborn has made homesickness obsolete.

The "Southend" of Dearborn is a ghetto-like geographical concentration. (Abraham, Aswad 1983:165.) Because of its isolation, Wiggle described the area in the following terms.

Upon entry into the Southend, an observer is immediately struck by its geographical isolation from the rest of Dearborn and Detroit. It is surrounded on three sides by large factories, and on a fourth side, it is enclosed by a park (and cemetery). (Aswad, ed., 1974:155)

Many of the pioneers who arrived in the 1920s to work in factories lived an isolated life. Those unskilled workers had no need to learn English. "Automation contributed to human isolation" (Ibid., p.158) Linguistic and occupational factors contributed to this "ghetto like" residential pattern. Presently, although many of Dearborn's Arab men do not work in the factory, (because of the fluctuation in the automobile industry)

some still have no incentive to learn English. Many of them work for Arab businesses, associate only with Arabs, therefore do not interact with Americans.

A vast majority of the respondents have been in the United States for several years, yet their English is still very elementary and they are attending first or second year English classes at the ACCESS Center.

The concentration of the majority of the community members was and still is around the Islamic mosque in the Southend. This section is at the very heart of the Arab community, where the new immigrants from Lebanon, Palestine, and Yemen, make it their home. Although this area is not as developed as the Warren Avenue area in East Dearborn, the inhabitants of the southend can find most of their necessities on Dix Avenue.

" The Arabian Villages", include authentic Middle-Eastern stores. All of the signs on the shops front are written in Arabic and English . Much of the talk in the street is Arabic. Most women wear the traditional outfit and most shopkeepers (not the employees) speak good English and are eager to serve their customers.

In those small strip plazas one can find bakeries, where different kinds of Arabic breads are baked in one's presence, so are meat pies, mana'eesh- a round, inch-thick bread with a topping of thyme, sumac (a tart spice) and olive oil; also cheese pies, and spinach pies. In the back room, women in their traditional costumes prepare for the bakers. There are also grocery stores

with shelves stocked with a large variety of Middle Eastern cooking ingredients—from canned tahini to fresh grains, Arabic cheese, also herbs and spices, olive oils, Arabic coffee etc. In addition, fresh produce is available for everything to make an Arabic meal, as well as "Halal" chicken and meat markets." Halal" means that the chicken or the beef in those stores is slaughtered according to Muslim belief. That is, the animals were not fed any pork derivatives, and when slaughtered it is done in such a way as to be as painless as possible to the animals, while letting the blood drain out.

In addition to their food demands, those who live in the South End, can find clothing, housewares, drug stores, video stores, a travel agency, hair salons, restaurants, and the very important social places for men: the coffee shops. One for the Yemeni men, one for the Lebanese, and one for the Palestinian men.

Women do not patronize those "clubs". They are strictly male oriented. It is Islamic tradition that women should not sit with men in public. In addition to playing backgammon or cards for entertainment and relaxation, the coffeehouses are centers of circulating news. The latest social news can be heard at the gatherings, as well as political debates, all in Arabic, while sipping Turkish coffee or tea, or freshly squeezed juice.

For all of my interviewees, the Southend offers everything the community desires within a walking distance. They feel there is no need for them to go anywhere else and most of them do not. They stay close to home in an environment they feel comfortable with,

amongst family, relatives, and friends. They are not dispersed, consequently, they feel it is a safe and secure place to raise a family. In addition, many of the residents of the Southend are poor and unemployed due to the fluctuation in the automobile industry. (There is never less than 30% unemployment. Source: Director of ACCESS) The cheap rent, and cheaper food than other areas, has its appeal. Also there is no problem with transportation and language.

As one drives through the streets where the Arabic population resides, it is easy to realize that the residents are proud of their homes and their neighborhood. The homes are well kept. Almost every house has an abundance of flowers planted in their front yard. A favorite on most porches and lawns is sweet basil, a popular fragrant plant in the Middle East. People walk up and down the streets, chatting together in Arabic. Women keeping with tradition, wearing long skirts and keeping their heads covered, while walking their babies in their strollers. For one fleeting moment it is easy to forget that this is a neighborhood in the United States.

East Dearborn.

Many Arab immigrants who come from the old country, find security and companionship in the Southend which plays the role of "a reception area" for newcomers. Since 1975, the east side of Dearborn has become home to thousands of Muslims from southern Lebanon and its devastated capital of Beirut. In addition, many of the residents of the Southend find it necessary to move to East

Dearborn which is considered a better area, and to get away from the pollution, and the dreary sight of the factories.

Warren avenue is considered thriving, more so than the Southend. The majority of the establishments are owned and operated by Lebanese immigrants. Arabs and non-Arabs patronize the stores and the restaurants.

Warren Avenue has become known as "little Arabia". A version of Greek town, or Chinatown. An article in the Detroit Free Press stated that a Washington consultant hired by the City of Dearborn said the area has every ingredient needed to succeed as a commercial attraction. In addition, the curator of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village said that many of his 1.3 million visitors a year want something more when they come to visit, and could be lured to Warren. (7-1-91)

Warren avenue was not always a business district. In fact, this mile long strip that runs through Dearborn, was hit hard during the deep economic recession of the early 1980s. It was a declining area with a lot of empty buildings. Now it is a major one thanks to the millions of dollars poured into its development by the Arab community, with no help from the city. Except for sidewalk improvement and trash containers supplied by the city, it was all done without a dime of taxpayer money (Detroit Free Press 7-1-91) Now, due to the hard work and determination of the immigrants, one can walk from Greenfield to Wyoming and see the Arab influence in the area. And unlike during the recession of the early 1980s, Warren Avenue merchants see increased traffic.

Lining both sides of the broad avenue are dozens of Arabic restaurants, bakeries, pastry shops, clothing shops, video stores, furniture shops, gas stations, hair salons, travel agencies, even an Arabic bookstore who has the largest collection of Arabic newspapers in the area. This once stagnant area is being revived. In 1982, there were eight Arab-owned stores in the Warren area, in 1990, there were 52, now there are about 75. (Source: American Arab Chamber of Commerce) Only Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn rivals the Bazaars that sport the numerous Arab signs and shops down Dearborn's Dix and Warren Avenue.

Presently there are few empty buildings along Warren, and Arab residents say the value of their homes has risen. Hundreds of Lebanese Muslims have bought homes in the neighborhood and given the area a distinct mideast atmosphere.

In addition, there are medical and legal practices. a bank, - Huntington bank- with a complete Arabic speaking staff, an American- Arab chamber of commerce, accounting services, insurance and real estate companies. And in November of 1993, the 19th district Dearborn court, hired an Arabic speaking magistrate to ease language barrier. (The Detroit News:11/23/93)

Also, Arab-Americans living in Dearborn have their own newspaper: " Sada Al Watan", which translates in English to: "Echo of the Homeland". It is not a propaganda newspaper, but it expresses the views and opinions of prominent Arabs, and it helps bridge the gap between Arab countries and Arab-Americans.

As in the Southend, the Lebanese- Americans have a positive

feeling about the Warren Avenue area. They feel that living here is almost a replica of their homeland. They are concentrated in a "Arab" quarter, clustered with people from home. Sometimes they even discover that their neighbors and friends are from the same hometown.

The difference between the Southend and Warren Avenue, is that the former is more of a working class neighborhood, and almost as authentic as a Middle-Eastern village. The east of Dearborn is more middle-class and Warren Avenue's atmosphere although Middle-Eastern, is in an American context. Having lunch at Al Ameer's restaurant (a restaurant well known for its middle-eastern cuisine), one can hear American as well as Arabic music in the background. The Cedar Land restaurant, has a take out window for its busy customers.

As in the Southend, the vast majority of my respondents liked the area because of its Middle Eastern atmosphere. They have moved here primarily because of that fact, as well as to be with families. They are very happy to be able to retain the flavor and traditions of their homeland.

The same holds true for the houses around Warren Avenue. They are all well kept. Flowers and the aromatic Sweet Basil adorn the porches and the lawns. Understandably, safety is a key factor for liking the area. One woman I interviewed in her home, told me that she rarely closes her front door neither do her neighbors. Crimes that seem to terrify neighborhoods in Detroit, seem non-existent in that area. The vast majority of her neighbors are Arabs although

she mentioned that on her block there is a Polish and an Italian family.

It is important to realize that in Arab culture worrying about what others would think of one's behavior, and not wanting to dishonor the name of the family, is sometimes a deterrent to misbehavior and crime.

Since much of the old country has been recreated in the new land, many of the residents of the Southend and the east Dearborn residents, do not find it necessary to interact with the dominant American culture. All their needs are concentrated in one location, and they feel comfortable residing with their own kind. They find themselves largely isolated from the mainstream of American life.

The response of the interviewees demonstrates their positive feelings toward the area. To the question: " Why did you migrate to this area?", for 32.5 percent of the respondents it was "chain migration"; for 60 percent it was the Arabic environment. About 7.5 percent did not answer this question.

And to the question: " What do you like most about this area?", 92.5 percent responded it was the Arabic environment.

Asked " if all their needs are met in their neighborhoods, or do they find it necessary to go somewhere else?" 85 percent of the respondents find all their needs fulfilled, many do not go anywhere else.

CHAPTER V

Cultural Factors Contributing to the Unacculturation of the Arab-Muslim Community.

As demonstrated, the environment of the Muslim-Arab community, is one factor which contributes to their unacculturation, and cultural factors play a major part. My research indicates that in addition to having Arabic social institutions at their disposal, the vast majority of my respondents still adhere to traditional cultural customs such as cooking, socializing, religious practices, and speaking the Arabic language. Those factors, along with the continuous immigration of newcomers reinforce their traditional values, and keep them separate from the dominant culture. Those new arrivals bring with them their national identity, and political consciousness especially those who come from unsettled areas such as the West Bank, Southern Lebanon, and Yemen. This insures that the community will preserve its rich ethnic identity, keeps bond with the homeland alive and slows down the forces of acculturation. (Abraham ed.1983:181)

A. The Nuclear and Extended Family

The residents of Dearborn, also preserve their identity through institutional means such as the nuclear and extended family. These are the most important aspects of Arab women's lives. All my respondents emphasized that the wife's major responsibility centers around the nurturing of the family. Family groups stay together as they did in the old country. They represent Arab-Moslem culture.

Whatever they do is within a family framework. Social, economic, and religious life centers on the extended family.

The following statements in Family and Religion among Muslim Immigrants and Their Descendants, describe the relationship between family and religion: "Traditionally, both religion and family tend to be central to personal identity and sense of social support. Both can be guardians of heritage and elicit strong feelings of belongingness. Empirically, this intermesh between religion and family appears to be qualitatively important. Recent North American research attempting to identify the characteristics of "strong families" found two factors consistently present—religious orientation and family commitment. Religion can provide an ideological framework and a codified assurance of kinship reliability and empowerment".(Waugh, Abu-laban, Qureshi 1991:6)

Just as in their homeland, the residents of Dearborn are part of closeknit extended families. These cohesive kin relations give the families a unified view in dealing with any problem that comes their way.

Many families followed the pattern of "chain migration " to live with their relatives. One or two family members arrive first, then they send for brother, sister, wife and children. Marriage also reinforces "chain migration", a few of my respondents came to Dearborn through marriage.

Husband-Wife Relationships.

Once a woman is married, she dedicates her life to her husband and children. To the question:" In your household does the man

have the main authority, or are the responsibilities shared with the wife?", 42.5 percent of the respondents answered that the man is the head of the family, and 57.5 answered that the man and wife share responsibilities.

But 70 percent felt that a woman needs her husband's permission before engaging in outside activities since this is the law of the Koran they said. 22.5 percent felt she does not need permission. 2.5 percent did not answer.

This is what the Koran advocates regarding this issue:" A wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses to reside, and remain in the house, not quitting it without his permission. However, the husband has no right to prevent a wife from going out to acquire religious knowledge which is enjoined on both males and females, and he cannot prevent his wife from going out to care for her parents even if they are infidel because caring for her parents takes precedence over the rights of the husband". (Waugh, Abu-Laban, Qureshi, 1991:49).

This is one reason why the women I interviewed love coming to ACCESS since it is within the community and the husband allows it.

Parents-Children Relationships.

Arab children feel deeply loved at home, not only by their parents, but also by grandparents, uncles, aunts, on both sides of the family. Some Arab-American youths in Dearborn, may clash with some Arabic traditions, but they feel privileged to belong to a large and close knit family with dozens of relatives. They

appreciate the fact that they are always welcome to live at home even after graduating from high school, without having to pay rent.

Kinship Relationships.

Newly arrived immigrants rely on their relatives who are already established in this country, to advise them where to start looking for a job, a place to live, and to inform them about western culture. They live in close proximity and much of the community's social interaction is based on kinship. Such gatherings, are like a "security blanket" to the new immigrants, and they reinforce the closeness of the community.

B. Traditional Food Habits.

Traditional food habits are strictly observed by the community members. Most of their food is homemade. They refuse to accept canned or frozen ingredients as a substitute for fresh foods, or for cooking "from Scratch". They feel that Arabic food is economical, healthful, and delicious. Furthermore, it offers a great variety and expresses Arabic generosity and hospitality. Consequently, the Dearborn Arab woman always cooks in abundance a variety of foods in case members of family or friends drop by. She also takes pride in her home and her cooking. This hospitality is one of the main characteristics of Arab culture and has been handed down through generations. (As soon as I walked into their homes, my interviewees offered me a cold drink or a cup of Arabic coffee).

Some of the Arabic dishes are becoming familiar to the American public in Dearborn, because of the numerous restaurants

who serve them; namely Shish Kabob, Tabbouleh (a salad), Hummos, (a dip), Kibbeh, stuffed Grape Leaves, baklawa, etc.

As mentioned earlier, all ingredients for Arabic cooking are plentiful in Dearborn. Some are imported from the Middle East but most are produced in the United States by Arab food companies, or cooked on the premises such as the baked goods.

The lives of the women in Dearborn are made easier by modern household appliances which many did not have before coming to the United States. Therefore in technology, the impact of American culture is strong. But food habits are the same as in the old country.

C. Socialization.

The geographic concentration of the members of the community has helped maintain many of the old traditional folkways, at the same time increasing their social interaction on the account of the absence of social interaction with Americans. To the question, "What percentage of your friends are Arab?" 28 of the 40 respondents answered 100 percent, 10 answered 75 percent, and 2 answered 50 percent.

One of the major activity is visiting with neighbors or relatives. Since 72.5 percent of my interviewees have never worked, some see each other on daily basis, with 75 percent of their social activities being with Arab friends. They drink coffee and gossip. The women I interviewed felt that neighbors brought relief from loneliness. Their social life almost exclusively consists of

relationships with other families and neighbors. "Women have developed important neighborhood networks".(Aswad) One woman mentioned that she and her husband never go anywhere socially except to weddings, so keeping those "neighborhood networks" alive is an important survival tool.

Some of the homeland cultural traditions such as having women only "Henna" parties, still take place especially by Yemeni women. At the parties, they paint geometric designs on the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet with a dye made from the henna plant. The Henna parties precede traditional weddings. The day of the wedding the bride wears a turban- like head cover and wears the usual wedding gown. At weddings, Arab-American ties to the past are expressed in the Arabic language, the sounds of Middle Eastern music, as well as traditional food, dress, and dance . It is all part of the ethnic identity of the community.

To the question, " Do you practice the same social habits such as cooking, religious practice, visiting, socializing as in the old country?", 75 percent stated they practice them all the time, and 25 percent some of the time.

D. Religion.

In addition to the hometown cultural practices of the residents of Dearborn, their religious practices are also continuing without an appreciable break. Religious values are the basic ethos of the residents of Dearborn. Religion keeps this "ethnic enclave" united. Islam, strengthens the ethnic identification of this

community, consequently it weakens the process of acculturation.

Elkholy, the author of The Arab Moslems in the United States, affirms that "there are certain elements in particular cultures that tend to hinder the process of assimilation of particular ethnic groups to any other culture. One of the strongest of these elements is religion. When religion is identical with nationality or race it tends to strengthen the group solidarity and thus weaken the process of its assimilation with the adopted culture"(p.71)

" Islam is on the rise in America. There are about 4 million Muslims today." said Yvonne Haddad, professor of anthropology at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. She estimates there will be 5.5 million Muslims by the year 2010. (Detroit Free Press: 11/21/93. p.2c.)

Since the beginning of the 1970s, religious revivalism has been a growing phenomena in parts of the Middle East, growing out of oppressive conditions there. It has also occurred among some segments of the Arab community in the United States. Dearborn is one such place where most members are committed to Islam as a way of life.

There was a time, as was mentioned earlier when the Muslims in the United States became almost acculturated. The role of the mosque used to be closer to that of denominational churches than to mosques in the Arab world.

Barbara Aswad indicates that in the 1920s and 1930s there was no large community of Muslims in Dearborn. "... the climate in America favored assimilation. There was less pressure to adhere to

the social mores of the Middle East, and they pushed their children to assimilate. They gave them both Anglo and Muslims names, pressured them to learn English, and generally lived in a bicultural tradition. It was not unusual for their sons and a few daughters to marry non-Arabs and raise a much more assimilated second and third generation". (eds., Waugh, Abu Laban, Qureshi, 1991, p.262.)

Islamic traditions have changed drastically since that period. Since the 1970s, efforts have been made to rid the religion of "un-Islamic patterns of acculturation" (Abraham 1983:74) The mosque used to be more a social than a religious place. Now it is more conservative and not as many social functions take place. The immigration of more traditional Muslims to the area triggered this change. "Their increasing influence led to a "take over" of the mosque culminating in the ouster of the presiding American-born imam (prayer leader) and his replacement by a more traditionally-minded imam from the Arab world". (ibid., p.172)

Oil rich countries as well as wealthy individuals have also had an impact on Muslims living as minorities in various areas of the world. Large donations for the construction of mosques and Islamic centers in this country since the early 1970s, have had an effect on the thinking and directions taken by the recipients. (Haddad, Smith eds., 1994:xxii)

Some women have also become active in their mosque; although in the Middle East women seldom even attend the mosque. Some function as in Christian churches, preparing bake sales, running

bazaars, and holding luncheons and dinners, while others have taken on roles of leadership and are active in forming groups especially for Muslim women. Muslim university students, (I interviewed one such student. She worked at ACCESS during the summer) play the role of good-will ambassadors helping non-Muslim Arab-Americans understand the religion of Islam. Still others are involved in providing Islamic education for their young or debating issues of dress for women. (ibid., p.xxvii)

There are four mosques in Dearborn at the present time. In some, services are both in English (for the younger generation) and Arabic. Some mosques broadcast regularly on channel 23. The Friday service is video taped and given to the T.V. channel. The "Imams" feel this is a successful medium to reach the congregation. It is obvious that the majority of the residents of the Southend are Muslims; One can hear the "Azan" calling the Muslims to prayer over a loud speaker five times a day.

Facts About Islam.

Here are some facts about the world's second largest religion: It was founded in 622 A.D. on the Arabian peninsula by Prophet Mohammed. It has about 800 million followers around the world. Muslims believe in one God, Known in Arabic as Allah. The three major holy sites are Mecca(Mohammed's birthplace) Medina (where Mohammed organized Islam and died) and Jerusalem (where Mohammed's ascension to heaven took place at the Dome of the Rock). The Holy book is the Koran. Each person has five duties: to make a profession of the faith, to pray five times a day, to give a regular

portion of one's goods to charity, to fast during the day in the month of Ramadan and to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca if possible. (Detroit Free Press, 11/21/93, p.3c.)

There are two different major sects in the Islamic religion: Shiah and Sunni.

The word Shiite means "partisan" and the movement stems from the conflicting claims of authority in Islam after the Prophet Muhammad's death in the 7th century. The Shiites disagreed with some of Muhammad's successors and for 13 centuries have revered the Caliph Ali, and Ali's descendants, as the true leaders of the faith. Over the centuries, further divisions have arisen within Shiism, each of which has slightly different interpretations of the faith and the Koran. (The Detroit Free Press Special Report, 10-18-90)

Some experts estimate that almost 90 percent of the world's Muslims are Sunnis, although they are only a third of the Islamic community in southeast Michigan. Most local Sunnis, are of Syrian, Yemeni, Lebanese or Palestinian descent. Sunnis sometimes are called "Orthodox" Muslims, although four separate schools of religious law have evolved within the Sunni movement. (ibid.,)

Most of my interviewees felt that there is not much difference between the two sects; they stated that just like Christian religion has protestants, catholics etc. they too have different schools of thought. 37.5 percent of my respondents are Shiah, 60 percent are Sunni.

Islamic Institutions.

With the influx of new immigrants, there has been an increase in the number of religious institutions and in the degree of religiosity.

The Foundation of Islamic Heritage in Dearborn, was established to become a hub of communication for Islamic centers around the country. The foundation which in 1993 had a staff of about 30, supplies Islamic speakers to Muslim and non-Muslim organizations, and Islamic ministering to prison inmates and consulting for fund-raising events. (The Detroit Free Press, 11/21/93:c3)

This is what Paul Walker, a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Michigan has to say about Islamic institutions: " Religious institutions of all stripes bring stability and morality to a neighborhood, they also help Islamic immigrants to feel a sense of neighborhood". He goes on to say that " Muslims find themselves surrounded by an ocean of prejudice. It's necessary for them to have other Muslims around, to have communal prayers". (Ibid.,)

Since Muslims across America feel the sting of prejudice especially after an act of terrorism, Imam Mohammed Ali Elahi of the Islamic Center of America in Detroit, has this to say about that fact: "...Muslims and Islam are misunderstood and maligned in the United States. Many of them are professionals and most are U.S. citizens. There are more than 3,000 Islamic centers, mosques and schools," yet the imam says, " the community does not have either

the political participation or the political clout one might expect. Unfortunately, this big community religiously and socially has been oppressed" and he cites the ignorance of the media as partially responsible. The movie "True Lies", for instance, unfairly and inaccurately portrays Muslims and Arabs as terrorists and Islam as a religion of war. (The Arab American News, 8-13-94, p.5)

The Islamic Center is doing its utmost to rectify this stereotype and prejudice. This includes having interaction with other religious groups to unify the community and to dispel the stigmas about them. (ibid.,)

Barbara Aswad also indicates that, "The increased religiosity in the community is due both to the infusion of immigrants and to the attempts to assume a position of solidarity in the face of the antagonism felt in the United States in general and in Dearborn in particular against Arabs and Islam." (Haddad, Smith, eds., 1994:502)

When asked if they face prejudice as Arab-Americans, 20 percent of the respondents stated that they do, 40 percent said they do not and 40 percent said they do sometimes.

And when asked if they feel the media portrays Arabs fairly, 15 percent said yes, 77.5 percent said no, and 7.5 percent said sometimes.

To strengthen the commitment of the Dearborn residents to Islam, eight professors of theology were brought to the U.S. in 1993 from Saudi Arabia. They came from the center of the Islamic world to teach the fundamentals of Islam and Arabic, the language

of their faith.

They spent three weeks in Dearborn, where 160 Muslims young and old, native-born Americans as well as Arab immigrants attended the classes. The professors taught in Arabic and English.

In addition to Arabic grammar, they taught the Islamic law known as the "Sharia" as well as the philosophy and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. One of the professors stated that "The law of Islam, Judaism and Christianity all forbid using drugs, sex outside marriage and other things," he said. "But people love temptation. They like things that are forbidden to them. It all depends on whether a person follows a religion's laws." (The Detroit News, 8-20-93. p.3B)

Religious revivalism has affected Muslim youths as well. In 1991, a few young people from Dearborn started Islam Universal with just a group of 15. Today there are 200 young Muslims attending the bi-weekly meetings to learn about their faith.

Their goal is to "enlighten" English speaking Muslim youth, for whom Islam can be bewildering since it is usually taught in Arabic. They meet at the Islamic Institute of Knowledge. Every Friday, two meetings are held, one for women and one for men. At the co-ed meeting on Saturday, boys and girls sit on opposite sides of the room divided by a row of string. (The Detroit News, 3-18-94)

At these assemblies, religion is discussed primarily but also other topics, from economics to saving the whales, and sports. A few months ago, this organization began its own version of the television game show "Jeopardy", where participants test their

knowledge of Islam by answering questions on lecture subjects in exchange for points. (Ibid.,)

Islamic Schools

The residents of Dearborn are also building their own schools to maintain their traditional beliefs and values. The Islamic Institute of Knowledge, in Dearborn, hopes to fill the void created by the lack of Islamic high schools in Metro Detroit by opening a full-time school for 700 teen-agers within the next two years. The organization, which is working to get city government approval and funds, is trying to decide between two sites. Many Muslims are interested in this project, for they want to teach their children the Islamic way of life. They realize that a full time school will have a major impact on the retention of the Arabic language. In addition, they want to protect their children from the inherent problems of the public schools.

One such school, "Dar-Ul-Arqam" (house of numbers) Islamic school was opened in 1992 in Detroit. The school follows the basic curriculum established by the Michigan Board of Education. It also teaches Islamic history and civilization as well as Arabic. Students from kindergarten through eighth grade are taught how to pray. They all assemble to pray at noon every school day. The school is so popular that there is a waiting list albeit the price is \$1,600 per year. (The Detroit Free Press, 11/21/93, p.c3)

Muslims First.

Islam, affects every segment of Muslim's lives in Dearborn. As a case in point in 1988, five Muslim sisters were placed in a

non-Muslim foster home. The imam felt that the girls' religious beliefs were violated, because Muslims follow a diet which prohibits consumption of pork or anything cooked in animal fat, and they pray five times a day. The community felt that the social workers should be more sensitive to the community's culture and religion. The girls were released from foster care and their 20 year old brother was appointed as their guardian. (The Detroit News,4-8-88)

The Islamic faith also came into play in the case of a Muslim woman in Detroit in 1993, when the hospital removed the patient who was brain dead from life support despite her husband's protests that it was against their Islamic faith. He sued the hospital for "\$5 million, charging religious discrimination, intentional infliction of emotional distress and breach of contract". The woman, who was eight months pregnant, went into a coma after suffering a heart attack. The same day, the baby was stillborn. (The Detroit News,11-23-93)

The previous examples demonstrate just how serious the Muslims in Dearborn are about their faith.

All the rites of Islam are faithfully followed by the residents of Dearborn. 80 percent of my respondents wear the Islamic traditional garb and scarf, 90 percent fast for Ramadan, 70 percent pray five times a day, 57.5 percent attend the mosque regularly, 92.5 percent refrain from drinking alcohol, and 100 percent abstain from eating pork.

The fast during Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Ramadan is considered holy because it was during this month that the Koran was revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad through the Archangel Gabriel.

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims must not eat, drink or smoke and abstain from sexual activity from dawn to dusk. Everyone who is healthy must follow the strict fast. However travelers, the sick and pregnant women are exempt. At the end of the thirty days fast is the holiday Eid Al-Futr, (the holiday of breaking fast) celebrated by feasts and gift-giving. Eid also includes giving gifts to the needy.

In the Dearborn school system, where a large number of students are Muslim, teachers are sensitive to this holiday and try to accommodate the students who are fasting. Some teachers try to give tests in the morning instead of the afternoon, since by the afternoon the students have a hard time concentrating because of hunger. In the gym, fasting students are excused from strenuous exercises. One fifth grade teacher, opens his classroom for the first ten minutes "so kids who are fasting don't have to watch their friends eat their lunches." (The Detroit News, 2-19-93

Several of my respondents volunteered the information that they did not always follow the rites of Islam as conscientiously as they do now, they also did not wear the "hijab". (refers to an ankle-length, long-sleeved dress that hangs loosely around the body. It is accompanied by a scarf that is tied so as to cover all the hair). The rise of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Middle East they indicated, was aided by the continuing unanswered

occupation by Israel's military regime, by the intolerable barbarism of the civil war in Lebanon, but also by a public disappointment with secularism in general. They have suffered physically and emotionally and felt that religion is their only outlet.

Some indicated that the Koran advocates modesty in Muslim women. This is a quote from the Koran regarding this issue.

"And say to the believing women that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts, and reveal not their adornment such as it is outward; and let them cast their veils over their bosoms, and not reveal their adornments..."

Others, especially younger women, brought up the issue of covering up as being liberating from men's sexual harassments. When a woman is covered up, there is less temptation on the part of a man to approach her. In addition, she is not seen as a sex object.

In Islam, men and women should not touch. When a Muslim woman meets a man she knows, she only greets him without shaking hands. And a woman is never to allow herself to be with a man alone, unless he is her husband. The prophet Muhammad stated that: "When a man and a woman are together, Satan is in their midst". Understandably, dating is not allowed unless it is chaperoned. Of course there is romance, they can love, laugh or cry together, but no touching. Chastity is valued in Islam.

When asked what should parents do about a Moslem girl falling in love with a Christian boy and wanting to marry him ,10 percent

indicated they should give their approval, 42.5 percent said they should not approve and 47.5 percent said they should approve if he converts to Islam.

To the question what should parents do if a Muslim boy fell in love with a Christian girl, 12.5 percent answered they should give their approval, 7.5 percent should not approve, and 80 percent said they should approve if she converts to Islam.

Muslims are strongly opposed to a Moslem girl marrying a non-Moslem male, even if he converts to Islam. But if a Moslem man marries a non-Moslem female, it is acceptable. Because as one interviewee told me if a Muslim girl marries a non-Muslim, she is lost to Islam, whereas a Muslim boy marrying a non-Muslim, makes her convert to his faith. While most of the mothers interviewed said they would prefer that their children marry Arab-Muslims, a few said they would accept an American son-in-law or daughter-in-law if they would convert to Islam. One of the respondents indicated that if her daughter fell in love with a non-Muslim, she would be sent to her hometown for a while, in the hope that she might meet someone there. If that does not happen, then they would reluctantly give her permission to marry him if he converts.

To the question "do you feel a conflict between your traditional beliefs and customs, and the American way of life "? 62.5 percent emphatically stated that they are very comfortable with the status quo, that dressing the way they do, and conserving their traditions and values is an assertion of their religion and their cultural identity, and that it increases their chances to go

to heaven. 22.5 percent admitted to feeling conflict, and 15 percent admitted to feeling conflict sometimes; but with the grace of God hope they can overcome that feeling.

One woman who does not wear the traditional garb, stated : "May God give me the wisdom to cover up eventually".

Most of the women I interviewed at ACCESS, or in their homes, come from basically the same socio-economic class. They belong to the blue-collar working class, and have had elementary education, except for the employees at ACCESS. It is interesting to note that women who come from a different socio-economic class, and possess a different level of education have the same outlook on covering up, and on Islam in general.

In 1990, Muslim women with PhD's, and DDS', were interviewed by the Detroit Free Press. Those women, (who wear the traditional garb) emphasized that when sexuality is eliminated from normal interaction, it is actually liberating and allows, in the words of Dr. Ghalia Katranji a dentist in Dearborn, "the man to look at your mind, not how you dress...When you wear a veil, your beauty is not "how am I going to wear my hair , "but it is inside, and in how I treat people." (1-7-90).

"You're either a good dentist, or you're not. That's the bottom line as far as Katranji is concerned "if my patients like me, they come back", adding that her observance of Islamic traditions is an irrelevant factor in a dental practice".

Her patients she said are 90 percent non-Islamic, but she finds that most American people are very open-minded. She states

that many Muslim Arab women have raised families, and pursued a career as well.

Najwa Jawad who earned a PhD in nutrition, and currently works as a nutritionist for several local doctors, reiterates that ideology." I was always free to do what I wanted,"she says, responding to those who might think that her veiling is a sign of sexual repression. "...some may be surprised I have a PhD, they may admire what I got with my "hijab"..." This is an indication that the "hijab" itself does not prevent women from going to school or working".(ibid.,)

It would not be exaggerating to state that endorsing the tenets of Islam, and being a good Muslim, is a cathartic experience to many of the members of the community. By covering up, women feel they have made a choice, a symbol of a deeper commitment to Islam. Islam is the lifeline and guiding force that enables them to face many of life's challenges. And as demonstrated, the community is doing everything in its power to preserve it. Religion, first and foremost, and other cultural and physical factors, contribute to forming a strong ethnic consciousness in the community.

E. The Prevalence of the Arabic Language.

Sociologists have stated that a fundamental factor in cultural persistence has been the language of the ethnic group. Information received from the respondents indicates that 65 percent speak Arabic always, 27.5 speak the language often, 5.0 percent speak it rarely, and only one person of the 40 interviewees said she never

speaks the language because she was born in the United States. Arabs in Dearborn use the Arabic language as means of communication with their family, friends, and relatives.

Also 57.5 percent of the respondents indicated to always listening to Arabic radio, watching Arabic television, and renting Arabic videos, 22.5 percent to doing it often, and 2.5 to never doing it. There was no response from 17.5 percent of the respondents.

According to the director of the Michigan Arab-American chamber of Commerce in Dearborn, "There must be six or seven TV stations broadcasting in Arabic in the Dearborn-Detroit area alone". (American Demographics Jan.1994 p.27)

The influx of immigrants keeps the language alive as well. The mosque is also an important institution in keeping the Arabic language alive, since Arabic is an integral part of the practice of Islam. Imams (prayer leaders) teach it to their congregation along with modern Islamic thought. In addition, weddings, funerals and religion classes, are mostly conducted in Arabic. Arabic classes as mentioned earlier are also taught at different Islamic Institutions in Dearborn.

Amongst the families, the Arabic language is very strong. In businesses, more so on Warren Avenue than in the Southend, English is often heard; especially if their customers are Americans. Owners and employees, realize it is important for business. Consequently, males by means of interaction, learn the language sooner than the females.

Several of my respondents have been in the United States for several years, (32 percent have lived here from 1-5 years, 24 percent from 6-10 years, 18 percent from 11-15 years, another 18 percent from 16-20 years, less than 1 percent from 21-25 years, and less than 1 percent from 26-30 years,) yet their English is very limited and they are attending English classes at ACCESS for the first time.

The predominance of the Arabic language is due to the fact that 87.5 percent of my respondents did not speak any English when they arrived in this country.

In Dearborn, over one-third of Arab-American adults do not speak English well enough to get along at work, two-thirds do not read or write English, and another third does not read or write Arabic. (NBD in the Community: 1994). Sociologists have indicated that there is actually a connection between acculturation and education.

Since the first agent of acculturation is language, and lacking the knowledge of the English language, the newcomers find it difficult to understand the values and norms of the dominant culture. Some of my interviewees told me that the most difficult adjustment they have to make is learning English. Having no knowledge of the English language before coming to this country, everything seemed very strange to them. This is the reason why the majority of the first generation have to cluster around one another hoping that this would help solve the critical linguistic problem.

This linguistic problem is described by Abdo Elkholy a

sociologist, in the following manner: "This linguistic handicap probably has been one of the most influential factors in erecting the ghettos and ethnic residential sections in Moslems' American urban life. The less English-speaking an ethnic community in America, the more clannish it is and the more it segregates itself from American life. That segregation delays the process of assimilation". (1966: 84)

Children and the Arabic Language.

For American-born children and up through age five, or until the child enters school, parents and family members use the Arabic language at home with children consistently. The strong impact of the native culture during this period is enforced upon the child. A slight influence of the American culture reaches the child through television, which is a common item in the community. When the child starts the American educational system of compulsory education, the balance is somewhat reversed; since the school seems to be the most important force in enculturating American patterns of behavior. In the school, the child begins to master the English language. One mother told me that before going to school, her child's language was 75% Arabic; now it is 75% English. At this stage, when a child is spoken to in Arabic, he or she responds in English. Most of the time it becomes difficult for the parents to be consistent in requiring them to use Arabic.

In the area of language, the children of Arab-Americans become somewhat enculturated, but in religion, and in most of their values and beliefs, these children remain almost as unacculturated as

their parents. In addition to their Arabic home environment, Salina school for example exhibits features which help maintain certain Middle Eastern cultural features. This is understandable since 95.5 percent of the 700 students are Arab-Americans. Notices that go to parents are written in English and Arabic, pork is never served on the school menu. (data given by Salina's principal). Many of the girls in that school wear the Islamic garb and scarf. Peer pressure at this age has probably something to do with it. I feel the picture of a ten year old girl wearing the loose dress and the scarf keeping with Islamic tradition, and playing "The Star Spangled Banner", puts things in perspective. (picture taken from the Detroit Free Press Special Report Oct. 18, 1990)



Shadia Amen, 10, plays "The Star-Spangled Banner" on her clarinet while her 8-year-old brother, Bilal, listens. Their grandparents came to the United States from Lebanon.

When American born children first start school, they have some difficulty adjusting, because of the predominance of the Arabic language at home. But the real problem is experienced by children who emigrate to this country. Some Lebanese children for example, have difficulty with the English language but are illiterate as well in their native language, the schools being a casualty of Lebanon's decade of war. They cannot get the help from their parents since the latter lack the necessary language skills themselves. It is difficult to go to school in a foreign country where the culture is different and you cannot speak the language. This is the dilemma that the youngsters in Dearborn are facing. Currently, more than half the Arab-American children entering ninth grade read English at only a fourth or fifth grade level. (NBD in the Community: 1994)

The Bilingual Program.

The bilingual/bicultural program in Dearborn initiated in 1976, is the largest and oldest program in the country. It has solved some of the problems of the immigrant's children. Approximately 4,000 students are enrolled in the program, and 3,300 of them are Arab-Americans. (data:the bilingual office in Dearborn). The program begins in pre-school and runs to the senior year of high school.

Some say that the program is no longer "sticking to its original plan", to take the limited English speaking students and allow them only three years in a bilingual program. After that, according to the plan, the students should be quickly assimilated

into an English-speaking academic environment. Others feel that the three year time limit set on the program is not enough time for the students to develop the comprehensive abilities to perform well in an English speaking classroom.

A major problem that the educators in the bilingual program are facing, is the concern that every summer the students become immersed once again into their home languages.

When parents and the educational system cannot help, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) is determined to fill the gap.

CHAPTER VI

A C C E S S

ACCESS was founded in 1971 to give Arab-American immigrants the basic services they need to cope in the changing world they experience in their daily lives. With five Dearborn offices, the nonprofit organization's services are numerous. They provide a wide range of social, mental health, educational, artistic, employment, legal and medical services. To say that they are a dedicated organization, is an under statement.

To the Arab-Americans of Dearborn, ACCESS makes the circle complete. The organization acts like a cocoon to newcomers. They know where to go when they need financial help, someone to talk to, someone to trust, someone to confide in while trying to adjust to a new culture. Moving to a new country without financial stability, without the knowledge of its language and traditions, can be a terrifying ordeal. ACCESS helps the new immigrants financially when needed, they also help them adjust emotionally so that the unfamiliarity of the new culture is not too overwhelming. All their social and economic needs are met in one convenient complex. ACCESS strives to meet those needs whether they are related to social services, language, physical or mental health, legal or employment difficulties. They also seek to enrich their youth academically and culturally, as well as the adult Arab-American community at large.

When ACCESS was founded in 1971, it served 125 people the

first year, providing English classes and aid to "Yemeni workers who were fighting discrimination in the auto plants." (Detroit News:2, 1991). Last year they directly served over 23,000 and indirectly over 60,000 people mostly Arab but also non-Arab through 42 different programs. With a dedicated staff of forty-five, and over two-hundred regular volunteers, ACCESS is definitely a people helping people organization.

After "Operation Desert Storm", ACCESS helped about 100 Palestinians who left Kuwait after it was invaded in August by Iraq. The executive director of ACCESS, Ismael Ahmed said that "these people had to leave without most of their property, their money is frozen in Kuwaiti banks and the Kuwaiti government won't help the refugees because they aren't Kuwaiti citizens. Some of them spent their whole working lives in Kuwait, and they received no help". (the Detroit News: 12-2-90)

The Yemenis were also helped by ACCESS when they were thrown out of Saudi Arabia because of Yemen's unenthusiastic support for operation "Desert Storm".(Ibid.,)

Many of the Lebanese newcomers who escaped the atrocious civil war, and the Palestinians who escaped Israel's military regime feel more like refugees than immigrants. They carry heavy emotional baggage because of the violence and the duress they have encountered. ACCESS helps them cushion the shock in dealing with their new environment, and tries to alleviate their loneliness by being available when needed.

Most of the following information is taken from the 1993-94

ACCESS Year Book, other ACCESS publications, and the NBD in the Community Publication. My aim in listing all the services available to the newcomers, is to demonstrate how efficient this organization is and that in fact the immigrants do not need to go anywhere else for all their needs. They feel comfortable dealing with people of their own kind. Some of the employees at ACCESS are not Arab-Americans but it is obvious that they are dedicated and have empathy for the immigrants.

The drop-in- Unit at ACCESS is one of the departments where the Arab-American immigrants turn for help. Last year it provided the following services to more than 23,000 people.

Social Services:

Completing forms and applications such as Medicaid, food stamps, Aid to Dependent Children from the Department of Social Services, unemployment claims forms, Social Security, employment applications etc., also client advocacy such as telephone contacts with other Social Services.

Translation:

Their translation section is highly respected and recognized by federal, state and local governments. In 1993 over 7,000 documents were translated into Arabic, English, and French. Documents range from birth certificates, marriage certificates, school transcripts, power of attorneys, death certificates, driver's licenses.

Food/Shelter Program:

ACCESS assists over 300 families with emergency housing payments to

prevent homelessness. Families or individuals are assisted with one month's rent or mortgage if they are in danger of being evicted or are delinquent with their mortgage payment.

Monthly Surplus Food Program: On a monthly basis, the agency distributes commodities such as butter, rice, peanut butter, apple juice, etc., to over 180 families.

Education.

In 1991, with the assistance of the Dearborn Public Schools, the school system's Adult Education and Bilingual programs, the Dearborn Library system, and the United Way Foundation, ACCESS began its "Yalla" education project (Yallah in Arabic means let's get going). NBD joined the "Yalla" effort with a \$10,000 grant.

The "Yallah" youth program, covers a Summer Academic and Recreation Initiative, a Library and Tutoring Program, a Learning Abilities Program, and a day care center for the children of low-income and working class Arab-American parents.

The Summer Academic and Recreation Initiative program's goal is to help children retain and improve the English and math they have learned during the school year. This summer, the six-week program provided assistance to 400 to 600 elementary and middle school students. Half the students go to Salina school in the morning for English and math classes and the other half stay at the center for planned recreational activities. They switch after lunch.

Last summer, on a visit to the Detroit Science Center, students enjoyed exhibits like the water lens. Because many of the

students are Muslim and must wear coverings over their bathing suits according to their religion, they were unable to swim since the law does not allow anything but swim suits at the pool.

The spirit of the community is clearly visible at the Library and Tutoring Center. Everyday 50 to 100 neighborhood kids come to the premises to do their homework, to get tutored, or just to talk to someone about what is going on in their lives. High school students volunteer to help the junior high students and junior high students help elementary students. One student, thanks to the extra help she was getting at the center, made the honor roll.

The Learning Abilities Program (LAP) objective is to help children who suffer from attention deficit, behavioral and developmental problems that are made more complex because of the student's lack of knowledge of the English language. Last year over 40 students were helped at the center. LAP works with the Dearborn Public Schools to identify students who can benefit from the intense tutoring that the program offers. Parents are encouraged to get involved also, so they too can help their child at home.

ACCESS's day care center serves over 60 infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. It is a caring and educational multi-cultural center, at very reasonable and affordable rates. When ACCESS first opened the Center last year, they only had Arabic children. Now although the majority of the 60 children who attend the Center are Arabs, 15% are non-Arab. Some of the women I interviewed had their children in the day care while taking the English class.

In addition to the youth's academic programs, ACCESS offers a

variety of classes for adults both men and women. The classes range from writing workshops in poetry, or fiction, to embroidery classes, to English classes, and to classes about Arab Culture.

Recently, 25 deputies from the Wayne County Sheriff's office attended an all day seminar on Arab culture at ACCESS. The officers learned about the values, the beliefs and hospitality in Arab culture. They were briefed that when at a scene of an accident or a violent situation, a male officer should not talk to an Arab woman without an Arab man nearby. Some officers thought the seminar was very informative.

It is in the English classes where I met most of the women I interviewed. This year, the Center is offering six classes: three in the morning and three in the afternoon. The average number of students in each class is about 25 to 30.

As mentioned earlier, my respondents are Lebanese, Palestinians, and Yemenis. They attend the morning nine to eleven classes. Those morning classes are segregated. The vast majority in the afternoon classes are men. One might encounter two or three women amidst them who are less conservative and less traditional than their counterparts.

The women in the morning classes wear the Islamic garb: the long dress, and a scarf. Their skin is devoid of make up because they must not "tempt" men. The ones who agreed to be interviewed were very friendly and some even warm. They chatted, and gave me more information than I had set out to get. Some of the women felt inadequate because they do not speak English. One person confided

that she would love to further her education but not knowing English is a real handicap.

The teachers in those classes are American, the aid is Arab-American. Her job is to translate when the students encounter difficulties.

In her study of the community, professor Aswad indicated that women take classes at ACCESS for several reasons:" (1) they want to improve their skills, (2) they want to get out of the house to relieve their boredom, (3) it is an activity that their husbands consider legitimate, partly because it is in the immediate community, and (4) as welfare recipients they may take classes that improve their ability to be part of the workplace." (Haddad, Smith, eds.,1994:510).

Family Counseling, Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

These services are bilingual and bicultural. The ACCESS family Counseling unit assists women who want to end domestic violence. Although this is not believed to occur as frequently as in mainstream American society, what worsens the status quo in Arabic culture is that to avoid shame and embarrassment, domestic violence is kept a secret. Since the latter is often the result of drug or alcohol or substance abuse, the problem is dealt with in its totality. ACCESS also has an addiction, prevention and treatment service.

Professor Aswad again states that among the problems brought to the Family Counseling Center of ACCESS are family control in

general, specifically with daughters. Yemeni women want their daughters to marry Muslims and 90 percent want them to marry Yemenis. If the mothers feel their daughter is resisting the status quo, they threaten to cut off her education and to marry her off at a young age. When the problem escalates, mothers go to ACCESS. "Of the sixty major cases that came to the center during its first year, nearly half concerned mothers having problems with the discipline of daughters; other issues concern problems between mothers and sons, between fathers and sons, and between fathers and daughters. This also reflects the fact that 80 percent of the clients were women." (Ibid.,p.511)

The mental health services, assist people to understand and deal with the illness. These services include assessment and rehabilitation. "Based on the number of professional staff and the number of persons who have received or are receiving services, the program is the largest of its kind serving the largest concentration of persons of Arab origin outside of the Middle East".

Employment.

The Arab immigrants of Dearborn also benefit from the employment services which ACCESS provides. The organization is joined with many state agencies and services to provide the community with available jobs. To improve the marketability of their customers, ACCESS has also established the Community Education and Training Consortium. Special attention is given to those with language difficulties. The University of Michigan-

Dearborn, Henry Ford community College, Dearborn Public Schools, Ford Motor Company, Chrysler Corporation, The Dearborn Chamber of Commerce, State Representatives, the Department of Labor and the Michigan Employment Security Commission, are among the Consortium members representing the community.

In addition to the employment services, ACCESS' East Side Office, offers immigration services which provide advice on visa processing, asylum cases, and litigation to defend aliens' rights. Also, counseling and advice is provided to clients about legal and civil rights matters.

ACCESS Health Center.

In 1989, the Wayne County Health Department and ACCESS joined efforts to provide Women Infant and Children (WIC) Prenatal Care, and services for teens. Five years ago, the health clinic was just a one room in the Mental Health Unit's basement. Now in partnership with Saratoga Hospital, it has outgrown its own building and provides total care to families. The majority of them are uninsured.

Prenatal Care is very important in this Moslem community. Most of the women have transportation difficulties, a language barrier, and their cultural beliefs to deal with. They will not allow a male doctor to examine them. ACCESS has a female obstetrician who works with them, and Arabic speaking health coordinators. 90% of the staff at the Health Clinic are bilingual, speaking both Arabic and English.

ACCESS also has an AIDS Prevention, Counseling and Testing

Project. "Through an extensive outreach effort that included a thorough media campaign, educational seminars, and direct street outreach, the program's work has increased knowledge and decreased misconceptions about HIV transmission".

Educational pamphlets are given to patients about AIDS, venereal diseases, hypertension, cholesterol, diabetes, etc., all written in Arabic and in English.

Cultural Arts.

ACCESS is not only dedicated to the community's social and economic services, it is also committed to the development of their cultural life and the cultural life of Arab-Americans at large.

ACCESS even has an Arab cultural museum, which provides a brief introduction to the history, culture, religions, and art of the Arab world.

ACCESS, together with the University of Michigan's Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, regularly presents a series of lectures by Middle East scholars. In 1994, these lecturers included Dr. Alixa Naff, Dr. Nabeel Abraham, Dr. Barbara Aswad, Dr. Ann Rasmussen and others.

In addition, ACCESS hosts several of America's leading Arab artists. They provide workshops for local artists, and present their work to the public through lectures, readings, exhibits, and performances.

A celebration of Arab American Art, Music, and Poetry, is "Fann Wa Tarab" (Arabic for art and sublime music). This year the program was presented by ACCESS, the Arab American Arts Council,

and the Detroit Institute of Arts. The festival, (which I attended) also included a concert, a poetry reading, and a painting exhibit. The visual arts were combined with Arabic music to give the audience a larger view of Arab culture. The main performer Simon Shaheen, is a winner of a 1994 National Heritage award. He is regarded as the finest "oud" (lute) and violin player among Arab-Americans. He has performed throughout Europe, the Middle East and the United States, giving solo performances at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. The female singer Ghada Ghanem is a graduate from the Lebanese National Conservatory and from Rice University in Houston. The members of the Dearborn Ensemble, are also very talented and graduates of a Conservatory.

Summary.

Because of the influx of so many new arrivals, ACCESS is an important organization which serves the human needs of the community. The center helps ease the adjustment of immigrants to their new home, teaching them English and other essentials of daily life, such as how to use public transportation. The center also provides medical and legal assistance, and helps the immigrants find jobs with the help of other agencies.

Through their contact with ACCESS, the newcomers are indirectly exposed to the norms and values of the dominant culture. Although interacting exclusively with ACCESS seems to limit their exposure to the Americans at large, therefore weakening the process of acculturation; nevertheless, the services offered at the center are invaluable to help them adjust so that the unfamiliarity of the

new culture is not too overwhelming.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

At this point, the following question should be asked. Has there been any alteration in the customs and values of the Arab-Americans living in Dearborn in their ways of feeling, thinking, and acting that people acquire as members of society? On the one hand the interviews support the argument that the Dearborn Arab-American community has succeeded in establishing a genuine Arabic ethnic community in their adopted country. They have retained many aspects of the Middle East culture such as preserving their own language, religion, communal institutions and ancestral culture.

Since the Arab-Muslims of Dearborn have established a "ghetto like" community, their concentration hinders the possible increase of contact with the dominant culture. As stated earlier, the early Arab settlers became quickly assimilated, because as peddlers they learned English promptly through constant contact with native born Americans. Since language is the first agent of assimilation, this hastened acculturation.

As demonstrated, a majority of the respondents have been in the United States for several years, yet they do not speak English and they do not find it necessary to do so. Their concentration, also the influx of new immigrants help keep the Arabic language of the first and second generation alive.

Religion also tends to strengthen the group's solidarity, thus weakening the process of acculturation. Religion looms very large

in Dearborn and the community is doing everything in its power to preserve it, by building more mosques, Islamic institutions and Islamic schools. The arabic language is also kept alive through religion, since it is the language of Islam. And to appreciate the Koran, one must read it in arabic. Also prayers five times daily are recited in Arabic.

The ethnic family does not promote acculturation since it is a threat to the patriarchal aspect of the parent-child relationship. Neither do they encourage intermarriage which they feel alters the structure of the family and the community.

The evidence presented also suggests that American culture has not greatly modified the traditional patterns of many of the women's lives. The majority of them still need their husband's permission to engage in outside activities, and most of them have never worked outside the home. In addition, the vast majority still practice the same social habits like cooking, visiting and socializing of the old country, and 60% of the respondents still consider themselves Arabs rather than Arab-Americans.

On the other hand, since the donor culture, in comparison with the ethnic group, is numerically, politically, and economically more powerful than the recipient culture, the contact has resulted in some process of acculturation.

There are some cultural elements over which the ethnic group has no control, such as Michigan laws, American schools, also bigamy is illegal despite Islamic laws, and some members of the community have to speak English during work.

There has been some decline among the young in the language area. Once children start the American educational system of compulsory education, it becomes difficult for the parents to be consistent in requiring them to use Arabic. At home, although the majority of the adults tune in to Arabic stations, children watch the regular English channels on television. And every summer when the students become immersed once again into their home language, the Summer Academic Youth Program at ACCESS fills in the gap with a tutoring program.

At the mosque, although the prayers are in arabic, the sermons are in English and Arabic to enlighten Muslim youth. At the assemblies, religion and other topics are discussed, also in English and Arabic.

The role of women at the mosques is also gradually changing. Some women have become active, although in the Middle East women seldom attend the mosque. Some function as in Christian churches, others have also taken on roles of leadership and are active in forming groups especially for Muslim women. Understandably these women are more educated and less conservative than their counterparts. But regardless of their involvement, when praying, they are still segregated. Some women worship in basements while their husbands and sons pray under a high dome on the floor above.

Although the majority of the women I interviewed have never worked, a few have jobs presently. Maybe eventually due to the economic factors in this country, they could become an important economic asset; also working outside the home would advance the

economic asset; also working outside the home would advance the woman's status in the home and in the community.

There is some degree of mobility from the Southend to the East of Dearborn, although the Arab-Muslims are still clannish. They tend to live with their own kind.

In technology, the impact of American culture is strong on the community. The availability of cars, televisions, telephones, kitchen and other appliances are strong cultural change agents.

In this ethnic community, the patriarchal aspect of the parent-child relationship of the homeland is showing some changes. As stated earlier, among the problems brought to the Family Counseling Center of ACCESS are family control in general, specifically with daughters rebelling against an arranged marriage. Other issues concern problems between mothers and sons, between fathers and sons, and between fathers and daughters.

The American schools the parents feel, are one of the culprits. From the teachers and school companions, these Arab-Muslim youths, learn to esteem the American way of life and even sometimes to look down upon their parent's ways. The greatest conflict is with some teen-age girls. They are not allowed to date, since they symbolize family honor. The parents are hoping that by sending their teen-agers to Islamic high schools, they might help solve some of the problems.

Whether acculturated or not, most of the respondents have positive feelings about the United States. They realize that they are fortunate to be able to share in the common core of American

life while simultaneously retaining the ethnic cultural characteristic of their own group. They are also grateful to the United States for providing them a secure haven from war and political upheaval. Although 75 percent of the respondents are overwhelmed by the openness of Western culture, 75 percent of them feel that cultural pluralism is tolerated in this country more than in their homeland and they appreciate that fact.

55 percent of the respondents would like to remain in the United States, 20 percent want to go back, and the other 25 percent are unsure. But 82.5 percent of the interviewees admitted they like living in this country and that they are aware of the fact that few countries will give them such freedom in maintaining their own ethnic and religious patterns without sacrificing the benefits of life in the United States. They also realize that in this country they can find economic and political freedom not found anywhere else.

Since the American milieu does not threaten the heritage of the immigrants, there should not be a conflict between the recipient and the donor culture. In fact, both sides can benefit from each other's culture. Compromises can be made without giving up one's values and traditions.

Don Unis of ACCESS is already starting to see signs of that happening. He recalls watching a 6 year old Muslim girl come bouncing out of school, proudly carrying a little papier-maché Easter basket. The fact that her head was covered showed she was being taught traditional values at home, and he wondered how her

father would react to the basket she had made in school.

"You could tell she was so proud of that little Easter basket, but you could also tell she kind of knew what it was all about and was wondering if Dad was going to approve. He reached over and opened the door for her, and she showed it to him. He picked it up and praised it. She beamed got in the car and they drove off."

" That one- minute episode brought two worlds together", Unis added. "There was a compromise made and that's what we're talking about. We are saying that you can make compromises without giving up everything you are. Other immigrant groups have done it. We are doing it,too".(Michigan, The Magazine of the Detroit News, 4/6/1986).

DATA TABULATION (APPENDIX A)

Facts Concerning: Background, Occupation, and Education

I. Length of Stay in the USA	Number	Percentage
a. 1 - 5 years	11	32
b. 6 - 10	8	24
c. 11 - 15	6	18
d. 16 - 20	6	18
e. 21 - 25	2	< than 1
f. 26 - 30	<u>1</u>	<u>< than 1</u>
	40	100
2. Immigrant Generation		
a. First	19	48
b. Second	17	42
c. Third	2	5
d. Missing	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
	40	100
3. Reason to emigrate to the USA		
a. Economic reasons	16	37.5
b. Political reasons	20	50
c. Education	1	2.5
d. Other	<u>3</u>	<u>10</u>
	40	100
4. Speak English when arrived		
a. Yes	5	12.5
b. No	<u>35</u>	<u>87.5</u>
	40	100
5. Original Nationality		
a. Palestinian	8	20
b. Lebanese	16	40
c. Yemeni	<u>16</u>	<u>40</u>
	40	100
6. Place of Residence		
a. in the Southend	27	67.5
b. in east Dearborn	<u>13</u>	<u>32.5</u>
	40	100

7. Work outside the Home	Number	Percentage
a. never worked	29	72.5
b. work presently	<u>11</u>	<u>27.5</u>
	40	100
8. Occupation of head of family in homeland		
a. service industry	19	47.5
b. farmer	9	22.5
c. professional	2	5
d. unemployed	<u>10</u>	<u>25</u>
	40	100
9. Occupation of Head of Family now		
a. service industry	16	40
b. factory	10	25
c. professional	3	7.5
d. unemployed	<u>11</u>	<u>27.5</u>
	40	100
10. Reasons for migrating to Dearborn		
a. arabic environment	24	60
b. chain migration	<u>16</u>	<u>40</u>
	40	100

Arabic Ethnicity

1. What respondents like about area		
a. arabic environment	37	92.5
b. family	<u>3</u>	<u>7.5</u>
	40	100
2. Percentage of Arab friends		
a. 100%	28	70
b. 75%	10	25
c. 50%	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
	40	100

	Number	Percentage
3. Are all social activities with Arabs?		
a. yes		
b. no	30	75
c. sometimes	9	22.5
	<u>1</u>	<u>2.5</u>
	40	100
4. Practice same social habits as in homeland?		
a. all the time		
b. some of the time	30	75
	<u>10</u>	<u>25</u>
	40	100
5. Are most of neighbors Arabs?		
a. yes		
b. no	31	77.5
	<u>9</u>	<u>22.5</u>
	40	100
6. How often do respondents visit neighbors?		
a. once a day		
b. twice a day	13	32.5
c. twice a week or less	3	7.5
	<u>24</u>	<u>60</u>
	40	100
7. How often is Arabic spoken at home?		
a. always	26	65
b. often	11	27.5
c. rarely	2	5
d. never	<u>1</u>	<u>2.5</u>
	40	100
8. Do children speak Arabic?		
a. yes	22	55
b. a little	5	12.5
c. no children	<u>13</u>	<u>32.5</u>
	40	100
9. Do they listen to Arabic (radio, TV, videos)?		
a. always	23	57.5
b. sometimes	9	22.5
c. never	1	2.5

d. no response	<u>7</u>	<u>17.5</u>
	40	100
10. Are all respondents' needs met in their neighborhood?	Number	Percentage
a. yes	34	85
b. no	<u>6</u>	<u>15</u>
	40	100

Religion

1. Respondents sect

a. Shiah	15	37.5
b. Sunni	24	60
c. Other	<u>1</u>	<u>2.5</u>
	40	100

2. Do respondents wear a
"Hijab"?

a. yes	32	80
b. no	<u>8</u>	<u>20</u>
	40	100

3. Do respondents fast for
Ramadan?

a. yes	36	90
b. sometimes	1	2.5
c. no	<u>3</u>	<u>7.5</u>
	40	100

4. Do respondents pray five
times a day?

a. yes	28	70
b. no	2	5
c. sometimes	<u>10</u>	<u>25</u>
	40	100

5. Do respondents attend the
Mosque regularly?

a. yes	23	57.5
b. no	10	25
c. no response	<u>7</u>	<u>17.5</u>
	40	100

	Number	Percentage
6. Do respondents drink alcohol?		
a. yes		
b. no	3	7.5
	<u>37</u>	<u>92.5</u>
	40	100
7. Do respondents eat pork?		
a. no		
	40	100
8. Distribution of respondents on a Moslem girl wanting to marry a Christian boy *		
a. give their approval		
b. should not approve	4	10
c. approve if he converts to Islam	17	42.5
	<u>19</u>	<u>47.5</u>
	40	100
9. Distribution of respondents on a Moslem boy wanting to marry a Christian girl *		
a. give their approval		
b. should not approve	5	12.5
c. approve is she converts to Islam	3	7.5
	<u>32</u>	<u>80</u>
	40	100

* Questions taken from The Arab Moslems in the United States Religion and Assimilation by Elkholy page 52.

Kinship

1. Man has Main Authority

a. the man is the head of the household	17	42.5
b. man and wife share responsibility	<u>23</u>	<u>57.5</u>
	40	100

2. Percentage of respondents who need husband's permission to engage in outside activities

a. yes	28	70
b. no	9	22.5
c. not applicable	<u>3</u>	<u>7.5</u>
	40	100

How respondents feel about the United States

1. What do respondents consider themselves?	Number	Percentage
a. Arab	24	60
b. Arab-American	16	40
c. American	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	40	100
2. Would respondents like to remain in the U.S. or go back to old country?		
a. remain in the USA	22	55
b. go back	8	20
c. unsure	<u>10</u>	<u>25</u>
	40	100
3. Do respondents face prejudice as Arab- Americans?		
a. yes	8	20
b. no	16	40
c. sometimes	<u>16</u>	<u>40</u>
	40	100
4. Do respondents feel media portrays Arabs fairly?		
a. yes	6	15
b. no	31	77.5
c. sometimes	<u>3</u>	<u>7.5</u>
	40	100
5. Do respondents feel that cultural pluralism is tolerated in the U.S. more than in their homeland?		
a. yes	30	75
b. no	7	17.5
c. sometimes	<u>3</u>	<u>7.5</u>
	40	100

	Number	Percentage
6. Are respondents overwhelmed by the openness of Western culture?		
a. yes	30	75
b. no	8	20
c. sometimes	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
	40	100
7. Do respondents feel a conflict between their traditional beliefs and customs, and the American way of life?		
a. yes	9	22.5
b. no	25	62.5
c. sometimes	<u>6</u>	<u>15</u>
	40	100
8. Do respondents like living in the United States?		
a. yes	33	82.5
b. no	6	15
c. unsure	<u>1</u>	<u>2.5</u>
	40	100

APPENDIX B

Facts Concerning: Background, Occupation, and Education.

1. How long have you been in the United State?
2. Are you a. first generation immigrant b. second c. third
3. What made you emigrate to the United States?
a. economic reasons b. political reasons c. education
4. Did you speak English when you arrived? a. yes b. no
5. Are you a. palestinian b. Lebanese c. Yemeni
6. Do you live a. in the southend b. east Dearborn
7. Do you work outside the home?
a. never worked b. work presently.
8. What was the occupation of the head of the family in your homeland?
9. What is his occupation now?
11. Why did you migrate to this area?

Arabic Ethnicity.

1. What do you like most about this area?
2. What is the percentage of your Arab friends?
a. 100% b. 75% c. 50%
3. Are all your social activities with Arabs? a. yes b. no
4. Do you practice the same social habits like cooking, religious practice, visiting, socializing of the old country?
a. all the time b. some of the time c. never.
5. Are most of your neighbors Arabs? a. yes b. no
6. How often do you visit your neighbors?
a. once a day b. twice a day c. twice a week or less.
7. At home do you speak Arabic
a. always b. often c. rarely d. never.

8. Do your children speak Arabic?
a. yes b. no c. a little
9. Do you listen to Arabic radio, watch Arabic videos, and Arabic television?
a. always b. sometimes c. never.
10. Are all your needs met in your neighborhoods, or do you find it necessary to go somewhere else?

Religion

1. Are you a. Shiah b. Sunni
2. Do you wear the traditional Islamic outfit: the "hijab" and the scarf? a. yes b. no
3. Do you fast for Ramadan? a. yes b. sometimes c. no
4. Do you pray five times a day? a. yes b. no c. sometimes
5. Do you attend the mosque regularly? a. yes b. no
6. Do you drink alcohol? a. yes b. no
7. Do you eat pork? a. yes b. no
8. Suppose a Moslem girl fell in love with a Christian boy and wanted to marry him, what do you think her parents should do?
a. give their approval b. should not approve c. approve if he converts to Islam
9. Suppose a Moslem boy fell in love with a Christian girl and wanted to marry her, what do you think his parents should do?
a. give their approval b. should not approve c. approve if she converts to Islam.

Kinship

1. In your household does the man have the main authority, or are the responsibilities shared with the wife?
a. the man is the head of the household b. man and wife share responsibilities.
2. Do you feel a woman needs her husband's permission before engaging in outside activities?
a. yes b. no

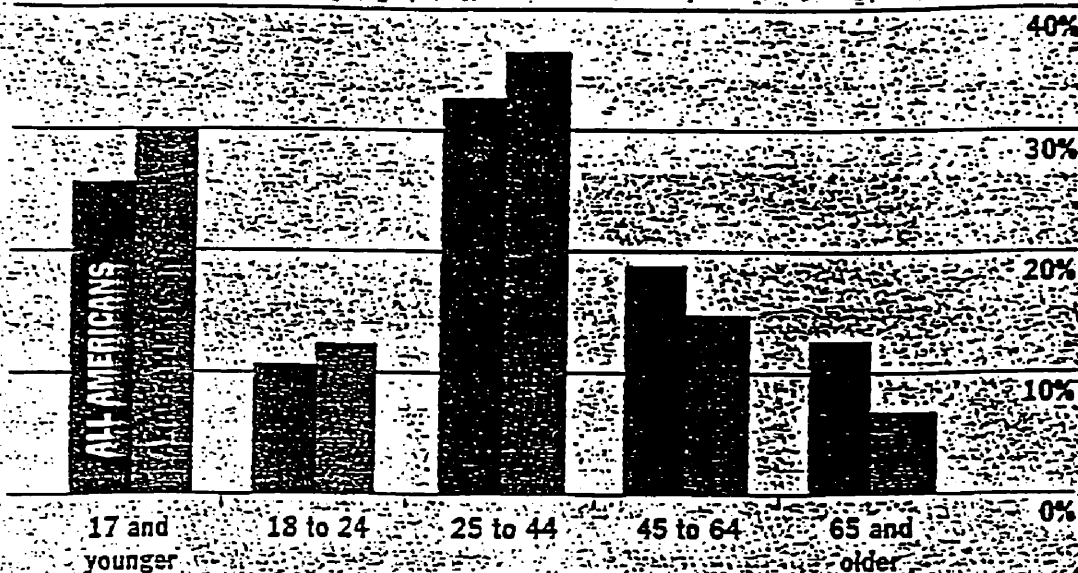
How Respondents Feel about the United States

1. What do you consider yourself?
a. Arab b. Arab-American c. American
2. Would you like to remain in the United States, or go back to your own country?
a. remain in the U.S. b. go back c. unsure
3. Do you face prejudice as an Arab-American?
a. yes b. no c. sometimes
4. Do you feel the media portrays Arabs fairly?
a. Yes b. no
5. Have you found that cultural pluralism is tolerated in the U.S. more than in your homeland? a. yes b. no
6. Are you overwhelmed by the openness of Western culture?
a. yes b. no
7. Do you feel a conflict between your traditional beliefs and customs, and the American way of life?
a. yes b. no c. sometimes.
8. Do you like living in the United States?
a. yes b. no

ARAB AMERICANS ARE YOUNG...

*Forty-eight percent of Arab Americans are aged 18 to 44,
compared with 43 percent of all Americans.*

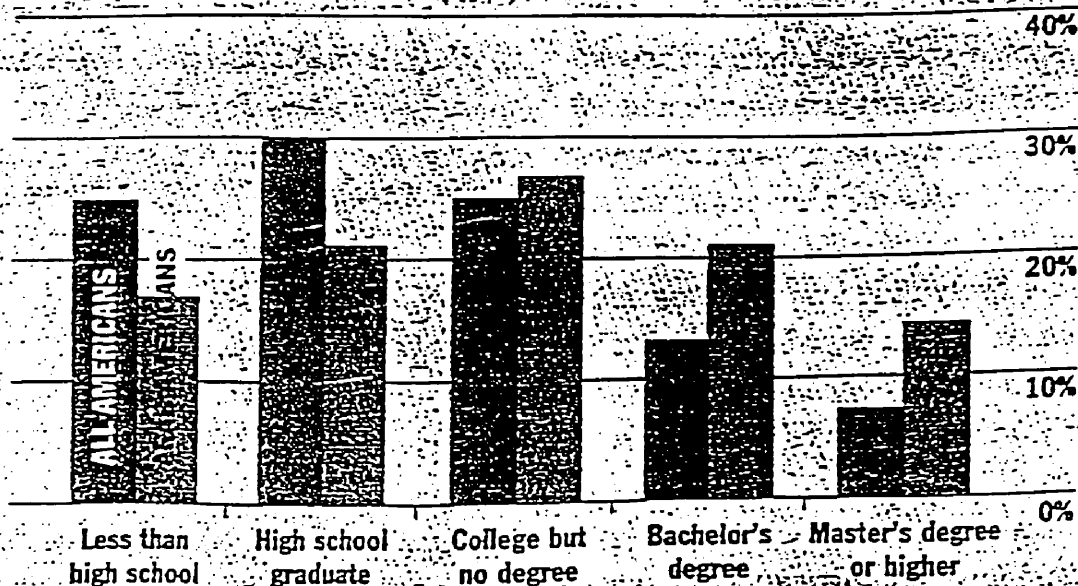
(percent of Arab-American and U.S. population, by age, 1990)



...AND WELL-EDUCATED

*Sixty-two percent of Arab Americans have been to college,
compared with 45 percent of all Americans.*

(percent of Arab-American and U.S. population aged 25 and older
by educational attainment, 1990)



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