

The Acculturation Modes of Arab Americans: An Empirical Study on the Effects of Gender, Religion, Nationality and Sojourner Status

Gaby SEMAAN
University of Toledo, USA

Abstract: This research focused on individuals of Arab ancestry residing in the U.S. and examined various factors that might influence their cultural identity. The research examined the effects of religion, nationality, and gender on participants' attitude toward the original and host cultures and perceived discrimination. It also examined the effects of religion, nationality (Arab country of origin), gender, immigration generation, perceived discrimination, and sojourner status on acculturation mode. Data were collected from 304 participants living in 13 states with origins from 10 Arab countries. The participants were provided with self-administered questionnaires with closed-ended questions. This study found that nationality and religion had significant effects on participants' attitude toward Arab country of origin and perceived discrimination by the host culture. In addition, immigration generation and sojourner status affected acculturation modes. The results of this study showed among other things that the major acculturation modes of Arab Americans in this sample were integration and assimilation.

Keywords: Arabs, Arab Americans, acculturation modes, Arab diaspora, cultural groups

1. Introduction

Arab Americans have been living in the U.S. since the second half of the 19th century (Hitti, 1923) and historically make up more than a 100-year-old tile in the mosaic of cultural groups in the country. However, since the US Census data does not have a category for Arab Americans and requires them to identify as White, the erasure of a distinct identity of this group within the White racial dominance made Arab Americans invisible until the late 1960s when, as Suleiman (1999) says, "members of the third generation of the early Arab immigrants had started to awaken to their own identity and to see that identity as Arab" (p.10).

However, since then, their visibility fluctuated between visible and invisible depending on the political climate and events happening in this country and abroad. More recently, Arab Americans became a very visible group in the United States following the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Haddad, 2004; Howell & Shryock, 2003). Not only did they become more visible, but also they became the object of perceived hatred and discrimination and the target of hate-crime (Fear among Arabs and Muslims, 2005; Haddad, 2004; Howell & Shryock, 2003; Muneer, 2002; Shryock, 2002; Witteborn, 2004; Zogby, 2001) and at the same time they received support and friendship (Haddad, 2004; Howell & Shryock, 2003; Salaita, 2005).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau Special Reports (2005), 75% of Arabs in the United States either spoke only English at their homes or spoke English very well. The Census Bureau (2005) reported that the four largest Arab groups are Lebanese (29%), Egyptian (14.5%), Syrian (8.9%) and

Palestinian (4.2%). In addition, it reported that the majority of the Arab population is male (57%). It stated that the proportion of the Arab population with a high school diploma or bachelor's degree was higher than the national average and the same was true regarding the median income of Arab men, women, and families.

In addition to the Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, and Palestinian ancestry reported by the Census, the heterogeneous composition of Arab Americans today includes people who came from Jordan, Iraq, Morocco, Yemen, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Kuwait, Libya, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain. It also includes some who reported Berber, Kurdish, Bedouin, and Alhuceman background in the 2000 Census.

Semaan (2014) points out that published works about the acculturation of Arab Americans are either based on studying the Muslim communities, many times including non-Arab Muslims (e.g. Ajrouch, 1999; Elkholy, 1966; Haddad & Lummis, 1987; Haddad, 2004) or are based on adopting the four types of Berry's (1980) model of acculturation without supporting research (e.g. Awad, 2010; Haddad, 2004; Shain, 1996; Suleiman, 1994, 1999). Thus, this study, which is part of a bigger ongoing research, attempts to bridge this gap, studying exclusively the acculturation modes of Arab Americans based on valid and reliable measurements. In this research, the term Arab American is used in harmony with Suleiman's (1999) definition to refer to all or any immigrants to the U.S. from any of the 22 Arabic speaking countries and their descendants.

2. Literature Review

It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive literature review of all the research done about Arab Americans. However, Semaan (2014) provided a detailed categorization of academic and scholarly work published on this ethnic group. Research on Arab Americans is grouped into four main categories (Semaan, 2014). The first is the negative stereotyped image of Arab Americans in the Western media (Shaheen, 1984, 1998, 2001; Suleiman, 1988, 1999; Zaharana, 1995; Hashem, 1995; Mousa, 2000; Kamalipour 2000). The second widely studied area concerns media coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Terry, 1975; Suleiman, 1975; McClure, 1975; Samo, 1975; Shain, 1996; Banks, 2003; Ibrahim, 2009).

In addition, a third category in Arab American research relates to the historical perspective of their immigration to the United States and their identity formation. Semaan (2013) provided an overview of the three different immigration waves starting from the 1870s till 2010 and identified a fourth immigration wave that began after the beginning of the so called "Arab Spring" in 2010. Semaan (2013) discussed the characteristics, challenges and other political, religious and economic factors that had an impact on this ethnic group. In addition to mentioning the three immigration waves, Semaan (2013, 2014) identified the above mentioned fourth immigration wave. The first immigration wave extended from the 1870s to World War I and was characterized by an immigration that came from the Levant, from the territory that after the fall of the Ottoman Empire became the states of Lebanon and Syria. This first wave was also mainly made up of immigrants with Christian religious affiliation and almost fully assimilated into the host culture (Semaan, 2013, 2014; Suleiman 1994; Naff, 1985; Hitti, 1923). The second wave was almost insignificant; it started in 1924 when the National Origin Act was put in effect reducing the quota of Middle Eastern immigrants to 100 persons per year. This immigration wave mainly consisted of wives and families joining their husbands who had immigrated during

the first wave (Semaan, 2013; Naff 1985, 1994; Suleiman 1994).

The third wave of Arab American immigrants started after World War II and extended to 2010. This wave witnessed the immigration of educated and politicized Arabs who came from different Arab countries and many of whom were Muslims (Naff 1985, 1994; Suleiman 1994; Semaan, 2013). Those immigrants and the previous ones started to develop a form of cultural identity as a response to issues happening in their countries of origin (Semaan, 2013; Suleiman 1994).

The fourth wave that Semaan (2013, 2014) identified started after 2010 and extends to the present. This immigration wave comes mainly from the Levant, includes both Muslims and Christians and is mainly from Iraq and Syria. Among those who studied the history and touched on cultural identity of Arab American immigration are Hitti (1923), Elkholy (1966), Naff's (1985, 1994), Friedhelm (1986), Suleiman (1994), Haddad (1994); Haddad and Lummis (1987), Shain (1996), Seikaly (1999), Ajrouch (1999), and Joseph (1999) among others.

The fourth area of research about Arab Americans surfaced after September 11, 2001 as organizations, such as Zogby International, conducted surveys and scholars focused on the implications of the 9/11/01 attacks against the United States (Semaan, 2014). Others, such as Muneer (2002) and Shryock (2002) said that the attacks forced Arab Americans to exaggerate their American identity. Also, Witteborn's (2004) and Haddad (2004) studied identification labels preferred by Arab Americans. Haddad (2004) asserted that due to hatred, many Arabs are "re-identifying themselves as Arab-American or Muslim - American" (p. 51). However, Haddad said that there are many questions that Arab immigrants in the United States need to answer regarding what identity they want, an American identity or a hyphenated one, and what impact their religious affiliation plays in forming this identity? Furthermore, Salaita (2005) claimed that the September 11 attacks did not alter the negative or positive stereotyped images of Arab Americans; rather, they reinforced the positive and negative pre-existing attitudes. In a related study but not exclusively focusing on Arabs, Awad (2010) studied the bearing of acculturation and religious affiliation of Middle Eastern Americans, including Arabs, on perceived discrimination of her participants. Abu Absi (2010) published an edited book about Arab According to Berry's model, if the attitude one has toward maintaining cultural identity and characteristics is positive and the attitude toward the host culture is negative, the outcome is isolation or separation. In this case, the individual or group will maintain its ethnic identity and cultural traditions without participating in those of the host culture. However, if the case was the opposite, where the person or group considers acceptance of the host culture positively and views maintaining his/her/its cultural identity negatively, then assimilation occurs. In this case, the group would sacrifice its own cultural heritage on behalf of adopting that of the majority culture. The other two possible outcomes of this model are marginalization and integration. Marginalization happens when attitudes to both one's own and host cultures are negative. On the other hand, integration occurs when attitudes toward both cultures are positive. This means maintaining one's original cultural identity and practices and as well as adapting to the host culture. Since this study is examining the acculturation modes of Arab Americans, Berry's acculturation model was chosen. Table 1 presents a summary of the possible results of Berry's model based on the attitudes toward the two cultures. Americans in Toledo, Ohio and their assimilation into the city's life and Semaan (2010) also studied the ethnic identification preferences for Arab Americans in Toledo, Ohio.

3. Theoretical Background

The theoretical framework of this research is based on Berry's acculturation model (Berry 1980, 2003)

and benefits from Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Berry's acculturation model is applicable to both individuals and groups (Hayani, 1999). This model is based on the attitudes of an individual or a minority group toward the value of maintaining its cultural identity and characteristics and toward the value of maintaining relationships with the dominant group or host culture. The four outcomes that Berry (1980, 2003) suggested are isolation, assimilation, integration and marginalization.

Table 1. Outcomes of Berry's (1980, 2003)_Acculturation Model

The Four Different Possible Forms of Acculturation		
	Positive value to maintain relationships with host culture	Negative value to maintain relationships with host culture
Positive value of maintaining cultural identity	Integration	Isolation
Negative value of maintaining cultural identity	Assimilation	Marginalization

Another informing theoretical background for this study is SIT. This theory consists of three parts: social categorization, social comparison and social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). SIT stresses the importance of considering threats to group identity when examining attitudes and behaviors. Thus, this theory warns of the impact of perceived discrimination of the majority group in the host culture against a minority or ethnic group on the latter's cultural adaptation (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). The literature review pointed out that Arab Americans have been stereotyped, discriminated against and, especially after 9/11/01, they experienced hostility and hatred. Because of these reasons, SIT seems an appropriate theoretical framework that informs this study.

4. Research Questions

Literature on Arab Americans suggests differences in cultural identity's importance to Arabs immigrating in different immigration waves. It suggested that the first wave, which was mainly Christians, almost fully assimilated into the host culture and not until the immigration wave after 1967 did Arab cultural and ethnic identities come to the forefront (Semaan, 2013, Suleiman 1994, Naff 1985, 1994; Hitti 1923). Thus, when studying acculturation modes, it is important to examine the effects of the religious affiliation of participants on their acculturation. The same is true regarding ethnicity. The first wave of Arab immigrants were not only Christians but also came mainly from Lebanon and Syria; however, the later wave came from other Arab countries. Thus, it is important to look at the effects of nationality on acculturation modes. In addition, some studies (e.g. Elkholy, 1966; Naff 1985; Ajrouch, 1999) addressed the role women played in preserving cultural identity of Arab immigrants. Thus, looking whether differences in attitude toward the original and host cultures and maintenance of cultural identity, and thus in acculturation modes, exist between the males and females is justified and necessary. Similarly, social Identity Theory (SIT) suggests that the degree to which a group perceives discrimination affects their integration into the host culture; Arab Americans suffered from negative

stereotypes in many different ways (Shaheen, 1984, 1998, 2001); thus, Perceived Discrimination is included as a variable. Taking this into consideration, this research firstly questions the relationship between these variables and Acculturation Mode and its constituents.

RQ1: How do religion, nationality and gender affect:

- (a) attitude toward Arab cultural background?
- (b) attitude toward the host American culture?
- (c) perceived discrimination against Arabs by host country?
- (d) acculturation mode (i.e., isolation, integration, assimilation, marginalization)?

Moreover, research on acculturation suggests that second and subsequent generations of immigrants show different acculturation patterns from the first generation (Gordon, 1986; Hayani, 1999). Thus, the author finds it important to question the effect of Immigration Generation on Acculturation Mode.

RQ2: What is the relationship between immigration generation and acculturation mode?

Furthermore, SIT suggests that the more an ethnic minority group perceives negative out-group attitudes, the stronger the in-group identification will be. In other words, the social position minority or ethnic groups acquire in the host culture is not simply dependent on their own choices but also on the perceived openness of the host society (Berry & Sam, 1996; Gordon, 1964). This raises the third research question regarding the relationship between Perceived Discrimination and the participants' Acculturation Modes.

RQ 3: Does perceived discrimination against Arab Americans influences the participants' acculturation modes?

Moreover, Arab Americans who came with the view to spend a few years during which they accumulated some wealth and then return to their country were less concerned about their role within the host culture than those who realized that they were here to stay or those who came with that view in mind (Semaan, 2013; Suleiman 1994, 1999; Naff 1985, 1994). Thus, this research questions the relationship between Sojourner Status and acculturation Mode.

RQ 4: Do respondents who plan to move back to their country of origin show different acculturation modes than those who do not?

5. Methodology

5.1. Sampling Design

The author used snowball sampling. In snowball sampling, "members of the target population... are asked to provide names and addresses of other members of the target population, who are then contacted and asked to name others" (Singleton & Straits, 2005, p 138). This sampling design depends on some sort of referral, where the participants contacted at the beginning of the data gathering process identify other members of the target population who might be willing to participate in the study. The author chose this design because of the concern that participants might have thinking that this study is some kind of undercover scheme from a certain government agency or group and thus either refuse to

participate or participate giving false information that they assume will keep them out of trouble.

5.2. Participants

A total of 304 individuals (159 females, 143 males, and one gender unknown) participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 84. The majority of participants were married ($n = 171$) with 102 single respondents. The remaining participants ($n = 31$) reported that they were engaged, widowed, or divorced. One hundred and sixty-nine (56%) of the respondents reported a Christian religious affiliation, 125 (41%) reported a Muslim religious affiliation, and 10 (3%) respondents reported other religious affiliations such as Druze, agnostics, or Atheists.

The majority of the participants ($n = 190$, 63%) reported being born outside the United States and 37% reported being born in the United States. The majority of respondents reported that they have American citizenship ($n = 245$ participants, 81%), 18% ($n = 54$) reported carrying a green card, and the remaining respondents reported other status without specifying it. Hatab (2007) reported that more than 80% of Arab Americans have citizenship. So the large proportion of citizens in this sample is not unusual. The participants lived in 13 states with the highest rate of participation from Ohio ($n = 117$, 39%), Michigan ($n = 78$, 26%) and Pennsylvania ($n = 66$, 22%). As for the respondents' or their Arab ancestors' Arab countries of origin, the majority reporting their Arab origin were from Lebanon ($n = 132$, 46%), Syria ($n = 77$, 27%), or Palestine ($n = 34$, 12%). Twenty-one participants did not specify their own or their ancestors' Arab country of origin. It is worth mentioning that the distribution of nationalities in this study's sample corresponded with the distribution of Arab groups reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2005) except for the Egyptians, who accounted for 14.5% of the Arab American population in the report For the breakdown of the participants' Arab country of origin, see Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' Reported Arab Country of Origin

Arab Country of Origin	# of participants	Percent
Egypt	9	3%
Iraq	11	4%
Jordan	11	4%
Kuwait	2	1%
Lebanon	131	46%
Libya	2	1%
Palestine	34	12%
Saudi Arabia	1	0.4%
Syria	77	27%
Yemen	5	1.6%

5.3. Data Collection

To collect the data for this study, the author used self-administered written surveys. The survey intended to collect data for an ongoing bigger research and thus, the survey consisted of 50 closed and open-ended questions (See Appendix for the survey questions relevant to this study). Of the 450 distributed

questionnaires, 310 were returned out of which 304 were used. Six questionnaires were not used because they were returned unanswered or partially answered. An Arabic version of the questionnaire was created for the use of participants who were not proficient in reading English or preferred to answer the survey in Arabic. The Arabic translation was prepared by the author, a native speaker of Arabic who , and was revised by another When participants were initially contacted, they were given the choice between a questionnaire in English or in Arabic. Out of the 304 completed questionnaires, 14 were completed in Arabic.

5.4. Research Sites

Three different locations were used as entry gates. The first was Toledo, Ohio where about 15,000 Arab Americans (Semaan, 2001) live. Of the 304 participants, 83 were from Toledo. Allentown, Pennsylvania was the second entry point with an Arab population similar to that of Toledo (Semaan, 2001). From Allentown, 53 participants were recruited. The third major site for data collection in this study was Dearborn, Michigan where there is a highly populated Arab community; according to the 2000 U.S. Census figures, there are 96,625 people of Arab ancestry living in metropolitan Detroit. From there, 48 participants were recruited.

The three sites increased the heterogeneity of the population of Arab Americans in the sample, and thus increased the representation of the population's different ethnic and religious affiliations. However, because snowball sample was used, the author was able to recruit participants from other states. These states included Arizona (n = 10, 3%), California (n = 3, 1%), Florida (n = 3, 1%), Illinois (n = 10, 3%), New York (n = 4, 1%), New Mexico (n = 3, 1%), and Texas (n = 3, 1%). Less than 1% of the total participants came from Iowa, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

6. Variables and Their Measurements

Religion. Participants were asked to report their religious affiliation. The available choices for this question were: Christian, Muslim, Druze, Agnostic, Atheist, and other.

Nationality. Participants were asked to specify the nation from which they or their Arab ancestors immigrated. The question asked them to specify the country from where they or their Arab ancestors originally immigrated.

Gender. Participants were asked to choose one of the two options male or female.

Immigration Generation. To identify whether a participant belongs to a first generation of immigrants or second and subsequent generations of immigrants, participants were asked to indicate whether they were born in or outside the United States. Those born inside the United States are considered to be second or beyond generation and those born outside the United States are considered to be first generation immigrants.

Sojourner Status. Sojourner status refers to whether participants plan to stay in the host culture or return permanently to their country of origin. The questionnaire identified immigrants who plan to move back to their country by asking on a five-point scale anchored by 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely) the likelihood of respondents permanently returning to their country of origin within the next five years. This question was reverse coded. Another question asked on a five point scale anchored by 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely) the likelihood of respondents permanently considering the U.S.

to be their home within the next five years. An index was created by averaging the scores for the two questions (Cronbach's alpha = .68, $M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.06$).

Perceived Discrimination. To describe the respondents' perceived openness of the host culture and their experience of discrimination, the questionnaire used three questions. One question asked how welcoming the American mainstream is to Arab Americans. Responses were reported on a five-point scale anchored by 1 (not welcoming at all) to 5 (very welcoming). This item was reverse coded. Another question asked about the frequency with which the participant had personally experienced discrimination within the past year. The third question asked the participants to report how many people with their cultural background they personally know that have experienced discrimination in the past year because of their cultural background. Answers for the second and third questions were reported on a five-point scale anchored by 1 (not at all) to 5 (almost all). Responses to the three questions were averaged, after reverse coding the question how welcoming the American mainstream is to Arab Americans to create an index for perceived discrimination (Cronbach's alpha = 0.66, $M = 2.49$, $SD = 0.99$).

Attitudes toward Own Arab Culture and American Host Culture. To measure the attitudes of the participants toward Arab and American cultures, the questionnaire used eight items, four for each culture. On a five-point scale anchored by 1 (not at all proud) to 5 (very proud), the participants were asked to report how proud they are of their Arab culture and a similar question asked about pride in American culture. Another question asked about the emotional ties the participants had to their or their ancestors' country of origin whereas a similar question asked about the emotional ties to the United States. Participants rated their emotional ties on five-point scales anchored by 1 (not at all) to 5 (very strong). The questionnaire included items about the participants' perception of the importance of preserving cultural identity and the importance of adapting to the host American culture using a five-point scale anchored 1 (not at all) to 5 (very important). The other two questions asked about the importance of the learning and/or retaining Arabic language and learning and/or retaining English language using a similar five-point scale. These questions were adapted from similar questions used by Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) when studying cultural maintenance and adaptation between minority and majority adolescents in the Netherlands. Elkholy (1966), Haddad (1994), Hayani (1999), Zogby (2001) and the Arab American Institute (2002) employed similar questions. Answers to the four questions for attitude toward each culture were averaged to create an index for attitude toward Arab culture (Cronbach's alpha = 0.68, $M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.73$) and another index for attitude toward host culture (Cronbach's alpha = 0.69, $M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.77$).

Acculturation Modes: As Berry (1980) suggested, the mode of acculturation of a certain group or individual is affected by the attitudes this group or individual have toward both the original and host cultures. The four outcomes that Berry (1980) suggested are isolation, assimilation, integration and marginalization. To describe the acculturation modes of the participants in the sample, the author used the responses of the participants to the variables of attitudes toward Arab culture and their attitude toward the host culture. After calculating the means of the items measuring each variable, scores below the mean on both variables were considered to be showing negative attitudes both toward maintaining their cultural identity and toward the host culture and thus were fit into the marginalization category. Scores above the mean on both showed integration. On the other hand, a score above the mean on maintaining Arab cultural identity together with below the mean on attitude toward the host culture were fit into isolation. Finally, scores below the mean on maintaining Arab cultural identity and above the mean on attitude toward the host culture were fit into assimilation.

7. Results

I ran stepwise regression where I entered city as a control variable on the first step and entered the other independent variables on the second step. The participants ($n = 10$) who reported religious affiliations other than Christian or Muslim were eliminated from the analyses. The small number ($n = 41$) who reported a nationality other than Lebanese, Palestinian, or Syrian, were combined into an Other category. For all of the research questions, the independent variables included religion (Christian or Muslim), nationality (Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, or Other) and/or gender (male, female).

Research Question 1a: Predicting Attitude toward the Arab Culture. The regression model showed significance on religion and nationality ($F(7, 293) = 4.04, p = .0003, R^2 = .09$) but not on gender. Participants' attitudes toward their Arab cultural background were relatively favorable ($M = 4.31, SD = .73$), but Muslims ($M = 4.54, SD = .61$) had more favorable attitude toward their Arab cultural background than Christians ($M = 4.27, SD = 0.6; B = -.27, t(291) = -2.68, p = .008$) and Syrians ($M = 4.6; SD = .5$) had more favorable attitudes than those grouped in the Other category ($M = 4.18; SD = .8, B = -.39, t(116) = -2.98, p = 0.02$).

Research Question 1b: Predicting Attitude toward the American Host Culture. The stepwise regression results indicated significant differences in the independent variable nationality, $F(3, 301) = 3.25, p = .02, R^2 = .03$. Although the average attitude toward the host American culture was favorable ($M = 3.86, SD = .77$), Syrian participants had significantly more positive attitudes ($M = 4.04, SD = .7$) toward the host culture than Palestinians ($M = 3.55, SD = .6, B = -.25, t(109) = 1.71, p = .01$). However, no significant differences were detected in any of the other independent variables.

To compare attitude toward Arab culture and attitude toward the host American culture I ran two sample t tests. The results showed that on average, Christians and Muslims had more favorable attitudes toward Arab cultural background ($M = 4.09, SD = .8$ and $M = 4.34, SD = .6$ respectively) than toward the American host culture ($M = 3.84, SD = .68, t(168) = -3.35, p < .03$ and $M = 3.63, SD = .88, t(124) = -6.83, p < .0001$ respectively).

Research Question 1c: Predicting perceived discrimination. Both religion and nationality had a significant effect on perceived discrimination, $F(4, 289) = 10.01, p < .0001, R^2 = .01$. Although respondents did not perceive extensive discrimination ($M = 2.5, SD = .99$), Muslim participants ($M = 2.78, SD = .9$) were significantly more likely than Christians ($M = 2.31, SD = .98, B = -.04, t(287) = -3.84, p = .0001$) to perceive discrimination against them by the host culture. As for countries, significant difference in perceived discrimination was found between Palestinians and Syrians where Palestinians ($M = 2.87, SD = .77$) were more likely than Syrians ($M = 2.29, SD = 1.0, B = -.08, t(109) = -0.52, p = .03$) to perceive discrimination against Arabs by the host culture.

Research Questions 1d, 2, 3 and 4: Predicting Acculturation Mode. Several research questions focused on potential determinants of acculturation mode. RQ1d examined the effects of religion, nationality and gender. RQ2 explored effect of the immigration generation. RQ3 asked about the effect of perceived discrimination by the host culture, and RQ4 examined the effect of respondents' sojourner status, or their plans to move back

to their or their ancestors' Arab country. For these questions, participants were assigned to one of the four categories of the acculturation model (i.e., integration, assimilation, isolation, and marginalization) based on their attitudes toward Arab culture and their attitude toward the host culture. Table 3 shows the overall acculturation modes of the participants.

Table 3. Acculturation Mode of Participants

	Integration	Assimilation	Isolation	Marginalization	Total
# of Participants	186	86	26	6	304
Percentage	61.18	28.29	8.55	1.97	100

To answer the research questions, I used a multcategory logit because the dependent variable acculturation mode is categorical and has more than two outcomes. I kept the continuous variables (i.e., perceived discrimination, sojourner status) as such because the multcategory logit accepts both categorical and continuous variables. Due to the small number ($n = 6$) of participants showing marginalization, this category was dropped. The analysis showed no significant differences in acculturation modes based on the participants' religious affiliation $\chi^2(2, N = 288) = 5.48, p = .06$, nationality $\chi^2(6, N = 298) = 7.43, p = .28$, gender, or perceived discrimination $\chi^2(2, N = 294) = 4.47, p = .11$. However, immigration generation was significantly associated with participants' acculturation modes $\chi^2(2, N = 296) = 35.47, p < .0001$ and so was sojourner status $\chi^2(2, N = 304) = 28.87, p < .0001$ (See Table 4)

Table 4. Maximum Likelihood Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Chi-Square	Significance
Religion	2	5.48	$p = 0.06$
Immigration generation	2	35.47	$p < .0001$
Perceived discrimination	2	4.47	$p = 0.11$
Sojourner status	2	28.87	$p < .0001$
Country	6	7.43	$p = 0.28$

As for how immigration generation affected the acculturation mode, the multcategory logit showed that when compared to those born outside the United States, participants who were born in the U.S. were less likely to have an acculturation mode of integration (-0.96) or isolation (-0.65) than an acculturation mode of assimilation, controlling for sojourner status (See Table 5).

As for sojourner status, keeping the immigration generation fixed, comparing integration to assimilation ($2 * -.7148 = -1.4296$) $e^{-1.4296} = .24$, for each unit increase in sojourner status, move back to country of origin or stay in the United States, the odds of integration over assimilation is multiplied by .24. Comparing isolation to assimilation, ($2 * -1.5957 = -3.1914$) $e^{-3.1914} = 0.04$,) keeping the immigration generation fixed, for each unit increase in sojourner status, move back to country of origin or stay in the United States, the odds of isolation over assimilation is multiplied by .04.

Furthermore, comparing integration to isolation, keeping the immigration generation fixed, for each unit increase in sojourner status the odds of isolation over integration is multiplied by 5.82. To split the sojourner status into two discrete groups, I used mean split. I assigned participants whose score

on sojourner status was below three (on a scale from 1 to 5) to group “move back” and those whose score was above three to group “stay.” Those whose score on sojourner status was three (n = 44), were excluded from both groups. Participants who reported that they most likely will move back to their country of origin were a small number (n = 37), nevertheless, they showed mainly an acculturation mode of integration or isolation whereas those who reported that they are most likely to make the U.S. their permanent home not only were the majority (n = 223) but also were more likely to integrate or assimilate rather than show an acculturation mode of isolation. Table 6 shows the breakdown of acculturation mode by sojourner status.

Table 5. Results of Multinomial Logistics Regression of Acculturation Mode of Sojourner Status and Immigration Generation

	Integration	Isolation
Immigration generation	-0.96*** (.15)	-0.65*** (.29)
Sojourner status	-0.17*** (.20)	-1.60*** (.28)
Intercept	3.80*** (.91)	5.03*** (1.10)
N	186	26

Total N = 304 (cf. Table 3)

Notes: Reference category for the equation is ACCULT_MODE of Assimilation

ACCULT_MODE of Marginalization was dropped due to low counts

Standard errors are in parentheses

*p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Table 6. Acculturation Mode of Participants

Frequency Percent Row Pct	Integration	Assimilation	Isolation	Total
Stay (U.S. Permanent Home)	135 51.92 60.52	79 30.38 35.43	9 3.49 4.04	223 85.77
Move Back	24 9.23 64.86	1 .38 2.70	12 4.62 32.43	37 14.23
Total	159 61.15	80 30.77	21 8.08	260 100.00

8. Discussion

In the questionnaire for this research, the term ethnic was used to refer to the original Arab nationality of the participants or their ancestors. Nationality was the independent variable that affected most

dependent variables in this research, although its effects were small. The third wave Arab American immigrants were educated and came with elevated nationalistic emotions which were revived following the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 (Sueliman, 1999) and, as this research showed, nationality remains an important factor in creating the Arab American diasporic identity for these research participants.

Syrian participants were the national group that consistently differed from some other Arab national groups. Syrians had significantly more positive attitudes toward their Arab cultural background than participants grouped in the category Other. Syrians had more positive attitudes toward the host culture than Palestinians and Syrians were also less likely than Palestinians to perceive discrimination by the host culture. This result could be attributed to many factors including the national spirit that Syrians are known for and to the ongoing multi-faceted war that is going on in Syria for the past few years.

In the past century, Arabs' identity consciousness resulted not only from the degree of education and rising decolonization movements in the Arab countries but also from the perceptions of an unjust American stand toward Arabs. For the past few years, American politics were unfriendly, even hostile some might argue, toward Syria and thus highest positive attitude toward Arab culture among participants of Syrian origins could be a result of the perceptions of biased American politics against Syria, whether toward the ruling regime or the shy support toward the so called Syrian opposition. Still, the same participants showed a positive attitude to the American host culture and low perceptions of discrimination. As for the significantly higher perception of discrimination and less favorable attitudes toward America by participants with Palestinian background, it is most likely due to the reasons regarding the American political stand toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The other two determinants of cultural identity of Arab Americans in this research were immigration generation and sojourner status. These two variables also had small effects. Those who were born in the host culture were more likely to show an acculturation mode of assimilation than integration or isolation. This is a predictable finding as we expect that second generation immigrants would assimilate more easily than first generation immigrants. However, immigration generation interacted with sojourner status in affecting acculturation modes. As for sojourner status, the results indicated that the majority ($n = 24$, 65%) of the small number of participants ($n = 37$) who indicated their desire to move back to their country of origin showed an acculturation mode of integration. Regarding those who indicated that they planned to make the U.S. their permanent home, their acculturation modes were mainly those of integration and assimilation.

In respect to perceived discrimination, 19% of the respondents reported perceived discrimination higher than the mean. This percentage is comparatively low and similar to the 20% reported by Zogby (2001) and less than the 30% reported in Zogby (2002). In addition 23% reported that they personally knew someone who suffered discrimination in the past year due to their cultural background. This figure was 45% in Zogby's report in 2002. However, percentages from this research's sample cannot be taken as accurate estimates of the population parameters because this sample was not random. These results show either that Arab Americans perceive less discrimination or that the events that are taking place in the Middle East, in countries such as Egypt, Libya, Syria and Palestine make Arab Americans feel more secure in the U.S. and thus maybe perceive less discrimination and more welcoming attitudes.

9. Theoretical Implications

The purpose of this study was not to test the theoretical framework guiding it; however, it has implications for both Berry's acculturation model and Tajfel and Turner's Situated Identity Theory

(SIT). The findings of the study support Berry's (1980, 2003) bidirectional model of acculturation's suggestion that an individual or group can have strong feelings toward two cultures. Participants in this study showed strong positive attitudes toward both Arab cultural background ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .73$) and toward the host culture ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .78$). Berry's (1980, 2003) acculturation model suggested that individuals can strategically make different acculturation choices in different situations. This research's findings are also in harmony with Berry's (1980, 2003) acculturation model that allows individuals to tailor their acculturation modes based on circumstances and preferences and thus allows for different forms and ways of acculturation.

However, this research did not support what SIT suggested regarding a relationship between perceived discrimination and acculturation or adaptation to the new culture (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). In fact, perceived discrimination of the participants did not have any significant effect on their acculturation modes. This could be due to the relatively low level of perceived discrimination the participants showed ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 1$). Yet, the finding that Muslim participants perceived more discrimination than Christian participants ($M = 2.78$, $SD = .9$, $M = 2.31$, $SD = .98$ respectively) is in harmony with what SIT suggested. Muslims in this context are out-group members, in a Christian majority population.

These results suggest the need to revise and extend SIT to account for the complex relationships between perceived discrimination, adaptation to the new culture, and the different affiliations or identities individuals have. Individuals and groups may perceive discrimination by the host culture and yet strategically adapt and acculturate for different reasons.

10. Strengths and Limitations

Like all research projects, this study has its strengths and limitations. First, this study expanded upon past research that looked at the cultural identity of Arab Americans; however, unlike past studies that included other Muslims or Middle Easterners who were not Arabs, this study exclusively included Arab Americans with origins from different Arab countries. In addition, the length to which steps were taken to provide integrity with the data collection process was a strength for this study. Social desirability effects were not as likely to occur because the surveys were self-administered and completed anonymously; the identities of the participants were protected by not asking any questions that would identify any particular participant. In addition, this study expanded on some qualitative research, such as that of Witteborn (2004) and included participants of both genders.

Furthermore, this research was first to focus on the cultural identity of Arab Americans exclusively, without studying others who may be Muslims or Middle Easterners but not Arabs, and it statistically studied the acculturation modes of Arab Americans by investigating the participants' views and responses rather than classifying them into Berry's acculturation mode without any supporting data.

However, this study had weakness and limitations. In this study, the author measured attitude toward host culture and attitude toward maintenance of original culture as continuous variables and then used this information to classify participants into one of the four acculturation modes. Reducing interval level variables to categorical variables reduces the number and power of statistical analyses available. So, using the interval measures rather than the categorical variables might strengthen future research. In addition this study shares the inherent limitations of self-administered surveys, such as not allowing for in-depth follow up questions and the influence the length of the questionnaire and the

clarity of questions can leave on the participant.

Additionally, this research's results are limited in generalization to the population of Arab Americans. This limitation is due to the data collection method: snowball sampling. It was beyond the author's resources to obtain a sampling frame of all Arab Americans from which to draw a random sample.

11. Conclusion and Future Research

In harmony with the results of previous polls (e.g. Zogby 2001, 2002), the participants in this study are proud of their Arab heritage and at the same time are integrating into the American main stream as they are showing positive attitudes toward the American host culture. Although they positively view their cultural identity, they are also integrating into the host culture. An additional area of future research would be to study the ways this cultural group is integrating into the host culture and examine the different features of this integration.

As this research showed, the positive relationship between Arab Americans and their original homeland is not necessarily affecting their ties with their new homeland in a negative way as the positive attitude of the participants toward American culture shows. In fact, by having their ties strong with both homes, they have the ability to act as representatives of each culture and nation to the other and thus create unique connections that bridge the two cultures and promote more effective intercultural communication and understanding.

Finally, groups continue to create and recreate their identities. This research was one step in unveiling some aspects of Arab Americans' acculturation. Future academic research will need to investigate other aspects of the cultural identity of this group in addition to studying the reconstruction of this identity over time using similar and other methodologies such as longitudinal studies, in-depth interviews and triangulation. Future research can also look into the identification labels Arab Americans choose, and future research should also focus on the newest, fourth wave of immigration that started around 2011 after the beginning of the "Arab Spring" in 2010.

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Author Note

Dr. Gaby Semaan is the director of Middle East Studies and the Arabic program coordinator at the University of Toledo, Toledo Ohio. He is also the co-director of the Arabic Summer Intensive Program at California State University San Bernardino. Dr. Semaan is a media and intercultural communication specialist whose research areas include cultural identities of minority groups. His publications include *Islam in Cyberspace: South Asian Muslims in America* log in (2010), *Arabs in America: An historical perspective* (2013), and *Arab Americans: Stereotypes, conflict, history, cultural identity and post 9/11* (2014). Parts of this article were in the author’s dissertation.

Appendix

Please circle or check (√) the answer that best represent your answer

Please note that the term ethnic background is used to refer to the country from where you/your ancestors originally originated, while cultural background is used to refer individuals from any of the Arab countries.

1. How proud are you of your Arab cultural background? (not proud at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (extremely proud)
2. How would you describe your emotional ties to your or your ancestors’ Arab country of origin? (very weak) 1 2 3 4 5 (very strong)
3. How proud are you of your American identity? (not proud at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (extremely proud)
4. How would you describe your emotional ties to the United States? (very weak) 1 2 3 4 5 (very strong)
5. Arab Americans need to maintain their own cultural identity as much as possible. (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)
6. Arab Americans should adapt to American culture as it is. (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)
7. How important to you is Arabic language? (not important at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very important)
8. How important to you is English language? (not important at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very important)
9. How welcoming of Arabs do you perceive the American mainstream to be? (not welcoming at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very welcoming)
10. Do you think in the next 5 years you will go back to permanently live in your or your ancestors’ Arab country of origin? (very unlikely) 1 2 3 4 5 (very likely)

11. How likely are you to make the U.S. your permanent home? (very unlikely) 1 2 3 4 5 (very likely)
12. In the past year, have you personally experienced discrimination you perceived to be because of your Arab cultural background? (never) 1 2 3 4 5 (very frequently)
13. In the past year how many people with your cultural background you personally know have experienced discrimination because of their Arab cultural background? (none) 1 2 3 4 5 (almost all)
Biographical Data
14. GENDER : <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
15. MARITAL STATUS: <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated
16. U.S. CITIZENSHIP STATUS: <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify visa type:
17. PLACE OF BIRTH: <input type="checkbox"/> United States <input type="checkbox"/> Outside the United States
18. AGE: Please specify:
19. EDUCATION: Highest degree attained or working toward <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary (Grades 1-5) <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate (Grades 6-9) <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary (Grades 10-12) <input type="checkbox"/> College <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Other specify:
20. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION: <input type="checkbox"/> Christian <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim <input type="checkbox"/> Druz <input type="checkbox"/> Agnostic <input type="checkbox"/> Atheist <input type="checkbox"/> Other, Specify:
21. If you are working full time, your average annual salary is: <input type="checkbox"/> less than 27, 000 <input type="checkbox"/> between 27,000 and 37,100 <input type="checkbox"/> more than 37,100
22. Please specify the country from where you or your Arab ancestors originally immigrated:
23. Current place of living. City: _____ State: _____
THANK YOU GRACIOUSLY FOR YOUR TIME. PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE ADMINISTRATOR