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The Impact of Immigration
on
Arab Families in South Florida

by

Khawla Abu Baker

A Dissertation Presented to the
School of Social and Systemic Studies of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University

1997

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Approval Form

This dissertation was submitted by Khawla Abu Baker under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the School of Social and Systemic Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Family Therapy at Nova Southeastern University.

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Acknowledgment

Arab immigrants in South Florida welcome each newcomer to the area and surround him or her with their support and warmth. This is how they accepted me as a researching therapist. I owe a great deal of thanks to each one of them. Without their trust and honesty, this study could not have taken place. I owe thanks to the religious leaders in the Islamic Center, Sheik Nitham Hasan, and Sheik Hasan Sabri, for allowing me to use the Center as a springboard for this study. I owe a special thanks to Amna, an active teacher in the Islamic Center and the core of a very rich social net who became a research assistant. Her help opened many homes and hearts for me including hers, her relatives, and friends. Her help and impact on this project is invaluable.

The faculty members who were on my committee: Dr. Ron Chenail, as a chair and Dr. Margo Weiss and Dr. Chris Burnett were all supportive and open to my ideas and suggestions. Most of all they were very curious about the new sub-culture I was exploring. Their guidance and helpful comments made this document possible in its current shape.

My "blood sister" Jane Dye, and my friends Tommie Boyd, and Dr. William Boyd helped me edit this document. Together, we found ways to express in a combination of Arabic style and grammatically-correct English sentences what I wanted to say. They always knew when to call and what to say. Their words motivated me to keep going. Thanks for being there as good friends!

Without the special program of Fulbright scholarship for Palestinians in Israel "USIA", I would be unable to attend a graduate school in America. The scholarship and the excellent administration and guidance of AmidEast made my dream come true. Thanks a lot. Also I thank the Arab Student Aid International (ASAI) for funding my fees during my third academic year.

In order to be able to attend graduate school in America I became an immigrant student. My spouse, Marwan, supported me all the way up to this point, metaphorically and literally. Without his love and professional support this process would have been a painful one. Instead, Marwan added a joy and companionship to my life during this period. My two daughters agreed to have a phone-voice mom, and suffered from the changes which occurred in their lives to enable me reach my goal. I love you Taymaa and Nidaa beyond the distances. Also my parents and my siblings and their families often urged me to finish this project to be able to reunite again as an extended family. For all of them, I wanted very much to understand family dynamics. I did. I am coming back home.

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Abstract

In the present, as in the past, people have been immigrating from one part of the world to another. In this act, they seek better conditions to their current situation. However, studies often show that immigration leaves a scar in individual's and families' experiences, interrupting their natural developmental process. This study intends to examine the experience of Arab immigrants in South Florida. It is influenced by systemic, developmental, contextual, and cultural theories in the family therapy field. Literature is reviewed to introduce the theories' main epistemology and further, to examine how they explain changes occurring in families' lives after immigration. The grand tour question is "How does the experience of immigration influence Arab family structure and relationships?" To conduct the study, the researching therapist used two qualitative research methods: (a) cases of Arab clients who sought family therapy was used as a case study, and (b) ethnographic research was conducted on Arab community members in a large city in South Florida. The combination of the two research methods aimed to expand the researching therapist's knowledge of the population. Data analysis showed that immigration causes a state of cultural dissociation from the American dominant culture. As a result of the gap between Arab and American cultures, Arab immigrants tend to live within their cultural communities. This provides mechanisms for preserving the Arabic culture and life style as an attempt to lessen the impact of assimilation. Immigration causes changes in the developmental stages of Arab families. Arab clients seek therapy when their natural support systems are not able to give proper

solutions. If therapists adopt the “anthrotherapist” approach, suggested in this study, they will be able to apply diverse kinds of theories in family therapy for this population.

Learning about clients in their cultural context enabled the therapist to abstain from pathologizing some phenomena recognized in the therapeutic encounter. Arab immigrants rarely have been studied in psychology or family therapy. This study may be considered a contribution to the field and to therapists’ awareness of cultural diversity within each society.

Chapter One

Do not believe stories told by an immigrant just as you would not believe those of an elder who has lost all his peers.

An Arabic Proverb

Introduction

“Why did we come to this country leaving behind our family and friends? Isn’t it for a better future for our children? Isn’t it for their own sake? If you really want them to become somebody in this country, you have to work extra hard as a parent. You have to open your eyes widely on them all the time. The most important thing is to hold them away from Americans as much as you can. Don’t even let them feel that they are in America. Bring them up as if they were still living back home.”

This conversation took place in a grocery store of Middle Eastern merchandise. The participants in the conversation were both Arabs, a man who immigrated from the West Bank 15 years ago and a new comer who immigrated from Jordan only two months ago. The “experienced immigrant” intended to give good advice to the new one. All other people who witnessed the conversation stressed the importance of the advice.

This conversation left me with open questions: “Why do Arab families immigrate to this country if they do not want to be part of it?”, “How does immigration influence their family structure and relationships?”, “What kind of ties do they maintain with their extended families in their home countries?” and, “What kind of relationships do they

develop with the host country?" The "experienced immigrant" wore a western suit and sprinkled his talk with English expressions which let me add one more question to the above list: "Is it possible for a person to decide not to be influenced by a cultural context in which he or she lives?" All those questions made me very curious to learn more about the experience of Arab immigrants in South Florida.

There were two Middle Eastern grocery stores that I found which functioned as "cultural ghettos". They became convenient sites to learn more about the Arab population in South Florida. Once a week, when buying my Middle Eastern food, I put on my anthropological lens and conversed with Abu Hisham¹, the owner of "The Arab Palms" grocery store, or with Sami, a worker in the "Arab Delicatessen" grocery store. Abu Hisham had emigrated from the West Bank in 1967 immediately after the Israeli occupation of the region, and Sami emigrated from Syria in 1994 in search of a remedy for his sick wife. Between those two stores, over about three years, I have met numerous immigrants who came to shop and to exchange information regarding the community with the storekeepers. My first impression was that they share the same ideas regarding child rearing and community relationships in the U. S. Later, I also became familiar with other types of cultural ghettos: An Islamic Center and the Arab newspapers published in the U. S. Between the issues discussed in the Islamic Center and those published in the newspapers, I found that most issues related to the same concern: The well-being of the Arab family in America.

¹ All names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Arabs in the United States

Arabs started to immigrate to the U. S. in the middle of the nineteenth century, driven by curiosity, adventure, famine, political events, and religious/cultural reasons (Naff, 1985). The first immigrants were Christians who immigrated from what is known today as Syria and Lebanon. They worked mainly as pack peddlers and later owned grocery stores and lands, becoming an integral part of the economy (Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1985). Arab immigration is characterized by a type of “family chain” where one immigrant who settled in the U. S. helped other relatives and friends to join and settle down (Abraham, 1983; Naff, 1994). Arabs in the U. S. prefer to reside in semi “ethnic ghetto” where several families live in the same building or neighborhood. In some areas, where the Arab population is very large, they live in a concentrated Arab neighborhood--such as in Dearborn, Michigan--attempting to duplicate the natural life of their home countries (A. Farag, personal communication, February, 1997).

It is estimated that in the mid-1990's the Arab population in the U. S. numbered about 2.5 to 3 million people, half Christians and half Muslims. They are concentrated mainly in eleven states and tend to live in the metropolitan areas (Zogby, 1990). Arabs immigrated to the U. S. in two major distinct waves. The first wave arrived between the years 1880 and 1914 (Khalaf, 1987) as a result of political, economic, and religious reasons. This wave tended to assimilate in the American life. They westernized their names, learned English, and tried to adopt an American life style (Halaby, 1987; Suleiman, 1987). Some descendants of the first wave are very well-known figures in Hollywood and in national sports such as Paula Abdoul, Casey Kasem, Moustapha

Akkad, F. Murray Abraham, Danny Thomas, Jamie Farr, Doug Flutie and Rony Sekaly (Zogby, 1990).

The second wave started immigrating after 1948, as a result of the war between Israel and the Arab countries, and is still occurring today. Subsequently, each war in the Middle East caused an increase in the number of Arabs who immigrated to the U. S. For example, after the Gulf War, 16,000 Iraqi were forced to immigrate to the U. S. for political reasons (A. Hamed, personal communication, February, 1997). The second wave immigrants placed a priority on their ethnic and political identification rather than their assimilation in the culture of the U. S. (Zogby, 1990).

The development of the identity of Arabs living in the U. S. was influenced by several factors: (a) the reason for migration, (b) the type of relationship developed with mainstream Americans, (c) the official stance of American legislation toward Arab immigrants, (d) political developments in the Middle East, and (e) the Islamic revolution in Iran (Abraham, 1987; Naff, 1983, 1985). Some of these factors reflect the interrelationship between immigrants and the American context, while others reflect the relationship between immigrants and the Middle Eastern context.

The 1970's witnessed an increasing awareness regarding ethnic groups in the U. S., including Arabs, which resulted in a wave of studies in the social science field about Arab communities. Zogby (1990) identifies these studies as "encouraged profiles of the immigrant experience and, in some instances, a focus on the contributions and successes of Arab Americans" (p. vi). However, in comparison to anthropology and sociology, very little was published on mental health or family issues of Arab immigrants in the U. S.

(Abudabbeh, 1996; Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993; Meleis, 1981; Meleis & La Fever, 1984). The mental health field is lacking in knowledge about the nature of Arab families and psychological needs of individuals. Aponte, Rivers and Wohl (1995) write:

The literature in this field is noteworthy in its failure to acknowledge that the ethnic minority groups that are the main subject of concern do not exhaust the supply of ethnic groups in North America. Psychological services are difficult to provide to members of many ethnic groups because of differences in cultural backgrounds. This is true, for example, of many individuals of East European and Middle Eastern family origin, who may find the idea of revealing their personal lives to strangers, expressing negative attitudes about family members, or discussing sexual matters with someone much younger or of the opposite sex almost intolerable. But these groups are rarely the focus in discussions of American ethnic minorities. (p. x)

Arab immigrants face several social and psychological challenges. First and foremost, immigration in itself is an act which interrupts the natural development of the family. It causes discontinuity of structures and relationships, challenging the family's sense of stability (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989). Some clinicians relate to immigration as a definite cause for psychological problems which onset immediately, or in delay, after the immigration act (Baptiste, 1990; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989).

Some of the problems Arabs face in the U. S. relate to the fact that they live in a non-Islamic country. Many Islamic religious laws and restrictions do not suit the rhythm

of the American daily life. For example, Muslims are required to pray five times a day at prescribed times. Schools and workplaces do not consider these needs, as they do in several Muslim Arab countries. Also, Islam has rules which clash with mainstream American life in regard to dietary laws which forbid the consumption of pork and all derivative foods made from it, and alcohol and all foods containing it. In addition, it forbids eating improperly slaughtered meat (Haddad, 1983). Many families cannot enjoy eating out in many restaurants because of these restrictions. Muslims find difficulty buying houses or starting new businesses because religious people abstain from receiving loans on which they have to pay interest, since taking or paying interest is considered a sin (Noorzoy, 1983). Finally, Muslim women have to respect a strict, modest dress code, covering their body in accordance with the degree of their religious fundamentalism and their traditional background (Haddad, 1983).

Islam is a lifestyle for Arab individuals and families (Lovell, 1983). It is part of the daily life of people in the Middle East to the extent that Christians and Muslims, who live under the influence of the Islamic culture, live similar family lives: Treat parents with sacred respect, provide high respect to elders and take care of them when in need, expect unchallenged obedience from women and children, abstain from sex outside wedlock, and maintain segregation between the sexes. The family, not the individual, is the main building block unit in society. Arabs identify themselves by their ties to their extended families. It is expected that families should provide all economic, political, social, and psychological support. In these kinds of families, individuals have to put the family's interest before their own. The goal of socialization within this culture is to keep

the cohesiveness of the family and the interdependent lifestyle (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993; Budman, Lipson, & Meleis, 1992; Dwairy, in press).

Arab individuals develop a collective, rather than an individual sense of self (Dwairy, 1997). After immigrating to the U. S. they continue to seek to live in communities; however, they do not live in isolated ghettos. They work within the American system and send their children to American schools. These encounters create challenges to individuals and tension within families. Teenagers who try to imitate other American teenagers face constant correction of their conduct; parents try to efface all non-Arab behaviors and norms. Boys and girls experience ongoing arguments with their parents regarding their rights--especially when they compare themselves to their American peers. In response, parents forbid any out-of-classroom encounters with American children--an attempt to minimize the influence of the American culture on their children (Barazangi, 1996; Swanson, 1996). Further, they send their children to learn Arabic and Islamic religion either daily or in concentrated hours on weekends. Parents, community centers, and Islamic centers are enlisted to help in isolating children from the American culture and influencing their socialization in congruence with the ethos of Arabic and Islamic cultures.

Cultural Family Therapy Studies

Arabs in the Middle East compose the dominant group and culture in the region. When they immigrate to the U. S. they become a small and alien group which lives within the American dominant culture. There are no studies in family therapy about Arab

immigrants in the U. S. However, cultural family therapy has been an interest of many researchers/clinicians in the field for the last twenty-five years.

Americans lived for many decades with the notion of a “melting pot” absorbing immigrating cultures and attempting to create a mono-American culture. In the past three decades, this idea gave way to the notion of building a pluralistic society, where each group may live within its own culture, and interact with other cultures in diverse contexts (Aponte, River, & Wohl, 1995). However, the majority of family therapy studies have been focused on white middle-class American families, using them in therapy, research, and in training programs as a frame of reference (Ho, 1987).

Different terms have been used in the literature to differentiate between mainstream Anglo-Saxon Americans and other populations. Among these terms, the most used are: Blacks, Native American, Alaskan, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific, people of color, Third World people, minority, ethnic, ethnic minority, racial minority, linguistic minority, culturally different, and oppressed minority (Comaz-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Ho, 1987; McGoldrick, 1982; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Pearce, 1996; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989; Sue & Sue, 1990.) It goes without saying that each term reflects the philosophical stance and the epistemology of the researcher/clinician who uses it.

Ho (1987) prefers the usage of the term “ethnic minority” and cites three major reasons he believes encompass the most important elements when working with this population:

- [a] Ethnicity denotes cultural distinctiveness, which supplies meaning to the cross-cultural encounter between the therapist and the client, [b] minority refers to

a group of political and economic individuals who are relatively powerless, receive unequal treatment, and regard themselves as objects of discrimination, [and, c] the therapeutic encounter requires that the therapist learn from the clients about their cultural values, signs, and behavioral style. Hence “ethnic minority” is more than a categorical description of race, culture, or color. It is the boundaries of separation and, in particular, how these boundaries are managed, protected, ritualized through stereotyping, and sometimes violated that is of primary interest and concern for family therapy [all underlines are in original]. (p. 7)

Saba, Karrer and Hardy (1989) debate between the usage of the terms “minority” and “oppressed groups”. They conclude that minority may point to the number of the group in comparison to the general population, and create one whole identity of dissimilar people. On the other hand, they believe that the usage of the concept “oppressed minority” highlights the socioeconomic and political aspects of the life of several groups. Thus, they decide to use the term “minority” since it may capture also the positive uniqueness such as “strengths, legacies, values, history, accomplishments, and wisdom” of people in minority groups (p. 6).

Webster’s dictionary (1983) explains ethnicity as:

1. Pertaining to or characteristic of a people, especially to a speech or culture group.
2. Referring to the origin, classification, characteristics, etc., of such groups.
3. Pertaining to non-Christians.
4. Belonging to or deriving from the cultural, racial, religious, or linguistic traditions of a people or country, especially a primitive one. (p. 489)

Thus, the term “ethnic minority” puts the Christian Anglo-Saxon culture in an ethnocentric position, in which other cultures are measured according to it. Although the term “ethnic” adds the cultural component, it discriminates between the status of the therapist and that of the client. Western or Christian American Anglo-Saxon therapists do not refer to themselves as belonging to an ethnic group (Weiss, personal communication, May 12, 1997). It is their clients who have an alien culture, not them. In addition, the term “ethnic minority” puts the client outside the dominant culture while, spontaneously, it puts the therapist within the dominant culture. In reality, this is not always the case. Often therapists who do not belong to the American mainstream culture work with diverse kinds of clients, those who belong to the mainstream culture and those who belong to other cultural backgrounds.

The term “minority” may relate to the number or the sociopolitical power of a group. However, it is a contextual term geographically-bonded. The same group may feel like a minority in one country, and feel part of the mainstream in another. In other cases, the identity is constructed by the term: Where a group is forced to be identified as a minority, its members may start to feel, think, and behave as minority. However, an incubation period has to pass from the time the term is first applied to that specific group until each member within the group develops a collective identity as a minority member. This does not describe the case of Arabs in America.

The usage of the term “people of color” had an important contribution: It made great numbers of cultural groups in the U. S. visible. However, there are two reservations from the usage of this term. First, it has mainly been used with non Anglo-Saxon groups,

indicating that Anglo-Saxons are “colorless” or “transparent” and putting them, consciously or unconsciously, outside the circle of people’s colors. Second, culture is more than the skin color of the person. As Hardy (1997) states, “culture is a complex, broad-based, multidimensional concept that shapes virtually all aspects of our lives. It cannot be understood by the examination of singular dimensions such as ethnicity, race or class” (p. 13).

Sue and Sue (1990) use the term “culturally different” once again relating to the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants as the cultural-centric point. By emphasizing the difference as a yardstick for cultural identity, the term does not leave an opportunity to discover any sameness among cultures.

In this research I will use the term “other culture” when talking about all cultural groups residing in the U. S. or outside. According to the context, each culture will be compared to another culture without prejudgment of superiority, centrality, or dominance. For instance, Mexican people are considered to be from an “other culture” than Cubans; Chinese have an “other culture” from the Japanese; and Americans are also an “other culture” from Arabs. The usage of this term also may be more appropriate in cases when the client belongs to the mainstream American culture, while the therapist belongs to “another culture.” Using this term puts all groups in equal relationships with one another. The term does not generate negative connotations; it leaves place for the differences and the sameness among cultures to arise and meet. Some research literature warns from “othering” researched populations (Fine, 1994; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994); negative connotations of the term depend on the researcher’s/therapist’s way of

representing the groups/clients (Denzin, 1994). In this research by “othering” cultures, I endeavor to emphasize their unique identity, entity, wholeness, and independence. I do not want to impose on a client or a group a partial selection of their identity by emphasizing some elements from their culture that do not reflect their wholeness such as their race, color, or language. Using the term “other culture” will encompass all cultural elements important to each group and individual.

There are numerous definitions of the term “culture.” I will adopt Falicov’s (1988a) definition of culture for its systemic approach and comprehension:

[Culture is] those sets of shared world views and adaptive behaviors derived from simultaneous membership in a variety of contexts, such as ecological setting (rural, urban, suburban), religious background, nationality and ethnicity, social, class, gender-related experiences, minority status, occupation, political leanings, migratory patterns and stage of acculturation, or values derived from belonging to the same generation, partaking of single historical moments, or particular ideologies. (p. 336)

The reason for learning about the cultural background of families in therapy is to be able to treat them in their own contexts. It is important to keep in mind that clients’ personal contexts are shaped, immensely, by their cultures (McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996). McGoldrick (1982) combines learning about ethnicity and the family, indicating that this should be one continuous process, since “ethnicity is deeply tied to the family through which it is transmitted. The two concepts are so intertwined that it is hard to study one without the other” (p. 3).

Working successfully with clients from other cultures requires cultural competency from therapists. Cultural competency should be inherent in the epistemology of training programs (Falicov, 1988a; Hardy, 1989, 1997; Ho, 1987). Hardy (1997) states that “cultural competency is more than a collection of codifiable techniques that one employs with individuals or groups of people. It is more epistemological than tactical, although there is a relationship between the two” (p. 13). Similarly, Falicov (1988a) describes culturally competent therapists as those who perceive the cultural frame in therapy not as another theory, but rather as a lens through which one understands families, distress, relationships, and solutions.

The main tool therapists may utilize to become culturally competent is self-awareness (Falicov, 1988a, 1988b; Hardy, 1989, 1997; Ho, 1987; McGoldrick et al., 1996). Hardy (1997) states “the ability to look critically at one’s self in relationship to others is at the heart of developing cultural competency” (p. 13). Analogously, McGoldrick et al., (1996) state “we learn about culture primarily not by learning the ‘facts’ of another’s culture, but rather by changing our attitude” (p. xii). Thus, therapists continuously have to learn about themselves in the context of their work with their clients. This tendency will benefit both sides when therapists become culturally competent and sensitive.

In order to experience the meaning of being different, McGoldrick et al., (1996) cite David McGill, who suggests to family therapists to live in another culture and learn a foreign language as part of their training. He believes that “this kind of experience might help clinicians achieve the humility necessary for respectful cultural interactions, based

on more than a one-way hierarchy of normality, truth, and wisdom” (xii). Although this suggestion for many family therapist is hard to apply, in my personal experience, it helps to develop the type of “systemic anthrotherapist.” I hope that I am training myself to become one.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in this study is to learn about the impact of changing contexts, such as that which occurs in immigration, on the nature of relationships and structure of Arab families in South Florida. I would like to learn about the changes in four different contexts identified by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems. A microsystem contains all relationships on the level of the nuclear and extended family. The mesosystem includes the neighborhood and immediate institutions which offer daily services such as schools, church, and neighborhood clubs. The exosystem relates to all kinds of media components used by the society. The macrosystem expands to include the dominant culture in society. Falicov (1988a) claims that when a family migrates, they interact for a while with two sets of micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro- systems--the original and the host. The larger the difference between the two, the more difficulty the family would face in its acculturation process. I intend to test this theory in the experience of Arab immigrants in South Florida. Specifically, I am interested in learning how the experience of living in two contexts, for a while, helps them in their new location.

Falicov (1988b) and Carter and McGoldrick (1989) believe that families have developmental stages, such as building the family nest, rearing children, watching

children's launching, creating new families, and grandparenting. They pinpoint events in family life as significant markers which influence the developmental process. Examples of such markers are: Marriage, birth, sickness, loss, and immigration. The authors postulate that the impact of immigration will leave its effect on family development for generations to come. I want to determine how immigration, if at all, impacts the development of Arab families.

The process which helps immigrants to acclimate in the host culture is called acculturation. It is perceived as a gradual process, moving the immigrant from a status of being alien to becoming acquainted with the culture. In a later stage, it is expected that the immigrants will adopt all, or part, of the host culture. This process is perceived as a developmental dynamic (Lonner & Ibrahim, 1996; Paniagua, 1994). Berry (1990) identifies four phases of acculturation: Marginalization, separation, integration, and assimilation. He emphasizes that "acculturation can be viewed as a multilinear phenomenon, [or] as a set of alternatives" (p. 244). I am interested to learn whether Arab families adopt "Easternization" besides the "Westernization" process. By "Easternization" I mean choosing, while being in the U. S., to live according to a more traditional or more religious lifestyle identified as "Middle Eastern," which is different than the lifestyle they had before immigrating from the Middle East.

Systemic thinkers believe that a family therapist influences the systems that he or she comes into contact with, while also being influenced by them (Bateson, 1972; Keeney, 1983). Also, it is believed that "all human behavior is conditioned by and is a reflection of the cultural context in which it is nurtured" (Aponte, et al., 1995, p. xi).

Hence, I am curious to learn about the changes occurring for me as an Arab family therapist working with Arab families in an alien culture for each of us, and how the context of the therapeutic encounter may influence my therapeutic work.

As a therapist/researcher in this research I was part of the ecosystem. I shared with the researchees, not just their cultural background, but also their experience as immigrants. No comparison between my experience of acculturation and theirs has taken place. However, I am using my personal experience in this regard as another resource from which I am able to derive a deeper understanding of clients'/researchees' ordeals. Their stories helped me better understand many of my personal feelings toward the experience of living in America.

Relevance of the Study

Since people are "cultural beings" (Hardy, 1997, p. 19), each study about any cultural group contributes to understanding people, their relationships, and their lives within their families in a better way. Aponte et al., (1995) state that "in the world of the 1990's, the groups that are the focal point of clinical and human service interest are those that historically and currently have suffered most blatantly and severely from being both underserved and badly served" (p. x). Ethnographic research about Arab immigrants in South Florida might help to learn about the types of daily challenges to community members, and mechanisms they develop to face these challenges in the immigration context. This may help to add more information to the body of knowledge in immigration studies. In addition, it may help to learn about Arab immigrants in other countries and about immigration and related issues of other groups in the U. S. Each study may

contribute a building block to the cultural family therapy theory. Such an effort may not be totally captured; however, it may provide a useful display of family therapy and systemic approaches to treatment. Falicov and Karrer (1984) state, “the task of building a theoretical model of family therapy that takes into account cultural variation can be facilitated by sharing the experiences of practitioners who have worked with families of various ethnic backgrounds” (p. 18).

Like many other cultures, Arabs seek help within their extended family or community. In cases of deeper distress, they may seek folk healers. It is very interesting to learn why and when Arab immigrant families decide to reach out for professional help. This may also contribute to the cultural family therapy theory. Policy makers may use this study as a window opened to the needs of the community in regard to psychosocial support to develop preventive and treatment programs. It is recognized that preventive programs may prohibit the onset of future problems. Further, it may help immigrants acclimate according to their own decisions and choices.

Studies about immigrants from other cultures may raise the degree of cultural awareness of other groups, including the American dominant one. On the higher level of social order, this may help in reaching sociopolitical justice and equality. For family therapists, as members in their societies, cultural awareness is a pivotal component of their training and work. It may become a permanent lens, a lifestyle.

Overview of Chapters

Following, in chapter two, I review literature in regard to three topics addressed through three main subchapters: (a) The impact of the act of immigration on mental

health, and subsequently, on types of relationships among immigrant families. Some explanations of the acculturation process and its dynamic also are addressed, (b) the history and current affairs of Arab immigration to the U. S. Next, an overview of the community mental health centers and their role within the Arab immigrant community is discussed. This subchapter ends by providing some examples of cases treated by Arab and non-Arab therapists focusing on the main concerns of clients and therapists in the therapeutic encounter, and (c) some theories in the family therapy field which may explain and treat problems created by the migratory act. In this subchapter, I discuss three main approaches. Under each approach some theories or models are included:

1. The "anthropological" approach. Under it I include the "anthrotherapist" and the "ethnic family therapy" models.
2. The "developmental" approach. The main model discussed here is the "structural developmental model."
3. "Ecosystemic" approach which includes five theories and models: (a) the myth of sameness, (b) emic ecosystemic/structural theory, (c) family in context, (d) wholeness, and (e) stability and change.

Chapter three discusses the main attributes of qualitative research in regard to clinical research. Then I discuss two major qualitative designs which will be utilized in this study: Case study, which contains Arab clinic population, and ethnography, which includes Arab people from the community. I examine the recursiveness in learning and how it relates to the setting of the two studied sites. Also, I focus on my role as a therapist/researcher as I detail the nature of my involvement with each setting. An

explanation of the resources for data collecting and the approach for data analysis is offered. Finally, I detail how I protected participants' anonymity, maintained confidentiality, and tested trustworthiness.

Chapter Four introduces the data gathered during the research. The data is displayed into two sub-chapters: data from the ethnography research and from the clinical cases. The ethnography highlights reasons of Arabs' immigration to South Florida, immigration difficulties, changes occur in immigrants' lives, families' problems, and coping mechanisms. All data is introduced through stories of Arab community members. The second sub-chapter illustrates two case studies with two female clients. Excerpts had been chosen to throw a light on clients' distress caused by their multiple ecological contexts as immigrants.

Chapter Five discusses the data of this study, comparing it with the literature review introduced in Chapter Two. Several questions regarding usage of suitable family therapy theories and therapist's usage of self are addressed. A suggestion to adopt the "Anthrotherapist" approach in training programs which are interested in training for cultural competency and cultural sensitivity. It is also suggested to adopt the "Anthrotherapist" approach as cultural dimension in clinical training.

Chapter Two

Whom of your children is your favorite?

The smallest until reaching maturation, the sick until remedy, and the migrated until returning-back home.

An Arabic Proverb

Migration

Throughout the history of mankind people have moved, both individually and in groups, from one region to another. Their reasons for moving included war, natural disaster, economic need, and personal preference. Nowadays, millions of people relocate from one country to another for similar reasons. They relocate to escape fear, at times illegally, driven by the hope of being accepted with open arms as they risk jeopardizing their own freedom. (Aponte & Crouch, 1995; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989; Sluzki, 1979).

Immigration is one of the primal human myths. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) claim that the tendency of people to migrate began with Adam and Eve and their curiosity concerning the tree of truth and that which was forbidden to them. The authors found evidence in religion and mythology where people have encouraged immigration as a solution to satisfy basic human needs. Examples of such stories are (a) the story of Abraham's migration from Ur, an experience which brought him great knowledge and wisdom and armed him with the ability to announce a new religion, (b) the story of

Moses who led the exodus of thousands of people from Egypt, testing both him as a leader and the Hebrews as a group, and (c) the story of Babel depicting the gathering of multicultural/multilingual people from many countries into one place. The reason for the gathering was to build a tower high enough to reach heaven in hopes of discovering another world. People then, as today, were very curious regarding the unfamiliar and unknown about places and cultures.

An example of an immigration story in mythology is the Greek myth of Oedipus leaving his homeland of Thebes as a child and his return as an adult to face his fate. Another popular account is the Arabian myth "A Thousand and One Nights," which tells of the voyages of Baghdad merchants and adventurers like Sindibad (known by Americans as Sinbad), driven by their curiosity toward unknown lands and cultures. Also the Qur'an and the history of Islam documented how the new religion remained secret within small groups until God ordered the prophet Mohammad to emigrate from his hometown of Mecca to Medina, the town of his supporters. It was at that very time that Islam suddenly began to spread throughout the world.

All these stories indicate the willingness of people to forsake their own stable lives in search of new knowledge and experiences. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) note that this very same urge paradoxically prohibited Adam and Eve and all their ancestors from the ultimate knowledge, because they were penalized in their exile.

The human mosaic in the U. S. has changed over the last hundred years as a result of the intensive migration from numerous countries and nations. Economic and political changes in the U.S., as well as in the world, have increased the migration of individuals

and ethnic groups in large numbers. The result has been that those who were once considered the majority have gradually become the minority. In the mid 1990's it was estimated that about 75% of Americans were non-Hispanic whites (Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989), or as McAdoo (1993) states that one in four is non-white or has some Hispanic ancestors. In cities such as Los Angeles, four in ten residents are foreign-born, and in New York, three in ten. It is estimated that by the year 2000, 46% of the residents of California will be Latino, Asian, and Black. Similar changes will take place in all major cities and metropolitan areas in the U.S., which will influence the economic, social, and political composition of the country. Students in American schools speak in approximately 150 languages at home. It is predicted that by the turn of the next century white Americans will be a minority (McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996).

In this chapter I intend to review the literature which discusses the mental health of immigrants including their interfamilial and psychosocial relationships. It is important to note that immigration is like a radioactive wave that one is not able to see, yet its impact influences the whole environment and remains for many years in the ecosystem.

Subsequently, I will review the history of Arab migration to the United States and their current sociopolitical status. A sub-chapter will be dedicated to discussing the mental health of Arab immigrants and their help providers. Several cases from the literature will be included to describe the differences and similarities of this population in comparison with clients from other cultures. Finally, I will review the literature regarding family therapy and immigrants. The focus will include three approaches: (a) the anthropological approach, (b) the developmental approach, and (c) the ecosystemic

approach. These approaches will be carefully summarized and the ideas of the authors, researchers, and clinicians will be discussed briefly and without criticism. My personal voice will exist in the very act of literature selection, but center stage will be given to the presentation of the literature. Discussion of several of the ideas presented will occur in subsequent chapters.

The Impact of Migration on Families' Mental Health

The definition of a family differs from one culture to the next. It may include limited or unlimited blood relatives, social alliances, and marriages. Families in various places in the world experience emotions, relationships, important aspects of life, the meaning of problems, and ways to solutions. They celebrate significant events in their life such as birth, marriage, or death in different and unique ways (Hardy, 1989; Ho, 1987; McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996). Families share similar feelings when one person or an entire nuclear family is uprooted. When this happens, both the relocated members and the remaining ones are impacted (Sluzki, 1979; Turner, 1991; Walsh, 1985).

Whether the decision to immigrate was voluntarily taken, very well planned, or forced by political, economic, or health issues, or possibly some other catastrophe, several studies (Cordiale & Brotherton, 1993; Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Paulino, 1996; Falicov & Karrer, 1984; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989; Lantz & Harper, 1990; Sluzki, 1979; Taylor, Hurley, & Riley, 1986; Walsh, 1985) consider the act to be a psychosocial trauma for all immigrants. This trauma occurs when an individual or a family is uprooted and detached from a familiar life and, often unwillingly, forced to adapt to a strange place. It is believed that such trauma will not be observed immediately at the time of

departure and separation from the homeland or the arrival to the host land. An accumulation of factors will eventually lead to social and psychological distress, which may appear either in psychosocial or physiological symptoms (Grinberg & Grinberg; Landau-Stanton, 1990; Lantz & Harper, 1990; Sluzki, 1979).

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) conclude:

These conditions may or may not show up clinically from the very beginning of the migratory process. An individual's reaction at the time of a traumatic event is not decisive in determining whether or not the event will have traumatic consequences later on: This will depend upon the subject's previous personality traits and other circumstances. It is even generally the case for there to be a latency period of indeterminate length between the traumatic events and their detectable after-effects, just as one frequently observes a delayed mourning period in cases of migrations. We suggest, then, that migration as a traumatic experience comes under the heading of what have been called cumulative traumas and tension traumas, in which the subject's reactions are not always expressed or visible, but the effects of such trauma run deep and last long. (p. 12)

Immediate and Delayed Changes After Migration

Changes that immigrants encounter depend on countries from which they come and countries to which they migrate. Some migration occurs within the same country when persons relocate from one state or province to another. People may find the move between small communities to large metropolitan areas to be traumatic. Another kind of migration occurs when people move from one western country to another western

country that shares the same language, religion, and lifestyle. These people may need to learn the local dialect as well as the history and some cultural aspects of the host country. Another kind of migration occurs when people move from one part of the world to another part that is totally different in language, culture, religion, social structure, social life, and economy (Landau-Stanton, 1990). The challenge and experiences of a family which emigrates from Canada to the U.S., following a parent who was invited to teach in an American university, will differ from a Vietnamese family who immigrated from Vietnam, forsook its life in the boats, and had to stay in a refugee camp in a third country for several years before the final arrival in the U.S. (Gold, 1993). Likewise, one may see the differences in the migration experience of young Arab people. For instance, students who are sent by their governments to the U.S., fully funded to study in American universities, will differ from young Palestinian men and women who are seeking refuge in the U.S., escaping the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In addition, for immigrants arriving in the U.S. from Asia (including the Middle East), Africa, and Latin America, immigration causes changes in family structure, affecting family interactions. People migrate as individuals, as nuclear families, or as extended families. Each pattern of immigration causes its own problems for the whole system connected to the migrated persons. When a person decides to migrate he or she gives up stability to avoid an unbearable situation. The very first active preparations such as writing letters, or applying for visas may change regular life rules and roles (Sluzki, 1979).

When children decide to migrate and leave their old parents behind, this act actualizes the separation in the final stage of death for the elderly, who, as a result, may continue living their lives in the pain of separation, loss, and mourning. The uprooting from the family's daily life structure forces all other siblings and kin to rearrange their instrumental and emotional roles and rules as members in their family system (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989; Sluzki, 1979).

Oftentimes, one spouse migrates alone. When this happens a great many responsibilities suddenly fall on the other spouse who has remained with the children. It is usually the wife who must learn to cope with her personal loss and to support her children in the new situation. There is usually continuous tension in the household as a result of uncertainty regarding the fate of the spouse. The structure of the family system is thereby changed when the household goes from two parents to one overnight, or when other substitute parents such as grandparents, uncles, and neighbors step in to help raise the children (Baptiste, 1990).

When both parents migrate to become distant breadwinners and the children are left behind a problem in parental-filial relationships may occur. If the substitute parent takes good care of the children, both sides may develop a close relationship, leaving the parents peripheral in their children's lives. In these cases the parents may feel betrayed. In cases where children are mistreated by the substitute parent they will blame their parents upon their return for having allowed this situation to take place (Baptiste, 1990).

Family therapy literature focuses mainly on the impact of migration on the well-being of the part of the family which migrated, not those who are left behind. The focus

of this study from this point on will be the migrated family. It is nevertheless important to conduct research on the immigrants' family members who are left behind. Other kinds of changes affecting the family life will also be addressed.

Challenges Facing the Migrated Family

The act of migration causes changes in many aspects of the immigrant's life.

Migration is often perceived as an act that takes place in stages varying between days, months, and years (Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Paulino, 1996; Landau-Stanton, 1990; Sluzki, 1979). The experience of each immigrant is influenced by the circumstances and nature of each stage as well as the reaction of the sending country and the receiving country. There are also different phases of adjustment in each stage (Berry, 1990; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989; Ho, 1987).

Sluzki (1979) has analyzed patterns of immigration processes from a sociological point of view with clinical implications. His findings indicate that these patterns might be categorized into five stages, each with "distinctive characteristics, triggering different types of family coping mechanisms, and symptoms" (p. 380). The stages Sluzki suggests are:

1. A preparatory stage: This stage represents the very first active steps toward a commitment to migrate. The length of time of this period depends partly on the purpose of migration such as study, economics, war, or exile. It also depends on the family decision making style, i.e., Is it a rush decision or a lengthy deliberated one? Persons in the preparatory stage may often hesitate and change their attitudes and feelings toward

the decision of migration. This in turn will affect their mood, their conduct, their relationships, and those who are in continuous contact with them.

Sluzki (1979) believes that the reason for immigration creates family myths and often family feuds. Questions arise, for example, "Was it because of the dreams of the wife, or perhaps the child's illness, or the husband's political activities? Who paid the highest price of loss?" The one responsible for the migration decision usually becomes the family scapegoat.

2. The act of migration: Very few immigrants are made to feel welcome and assisted in their adaptation when arriving in the host country. There are very few, if any, common rituals which facilitate migration transitions. Nearly every family must cope with the transition on its own. In the best case scenario, a group of immigrants will gather together and offer each other adaptation mechanisms and support. Some middle-class Americans still organize the "welcome wagon" (Sluzki, 1979, p. 383) to newly arriving families, usually Americans relocating from other states. The state of Israel, for political reasons, has arranged an institutionalized welcome and support system for Jewish newcomers as an attempt to encourage their settlement in that country.

3. Period of over-compensation: Sluzki (1979) observes that immigrants are often unaware of the cumulative impact of migratory stress. During this period they are usually busy acclimating to the new, alien environment. Immigrants begin to ask themselves about the efficacy of their own values and norms in their new environment. Feelings of dissonance result from the mismatch between migrants' expectations and environment, replacing feelings of consonance. Families live successfully in a moratorium period for

months, while pre-immigration conflicts remain dormant. For these families their previous structures and rules are observed as exaggerated. For example, a couple who appeared to be very close before the immigration may appear to become closer, while a couple who was very distant may appear even more so.

A collective myth developed at this period is that the family members will return to their home country after some time. This myth causes families to retain their original norms and to refrain from engaging in the new environment.

4. Period of decompensation or crisis: Sluzki (1979) perceives this to be the period when the migrant family reshapes its goals, norms, rules, roles, and activities in the context of its new environment. There is a complex, painful, and inevitable balance between the old identity and the new one. This is especially noted when there are children in the family who gain the language and the culture faster than their parents and who challenge the homeland values and styles. Many pre-immigration family rules will continue to be functional and have to adapt to the new environment, while many others will change and affect the roles and norms. This occurrence is likely to impact all family members. Sluzki remarks that families usually differentiate between instrumental and affective roles and create a split between them. Since men are usually the breadwinners, they are usually present and future-oriented, or outward-oriented in their attempts to deal with instrumental activities such as finding and maintaining jobs. Females may be perceived as present and past-oriented, or inward-oriented in their attempt to focus on affective activities, such as maintaining connections with the homeland, mourning the loss, and protecting the original values. The outward-oriented person usually adapts to the new

environment much faster than the inward-oriented person. They make new friends and learn new norms more quickly. In turn the inward-oriented person is more attached to the past orientation or to the other family members, and this behavior is likely to escalate to a major crisis in their relationship.

An additional challenge to the family relationships is the new economy in the host land (Sluzki, 1979). Women frequently find low-status jobs more quickly and easily than do men. This challenges the traditional role of breadwinner and creates new structures with regard to roles and rules within the family.

Some families continue to idealize what they have left behind. This makes the process of adaptation more difficult and creates tension between the husband and wife, as well as between parents and their children. Others succeed in moving from the mourning phase to integrate constructively what they have left behind and their new experience, creating new rules, models, and habits. According to Sluzki (1979), most families come to therapy during this period.

5. Transgenerational impact: All eclectic adaptation trends cautiously taken by parents will be changed much more readily by their children, who will challenge the past-avoided norms and values. This may create tension between generations and between cultures.

One exception to the above is ethnic ghettos created by choice or by force, since people mimic all aspects of life of their original homeland, children usually continue to live their parents' values and norms without importing aspects from the host country to the ghetto.

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) share some elements with Sluzki (1979). They also take into consideration the individual differences in each immigrant experience, generalizing their clients' responses toward the migratory act from a psychoanalytic approach. They divide immigrants' emotional reactions into three stages:

1. The first stage of immigration. Immigrants feel intense pain and loss for what they left behind. They fear the unknown. They feel the effects of loneliness, need, helplessness, mourning, and disorganization.
2. Intermediate stage. Immigrants feelings of nostalgia and sorrow from the loss of the homeland increase. In addition, they experience growing pain and mourning. At the same time, immigrants start to incorporate some elements of the host culture.
3. Final stage. Immigrants start feeling a sense of joy in future orientation. The homeland is considered as past, while the immigrants obtain the ability to live and enjoy the present.

Loneliness is one of the risks of immigration which Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) predict that all immigrants will experience in their host countries. The authors believe that the higher the degree of emotional maturity of the immigrants, the less they will suffer from loneliness.

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) describe immigration as an incubator where problems prior to immigration exacerbate. They believe that solid and stable marital and familial relationships help immigrants to tolerate the vicissitudes of change in the host countries, while conflictual relationships sharpen the conflicts and accelerate the explosion.

Landau-Stanton (1990) analyzes immigration from a developmental/change perspective. Drawing on Piaget's (1958) and Erikson's (1950) developmental stages, she suggests that immigrant families go through similar stages from the first arrival to the host country until the acclimation period. Therefore, learning about the history of migration is indispensable when working with migrant families (Landau-Stanton, 1990).

Landau-Stanton (1990) states that migration may cause a rapid process of industrialization and urbanization, which in turn causes a cultural migration that leads to a slow or rapid change in migrants' lives. Family problems arise when cultural changes happen too slowly or too rapidly (see also Cordiale & Brotherton, 1993). These changes frequently lead to changes in family structure and to gender role confusion. Living within a community which offers a support system and convoying other families who are in a similar stage may help the migrated family acclimate. Otherwise, members may start showing symptoms of transitional conflict.

According to Landau-Stanton (1990), the ultimate goal in family development as migrants is to acclimate fully in the host culture. Some basic factors that affect cultural transition or acclimation are:

1. Reasons of migration. Landau-Stanton (1990) agrees with Sluzki (1979) that reasons behind the immigration decision, such as famine, political stress, adventure, and so forth, will affect immigrants' acclimation in the host country.
2. Availability of support systems. The readiness of the receiving community to accept, convey, and integrate the newcomers is essential for the latter adaptation.

3. **The structure of the family.** Often families emigrate from societies who live in extended families. When arriving in the host country, they are forced to live for the first time their lives in a nuclear unit, isolated from other family members and friends.

Unprepared and unqualified, they have to make a new set of rules to fit their temporary situation.

4. **Degree of harmony between cultures.** Immigrants who move to a new country whose culture and language are similar to their own, face less transitional conflict than those who migrate to a country where they face ethnic and racial differences.

5. **Incorporation of transition as a developmental stage.** Passing the transition period successfully is viewed as moving to a new developmental stage of the family's growth while failure might lead to dysfunction in the system.

Landau-Stanton (1990) considers language, religion, education, and lifestyle important markers for migrated families. Frequently, when a family experiences cultural transition, these markers will be challenged and changed. It is common that third and fourth generation ignore the language of the first and second generations. This causes discord, transgenerational conflict, and discontinuity of the family's original culture.

Another marker is the religion. Many immigrant groups learned their religion, such as Judaism, Islam, and Greek Orthodox, in the school system in their homeland. As an attempt to keep this cultural marker as first priority, parents of these migrant groups arrange for their children to take religion classes after school hours. This creates conflict between parents and children, since this activity excludes these children from ordinary social activities of their peer groups in the host country.

Whether breadwinners continue working in their original professions or learn new ones, changes in the nature of the work are inevitable, leading to involuntary changes in lifestyle. Unlike their parents, children are more flexible in adapting to the new changes. Parents struggle to save elements from the “old life-style”, which becomes another factor causing transgenerational conflicts (Landau-Stanton, 1990).

Many families, especially those from East Asia, migrate to find better educational opportunities for their children. Lacking the language skills or having very limited education themselves, they may put unrealistic pressure to perform in school upon their children, which may lead to transgenerational problems.

Since extended families have been left behind, there is a reasonable risk that the migrant family will live in isolation because of difficulties of adjustment. In an attempt to protect children from influences of the new culture, the family overemphasizes the importance of living according to their original cultural lifestyle. Children spend most of their spare time with their family, which is isolated from its new environment, leading to what Landau-Stanton (1990) calls, “enmeshment.” Under such situations, some individuals decide to disengage from their isolated families in order to adapt further in the dominant society. According to Landau-Stanton, this may also happen to families within a cultural ghetto.

Intergenerational Conflicts

Children who immigrate to the U.S. with their parents usually become more Americanized than their parents are ready to accept or agree upon. This creates tension between home norms and school or peer norms (Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Paulino,

1996; Falicov, 1996; Sluzki, 1979). It is expected that parent-adolescent tension intensifies in immigrant families who are in the stage of cultural transition (Baptiste, 1990; Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Paulino, 1996; Walsh, 1985). Baptiste categorizes children of immigrants into three types: (a) immigrants, who arrived in the U.S. after entering their adolescent phase, (b) immigrant-Americans, who realized adolescence in the U.S. and, (c) Americans, who are immigrants' children born in the U.S. The first two categories, those born in their home country, tend to manifest anger regarding their parents' decision to immigrate when they feel frustrated with the difficulty of acclimating to the new country or when remembering a sweetheart they left behind. Baptiste argues that all three types produce chasmatic relationships with parents, as a result of the differential rates of adaptation/acculturation of children versus parents and grandparents.

Adolescents, categorized according to Baptiste (1990) as immigrant-Americans, tend to be bi-cultural. While trying to dress, eat, listen to music, and speak as Americans, they also attempt to maintain their cultural background by joining their parents at the worship place where other immigrants from the same culture gather. They celebrate holidays and attend extended family gatherings. While parents of "American" adolescents show more acceptance of their children's behavior, parents of "immigrant-Americans" are involved extensively in inter-generational transitional conflicts with their children. Baptiste states that these parents tend to seek therapy much more frequently than the other two groups.

While parents think that immigration will provide a better life for their children, the latter frequently feel that they lack the choice to decide for themselves. Often, they

feel rejected when parents decide to migrate alone as a first step in the new country².

Relationships become worse when children observe caretakers as “real” parents. When parents and children are reunited, problems tend to surface. The common problems are: problematic parental disciplinary methods and adolescents’ insubordinate behavior with parents and school, inappropriate behavior in the community, and substance abuse.

Reunification between children and parents may escalate dormant conflictual relationship problems (Baptiste, 1990; see also Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Paulino, 1996).

Immigrants’ children who live in the U.S. often feel ashamed of their parents’ native language and tend to express themselves in English. Some use their language skills to shirk from their parents’ authority, knowing that their parents will not be able to understand their conversations with their peers. Parents, and especially grandparents, gradually lose the ability to fully communicate with their teenage children (Baptiste, 1990).

Another kind of change which immigrants experience is the decrease of their professional status. Often, highly educated people migrate in an attempt to find better occupational and financial opportunities in the host country. Upon arrival, they

² Some parents have no other choice due to financial reasons. For example, the ticket to the U. S. from Jordan or Egypt is equivalent to an annual income of a middle class employee, such as a high school teacher. Often, family members help the father save and collect the ticket price. Later, after working and saving for several years in the U. S., the father will send tickets for his nuclear family, amounting to four or five tickets on the average (Interviewee, personal communication, January 19, 1997).

may discover that their degree or qualifications may not be transferred to the new situation, resulting in being forced to work in occupations much lower than their personal abilities. Repeatedly, this leads to low self esteem and lack of satisfaction (Turner, 1991).

Economic factors are among the reasons causing problems between generations. Many immigrant families start their own small family business in the host country, frequently a new type of work to all family members. For example, a Korean pharmacist, as a result of licensing difficulty, may open a vegetable store, forcing his wife and father to work with him. Problematic circumstances of the new work are: Long hours in the business, struggles with the language, unfamiliarity with the administrative arrangements for licensing and taxation, and racial barriers to social mobility. These new experiences make daily life very tense, very different from the lifestyle in their home country. After a while, they feel physically and mentally exhausted. Returning home after business hours, each family member is expected to behave according to the cultural norms: Women should prepare food and take care of their children, while husbands have to respectfully obey their parents. Due to such daily life stress, women start to challenge their traditional roles, while children, exhausted by business obligations, start to show disrespect for their elderly parents' authority. Grandchildren, left home with grandmothers, tend to show resistance to the traditional norms, values, and lifestyle. Any further demand or criticism by children, spouse, or parent, may detonate family relationships and cause marital or intergenerational conflicts (Baptiste, 1990; Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Paulino, 1996).

Generally, most families experience and face challenges of immigration and transitioning successfully, with support they have for each other and from the

surrounding community. Occasionally, these families face difficulties and problems in adaptation/acculturation which I will address later.

The exposure of immigrants to a new culture causes changes in their perception of themselves, their relationships with others, and their relationship with their own culture. Oftentimes this experience is painful, confusing, and destabilizing. This process is known as acculturation.

Acculturation

Acculturation is the process of change occurring when a person from one culture experiences first-time contact with another culture. Lonner and Ibrahim (1996) consider knowledge of the acculturating process phase of the immigrant client essential for assessment in cross-cultural psychology. For the assessment of the client's acculturation status, they use a series of personal variables: "These include, but are not limited to, education level, employment, use of the media, extent of political participation, language proficiency, social relations, and support groups" (p. 298). Lonner and Ibrahim approach acculturation as a developmental process. They hold the notion that people must ascend the acculturation scale until they reach the final stage. According to them, assessing the acculturation level may contribute significant information about what social-cultural skills clients possess and what specific skills they must acquire to function effectively in a particular society. Each level or type of acculturation requires the development of different skills and procedures of adaptation. This development reinforces the clients' coping styles and behavioral flexibility without forcing a change in their own basic values and beliefs.

Acculturation may be defined also in terms of the degree of integration of new cultural patterns into the original ones. When moving within the same culture, the acculturation is defined as internal. Moving from one country to another generates the external process of acculturation. Paniagua (1994) theorizes that, "the effects of the external acculturation process are less dramatic when immigrants who move to the U.S., reside in cities that resemble the norms, cultural patterns, and values of their home cities," (p. 8) such as, when Cubans move to live in Miami, Florida.

Paniagua (1994) also perceives acculturation as a developmental process. Levels of acculturation can be defined in terms of number of years in the internal or external acculturation process, age at which the client entered such process, and country of origin. The general assumption is that younger clients are more easily acculturated than older clients, and that as the number of years in this process increases, the level of acculturation also increases. Paniagua argues that each racial group tends to show a different level of acculturation, depending on their country of origin.

Beside the time factor, Berg and Jaya (1993) add the level of education as an additional crucial aspect in the acculturation process. They believe that the longer the family has been in the U. S. and the better educated they are, the more acculturated they will be.

Berry (1990) talks about the anthropological definition of acculturation. He differentiates between group acculturation and individual psychological acculturation. The author also distinguishes between internal source of change, which occurs as a result

of invention, discovery, and innovation, and an external source of change such as education, colonial government, and industrialization.

Psychological acculturation refers to the process by which individuals change, both by being influenced by a continuous and first hand contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes under way in their own culture. The influence of the contact usually continues for generations down the line. During the process of acculturation, people may experience new phenomena that they constantly have to make decisions about, such as, in which language to speak, what to eat, and how to live daily life. People will vary in the way they enter into the acculturation process and in their degree of the process (Berry, 1990).

Similar to Lonner and Ibrahim (1996) and Paniagua (1994), Berry (1990) views acculturation as a developmental process. However, he perceives it as different forms and phases of encounters between the ethnic group and the dominant culture. He states:

The goals of acculturation are not necessarily toward modernity or any other single alternative. Acculturation can be viewed as a multilinear phenomenon, as a set of alternatives, rather than as a single dimension ending in assimilation or absorption into a "modern" society. (p. 244)

Further, Berry (1990) suggests four varieties of acculturation:

1. Assimilation: When individuals, through free will, seek daily interaction with the dominant culture.
2. Separation: When people value perpetuating their original culture, wishing to avoid interaction with other cultures, including the dominant one.

3. **Integration:** When the minority group tries to maintain cultural integrity within the dominant group. Acculturation may be “uneven” (p. 245) across domains of behavior and social life; for example, one may seek economic assimilation in work, linguistic integration by way of bilingualism, and marital separation from the dominant culture by endogamy.

4. **Marginalization:** Where there is little interest in cultural maintenance and relations with other groups.

Acculturation in itself may be perceived as a coping mechanism. However, changes generated as a result of the cross-cultural meeting may cause a great amount of stress. During the acculturation process, immigrants experience societal disintegration and personal crisis. The old social order, which immigrants were accustomed to, disappears and some individuals may get lost in the change. With the change, there is often a particular set of stress behaviors that occur during acculturation causing confusion, anxiety, and depression. The eventual outcome for any particular individual is affected by other variables that govern the relationship between acculturation and stress.

Several factors mediate between the person and the acculturation experience, such as: The nature of the larger society, type of acculturating group, modes of acculturation, demographic and social characteristics of individuals, and psychological characteristics of individuals. People who feel marginalized and those who maintain a separation goal tend to feel very stressed. In contrast, those who pursue integration are minimally stressed, with assimilation leading to intermediate levels (Berry, 1990).

Assessment of the acculturation degree of clients provides therapists with the clients' perception of themselves, of their relationship with their own ethnic group, and their own relationship with the dominant group, highlighting psychosocial difficulties that therapists have to treat (Aponte & Barnes, 1995). Dwairy and Van Sickle (1996) consider the assessment of acculturation, or the cultural identity, of the client very crucial to the goal of the therapy plan, especially when therapists believe in prescribing a special kind of therapy for each case.

In order to succeed in joining and developing rapport with clients at this and further stages, some studies direct that therapists should not solely adopt the Western approach to psychological treatment. They may do better if keeping themselves open to clients' own understanding of mental health (Aponte & Barnes, 1995; Dwairy & Van Sickle, 1996; Ho, 1987; Spiegel, 1982; Sue & Sue, 1990).

From my own observation, while studies/clinicians describe assimilation as the highest and best degree of acclimation as Americanization, some immigrant families define it as the families' failure to keep and maintain their own culture. Some parents feel hatred and offense toward the host culture for "stealing" their assimilated children from them. In addition, many families may feel they are betraying their extended families in their home country and cheating on them by learning to live according to an alien culture.

Social Support

There is a consensus in the literature that one of the most important factors in the acculturation process is the social support immigrants receive (Berry, 1990; Cornille & Brotherton, 1993; Landau-Stanton, 1990; Lonner & Ibrahim, 1996; Scott & Scott, 1989;

Sluzki, 1979; Taylor, Hurley, & Riley, 1986). This refers to the presence of social and cultural institutions for the support of the acculturating individual, including ethnic associations, residential enclaves (ghettos), extended families, one's original group, and formal institutions, such as agencies and clinics devoted to providing support.

Taylor, Hurley, and Riley (1986) discovered that children of less acculturated Mexican-American mothers scored higher on a Test of Basic Experiences (TOBE) compared to children of more acculturated mothers. They attributed this phenomenon to the support system that extended families offered to the less acculturated women. The support system of the extended family may lessen the impact of stress on children who are from a single-parent family.

Shah and Sonuga-Barke (1995) reached similar conclusions with Pakistani Muslim families who immigrated to England. While mothers seem to show depression and anxiety, children in extended families seem to adjust better than children who live in immigrated nuclear families. This favorable adjustment may be a result of the support system grandmothers offered as surrogate mothers.

From research conducted on cultural adaptation of Pilipino³ families, Heras and Revilla (1994) conclude that family cohesiveness may facilitate mental health. Mothers of traditional children, who were not yet acculturated in the American culture, reported high satisfaction, and their families seemed to be more balanced than Pilipino families with acculturated children.

3

The authors used this "Pilipino" not "Philipino" as would be expected in English.

Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1984) consider loyalty an important aspect in individual/group relationship: "In order to be a loyal member of a group, one has to internalize the spirit of its expectations and to have a set of specifiable attitudes to comply with the internalized induction" (p. 37). When a family undergoes dramatic changes in its life, loyalty of family members on the functional and emotional levels, is pivotal. A bond of loyalty among family members reflects their commitment and acceptance of the symbolic definitions of their family. That enables them to develop and cherish family myths and legends (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1984).

Problems of Immigrant Families

Compared to cross-cultural counseling, the literature on cultural family therapy is limited (Vontress, 1985), and little empirical research in multicultural family therapy has been published (Ben-David, 1996). The literature does not offer much about how to view families through a cultural lens to help therapists convert concepts into behaviors (Ho, 1987; Hardy, 1989; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989). Falicov and Karrer (1984) encourage therapists who work with clients from various ethnic backgrounds, to share their experiences and practices, as an attempt to build a theoretical model of cultural family therapy.

Following, I will present some examples from the literature, written by family therapists, regarding problems of immigrant clients. In long-term research from the social work discipline, Gold (1993) investigated the impact of immigration on Vietnamese families who immigrated to the U.S. in two major streams, in 1975 and 1978. In Vietnam, the traditional Vietnamese family is male-oriented, multigenerational, and extended.

When arriving in the U.S., many families had to split up, requiring married children to live nearby, because families were unable to rent or buy large houses which could accommodate all family members. As a result of language and professional difficulties, many men could not work in their original professions, forcing women to find suitable jobs to support the family economically.

In turn, families experienced role reversals which led to marital problems. Drawing on several studies in the social work field, Gold (1993) concludes that role reversals in migrated families give rise to "self-destructive, violent, psychosomatic, or antisocial reaction--such as wife or child abuse, depression, or alcoholism" (p. 309). As a result of mothers' working, children had less parental supervision which facilitated their acclimation with the American culture, challenged their parents authority, and initiated more verbal fights.

Generational conflict is one of the common problems facing immigrant Vietnamese families. Parents who have lived in a society where fathers made decisions for their boys and girls, are faced with their children's claim of individualism. Parents believe that instead of preserving the family cooperation, the new values of their children will lead to friction in the family. Grandparents, who migrated with their children, complain of disloyalty and disrespect from their grandchildren who have been socialized according to the American norms (Gold, 1993).

Rapid social and cultural changes may cause turmoil that effects individuals' self esteem. Heras and Revilla's (1994) study shows that second generation Pilipinos had lower self-esteem and poorer self-concept than first generation Pilipinos. These findings

may be understood as a result of the disconnection with their homeland, language, culture, and heritage when attempting to assimilate into the American culture. When trying to assimilate, Pilipinos discover the incompatible and antagonistic demands of the host culture that effect their values, norms, relationships, and behaviors. According to the American culture, one has to be independent, self-reliant, and individualistic; not dependent on family, as is the case in the Pilipino culture. When they try to find jobs, they experience racism and discrimination, keeping them unemployed. As a result, second generation Pilipinos are forced to live with their parents and to depend on the extended family, making acculturation a more difficult process (Heras & Revilla, 1994).

Leung and Boehnlein (1996) highlighted the resistance of the immigrated Vietnamese families to seek help outside the family system: "They reserve outside intervention as the last resource to be utilized only when all internal family options have failed" (p. 301). As a result, it is believed that refugees from Southeast Asia suffer from high levels of distress and mental illness, such as depression and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Leung and Boehnlein assume that when people continue living with these mental illnesses without getting any professional help, it will affect the relationships and well-being of all family members.

Garcia-Preto (1996) concludes that many Latino families who immigrated to the U.S. consider this act as a last hope and refuge. When arriving, groups and individuals, recurrently, experience oppression and social depravation as a result of their color, language, and culture. Although some Latino families may succeed in moving up socioeconomically, the majority of the migrants will stay below the poverty line, despite

the fact that some of them, such as the Puerto Ricans, are considered American citizens before immigration.

Latinos immigrate to the U. S. to improve their political or economical situation. In reality, the majority of families live in poverty, suffer loss as a result of crimes, drugs, rape, and AIDS. Families live in intensified fear for their children's well-being. Immigrants miss the family left behind and fear they may not be able to reunite with them as a result of politics or immigration laws. Many families live in shame after experiencing deterioration in their social status (Garcia-Preto, 1996).

Ben-David (1996) studied the family structure of Ethiopian and Russian immigrants in Israel. The author summarized the findings, stating that all crises among the two communities were associated with relocation. The process of acculturation had contributed to marital and family distress in many migrated families. In the post-immigration phase, the traditional Ethiopian family experienced many social and structural changes, such as loss of the community base and changes in gender roles. Russian immigrant families struggled with the deprivation in their professional status, and struggled with the Western open market economy. Some of these families solved their problems through divorce, others defocused from the immediate problems by triangulating with their children, creating new forms of problems. Yet others, "subsequently become involved with governmental children services or manifest somatic symptoms which bring them to seek help for their migratory problems as well" (p. 28).

Contrary to other studies, Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991) find that the adventure investment made by the act of migration is "the most precious investment

ethnic communities make for their children” (p. 10). As a result of the sense of belonging to the community, immigrants, parents and their children, worked hard enough to fulfill the family dreams of migration. The authors agree that migration in itself is a major transition, culturally and socially, which requires all family members to learn a new language, norms, and behaviors, according to the socioeconomic and political strata that the family will live within. The researchers conclude that motivation and clear rewards help family members adjust to the extreme changes they have to go through. The adjustment process is affected by the immigrants’ motivation. Further, it is affected mutually by the responsiveness of the institutions, such as schools, in the host country to the needs of immigrant children. It is essential, according to Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), to be aware of children’s environments at home, at school, and at neighborhood peer groups.

Arab Immigrants in the United States

In their countries of origin, the Arab people reside in 21 countries in Asia and in North Africa, between the Gulf and the Atlantic. By the end of the century, the estimated Arab population will be approximately 200 million people, mainly a young population under 30 years of age. The majority of Arabs, about 90%, are Muslims who belong to several sectarian affiliations such as Sunni, Shi’ite, Druze, Alawi, and Isma’ili. The minority are Christians who also belong to several sectarian affiliations such as Copt, Orthodox, Maronite, Catholic, and Protestant. There are a few ethnic groups, such as Kurds and Berber, who are not Arabs, living in some of the Arab countries (Barakat, 1993). All Arab countries share the Islamic religion, Arabic nationality, history, and

culture. However, each one has its own borders, passport, citizenship, local history, dialects, and subcultures. Despite the fact that 90% of Arabs are Muslims, it is a common mistake to think about all Muslims in the world as Arabs.

According to the 1980 census, there are approximately 2 to 2.5 million Arab Americans, with 65% living mainly in 11 states in major metropolitan areas such as New York City, Detroit/Dearborn, Washington D. C., Chicago, and Los Angeles (El-Badry, 1994). The Arab population in Detroit is estimated at 240 thousand. It is considered the largest in the country and, probably, the largest outside the Arab World (M. Farag, personal communication, January, 1997). It is estimated that by the turn of the century, the number of Arab immigrants in the U. S. will reach 3 million. The Arab Americans are younger than any other ethnic group, more than 30% of the whole population are less than 19 years old. They are more educated than the national average, are mainly self employed, and earn higher annual incomes than the average national income (Zogby, 1990). However, Arabs tend to hold different occupations in different cities. El-Badry (1994) indicates that among those who reside in Washington D. C. and Anaheim, CA, 23% are executives, while 18% of Houston's Arab residents are professionals. Cleveland Arab residents work mainly in sales, and there is more concentration on administrative jobs in Bergen-Passaic, New Jersey, and in New York City. According to the census data, 82% of Arabs in America are U.S. citizens, and 63% were born in the U.S. (El-Badry, 1994).

Arabs immigrated to the U.S. in two great waves. The first took place around the turn of the century, bringing Arabs from what is known today as Syria and Lebanon,

seeking better life choices. The majority, about 90% of this group, were Christians.

Living in the Arab World, Christians were typical Middle Eastern people, whose traditions and culture were very similar to that of the Muslim population. However, they were distinguished by their religious, economic, and political links with the west, as a result of their openness to the Christian civilization, especially in Italy, Greece, and France (Ahdab-Yehia, 1983; Kayal, 1983). During the Ottoman era, they felt discriminated against as a religious minority; moreover, they were sought and massacred in some villages. After the year 1850, Arabs developed an unrealistic picture of the wealth of the new countries from stories told by European merchants (Suleiman, 1987) and by a few Arab immigrants who returned home to tell about their adventure. Also, the news about the Chicago Fair held in 1893 and that of Saint Louis in 1906 encouraged merchants and others to migrate (Khalaf, 1987; Saliba, 1983). In migration, the educated and intellectual groups found an escape from the repressive political atmospheres. Christian peasants, merchants, and intellectuals from Syria and Lebanon started arriving in America from two persons a year, in 1869, to about ninety-two hundred persons a year in 1913 (Khalaf, 1987).

Those who fled the country for economic reasons came with the idea of becoming wealthy and returning home. The economic and political situation in the homeland worsened due to high taxes and conscription in the army of the Ottomans. Christians and Muslims considered immigration as a solution for all their problems (Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1985). Today, immigrants from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine make up the majority of

immigrants from Arab countries; however, all Arab countries are represented in the mosaics of Arab immigrants (McCarus, 1994).

The first wave of immigrants established the pattern of family chain migration, in which one immigrant who settled down in the U.S. soon helped his kin to immigrate, who in return helped other relatives to immigrate. These immigrants settled in communities with village and religious ties, restructuring some of their homeland relationships (Abraham, Abraham, & Aswad, 1983; Conklin & Faires, 1987; Naff, 1985). Regarding gender ratio, most first immigrants were men. Lebanese immigrants tended to go back home to marry and return with their wives. Immigrants from other Arab countries remained mainly unmarried, especially Muslims who found it difficult to marry Christian women, because of religious intolerance and the local attitudes against the Middle Eastern immigrant groups (Bilgé & Aswad, 1996). Until recently, the 1990 census data indicate that 54% of Arabs in America are men, compared to 49% of the total U.S. population (El-Badry, 1994).

The second wave of immigrants started after World War II as a result of the turmoil in the Arab World. Wars and economic instability in the area on the one hand, and the establishment of the state of Israel on the other hand, left hundreds of thousands of people as refugees. Many of these immigrants sought to immigrate to the U.S. This group was composed of people with capital and college degrees or people who immigrated to earn them. Smaller waves from Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq materialized after each war in the region (El-Badry, 1994; Naff, 1983, 1985). For example, between 1996 and 1997, about 16,000 immigrants from Iraq are expected to

settle in Dearborn/Detroit. This group is comprised of refugees who lived in camps in miserable conditions since the Gulf War until the U.S. arranged for their absorption (A. Hamed, personal communication, February, 1997).

Observers believe each wave had unique features. First wave immigrants sought assimilation as a path to success in the new country. They translated or westernized their names, adopted the western dress, and tried to master English as well as the host culture, leaving their own cultural customs (Ahdab-Yehia, 1983). For example, in Dickinson, North Dakota, an Arab family won the first prize in decorating their children's stroller for the Fourth of July parade (McCarus, 1994).

While in the Middle East, Christians survived as a minority by virtue of nurturing their congregations. Being in America, with a Protestant majority, the Orthodox Christian felt again a minority. As a result of their small number, Syrian Catholics assimilated with Latins. Also Melkite and Maronite, who belonged to the Eastern Church, surrendered their autonomy to the Latin church. In some cases, Syrian Eastern Orthodox established some parishes with other immigrants from Greece and Russia. Very few ethnic Eastern "parishes" exist today in the U.S. (Kayal, 1983).

The second wave immigrants were more ethnically conscious and usually more politically vocal, a tendency that helped them to gradually become a visible minority (Zogby, 1990). The difference in the ethnic and political conscience of each wave of immigrants reflects the change in the geopolitical map in the Arab World. For example, during the first wave, Arab countries were ruled by Ottomans, who were Muslims but not Arabs. Therefore, they encouraged an Islamic identity, rather than a nationalist one, since

they themselves were a minority in the region. During World War I, the political map of the Arab World changed, and with it the borders of some countries. For example, people who lived in what is known today as Syria and Lebanon, used to call themselves Syrians during the Ottoman period. After the British and French occupation and mandate on the area, what is known today as Syria, Lebanon and Israel were called Larger Syria (Kayal, 1983). After World War II, Arab countries gained their independence from foreign regimes and soon national and pan-Arabists movements emerged. A new sociopolitical Arab identity developed, especially in Egypt, under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser. People who migrated to the U.S. after this period came with a crystallized ethno-political identity (Abraham, 1983; Abraham, Abraham, & Aswad, 1983; Naff, 1983).

Arab Organizations

Various ethnic religious organizations were established to organize immigrants under the same roof. An Islamic association was established in Highland Park, Michigan in 1919, and in Detroit in 1922. The Arab community in Brooklyn established the Young Men's Muslim Association in 1923 and the Arab Banner Society in Quincy in 1930. The first mosque was built in Detroit, Michigan in 1919 (Abraham, 1983), in North Dakota in 1920, and in Cedar Rapids in 1934. In 1954 the Islamic Center of Washington, D. C. was opened to serve Muslims who resided in the area, as well as Muslim diplomatic corps who worked and lived in the capital (Haddad, 1983). Haddad estimates there were about four hundred mosques and Islamic associations in the U.S., while nine years later Pristin and Dart (1991) estimated from 600 to 900 mosques. Haddad states that, "because Islam

does not have a hierarchical structure in which organization is imposed from above, these institutions were of necessity begun by individuals at the local level. Participation in them remains optional" (p. 68).

Among other organizations, there are those established by Muslim students such as "The Federation of Islamic Associations" (FIA) which was instituted in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1952. "The Muslim Student Association" (MSA) was founded in 1963 as a competitor to the "Organization of Arab Students" (OAS) which emphasized the pan-Arabism⁴ notion that rejected the religious divisions among Arabs. The Muslim World League began in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. However, since 1974 they serve as a nongovernmental representative in the United Nations and consultant to the UNICEF and UNESCO. All organizations and associations work toward propagating Islam (Daawah), publishing Islamic magazines and studies, organizing and sponsoring conferences, organizing pilgrimages (hajj) to Mecca, sponsoring the building of new mosques, and maintaining the salaries of the religious leaders (imams) brought to the U. S. from the Arab World (Haddad, 1983). After Protestant, Catholic, and Judaism, Bilgé and Aswad (1996) believe that Islam is becoming a significant fourth religion in the U.S. It is important to conceive all the above organizations as components of the support system, established by previous immigrants to support identity and provide socio-cultural needs to themselves and others of the upcoming migrations.

4

A national ideological/political movement which emphasizes the Arab nationality over other kinds of identities, such as citizenship or religion.

Since 1967, several national Arab American organizations were established, mainly by founders who came with the second wave. These organizations served as political movements, and “created a cultural bond across the immigrant generations” (Zogby, 1990, p. ix.). Among these organizations are: Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG), the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), the Arab-American Anti Discrimination Committee (ADC), and the Arab American Institute (IMI). There are also several national, professional organizations such as the Arab American Medical Association (AAMA) and Arab American Business and Professional Association (AABPA)⁵.

Self Identity

External events in the Middle East, and internal events and experiences of the Arab immigrants during the process of acculturation, and political events in the world have crystallized the self identity of Arabs in America. People who immigrated from what is known today as Syria and Lebanon were called by immigration authorities either Syrian, Turks, Ottoman, or Armenian (Khalaf, 1987; Suleiman, 1994). After World War I, immigrants of the first wave debated whether to go back “home” or to make America “home”. Some Arab voices started writing, in their established newspapers, about the necessity to assimilate and stop living, behaving, and feeling as outsiders to the American society (Halaby, 1987; Suleiman, 1987, 1994). Arabs started expressing and discussing their suffering regarding the American mainstream rejection and discrimination against

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For a wider list of all Islamic organization in the U. S. see Waugh, Abu-Laban, and Qurashe (1983).

them (Conklin & Faires, 1987; Halaby, 1987). Abraham (1994), Fa'ik (1994), Halaby (1987), and Stockton (1994) highlight the discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice that was established and expanded by the American media against Arabs and Muslims. The broken English and poor appearance of the pioneer Arab pack peddlers in the late nineteenth century, and the Arab-Israeli wars in the 20th century, were some of the main reasons for the booming prejudice.

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

After the 1967 war between Israel and the Arab countries, large numbers of highly politicized immigrants arrived in the U.S. Soon they established their newspapers, magazines, and television and radio shows. Arabic theaters for adults and

for children were also established (Halaby, 1997). The goal of this wave of media and theater was to teach, crystallize and maintain Arab identity in America among Muslim and Christian immigrants.

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

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

Arab identity in America was also influenced by the rejection from American mainstream society. As a result of evoking stereotypes against Arabs and Muslims in the U. S. by the media, especially after World War II (Abraham, 1994; Bilgé & Aswad, 1996; Stockton, 1994), Arab immigrants were marginalized from political and social

integration in the main stream of society. They soon realized that the only way to exist was within cultural and/or physical ghettos. This reaction was strengthened by family and community life in most Islamic and Arab groups (Abraham, 1983). Muslims started utilizing functions of Islamic institutions such as mosques and Islamic centers for teaching the Arabic language and the religion of Islam. Immigrants from previous generations supported this tendency (Haddad, 1986).

Arab Families as Immigrants in the U. S.

Influenced by Islamic ethos and agrarian economic background, the keystone of Arab society is the unit of the extended family. Parents and all their unmarried children live and work together in the family fields (or in the family business). The first born son functions as child-parent to brothers and sisters. He is supposed to remain in his parents' household after having a family of his own, to take care of his elderly parents and other elderly relatives, such as aunts and uncles who have no one else to take care of them. Other sons are supposed to live nearby, on the family lands, close to their parents since all members are interdependent on each other (Nydell, 1987). Children are encouraged to marry their first cousins from both the father's and the mother's lineage. This system, established whole neighborhoods, sometimes whole villages, formed from the same extended family. In this sense, the family functions as a political, economic, religious, and social institution. According to Nydell (1987), family affiliation provides security and assures emotional and material resources whenever needed.

Dwairy (1997) states that the Arabic family provides the first four basic needs identified by Maslow (1970): (a) physical and biological, (b) safety, (c) love and

belonging, and (d) self-esteem. According to Dwairy, the satisfaction of the first four basic needs in the Arab family depends upon children conforming to the family and to social norms and values. This same family restrains its children from reaching the fifth need in Maslow's hierarchy: Self actualization. The Arab family believes that the notion of self actualization develops selfishness, leading individuals to prefer their own interests over the collective interest of the family. Moreover, it separates family members who operate as individuals rather than as a family entity.

Socialization among traditional and modern Arab families still emphasizes the advantage of the collective, the family and the society, over that of the individual (Budman, Lipson, & Meleis, 1992; Dwairy, 1997). Individuals identify themselves by their extended families and draw their strength from them. While "'individualism' or 'leading one's own life' is not of value [to Arabs]" (Simon, 1996, p. 375), loyalty to the family is the most important relationship in the Arab society. Since there is no concept of individual self, rather collective self of the family and the community, it becomes essential to take the family viewpoint into consideration whenever an individual needs any kind of psychotherapy (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993).

One may find three kinds of acculturation in today's Arab World: The traditional, the bi-cultural, and the westernized. They are established according to the degree of adaptation of western norms and values--either from direct connection while learning or working in the western countries, or from the western media that all Arab countries are exposed to daily (Dwairy, in press). It is clear that these concepts are measured in relation to standards of the typical, traditional families in the Arab World, not in the west.

People who tend to be more bi-cultural or westernized, differ from others by their openness toward egalitarian relationships between genders, self-centeredness rather than interdependence on the family, maintainance of internal focus of control rather than external, and socialization within a group of professional colleagues rather than with the extended family (Dwairy, in press).

Moving from villages and towns from the Middle East to America, Arabs have carried with them this notion of the family. Apart from the financial contributions to kin in the homeland (Simon, 1996), immigrants help their siblings, their cousins and people from their villages to join them in the U.S. They offer shelter, funds, jobs, monitoring or partnership to newcomers (Conklin & Faires, 1987; Naff, 1985). Swanson (1996) claims that in addition to the psychological support one gains from living within the same cultural group, it is cheaper for people in an ethnic grouping, especially a first generation of immigrants, to maintain loyalty to their group than to assimilate into the dominant culture.

First generation immigrants gathered in small communities that included people who immigrated from the same country or the same villages. These communities became the blueprint of the Arab immigration residential style in the U.S. Even though the second generation was more educated, relied less on the ethnic community and moved faster toward acculturation (Swanson, 1996), they still lived in ethnic cluster residences. Whole streets became resided by people who arrived from the same country, even from the same area or village. They established communities that are still identified by a high population of Arab Immigrants (see for example, Abraham, 1983; Abraham, Abraham &

Aswad, 1983; Cainkar, 1996; Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1985; Sengstock, 1983; Walbridge, 1996).

Husbands and wives. According to the Islamic faith, marriage is considered complementary to religious obligations. Men and women are encouraged to marry as a way to maintain their chastity and as a remedy for sexual deviation. Although divorce is abominable, Islam allows it if one or both spouses find it impossible to accept the counterpart as a partner. However, the rate of divorce in the Arab World is about 4% (Barakat, 1985). Arab couples try to repair marriages rather than divorce, since divorce may malign the reputation of both extended families (Simon, 1996).

Most marriages are arranged by family members or friends. Because marriage is construed as a relationship between two extended families, it has to be profoundly examined before taking any serious steps. Therefore, "Arabs generally approach marriage with more pragmatism, based on group consensus rather than individual choice" (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993). From marriage, the couple seek companionship and love, financial security, social status, and children (Nydell, 1987). They often focus on children's issues, whether the children are adults or small, rather than on their romantic needs (Simon, 1996).

Arab society, Christians and Muslims, is socially stratified among classes. They are very religious, patriarchal, patrilineal, and place a high value on family ties. Arabs believe that nature created men and women for different, but complementary, roles. Arabs in the Middle East and in the U.S. have double standards regarding men and women. Women should be watched and controlled while men enjoy privileges, such as

having more rights, being served all their lives by females, and being recognized socially and culturally as superior to women (Cainkar, 1996). Rural women in the Middle East always worked in the family fields, however, that was not recognized as a labor force since those women were never paid. In America, many women started working beside the men when they immigrated. Naff (1985) and Walbridge (1996) cite real life stories of women from the first Arab generation who worked as pack peddlers, factory workers, and storekeepers in the late 19th century and the turn of the 20th century. Also Hooglund (1987a, 1987b) and Shakir (1987) relate the hard work of first and second generation Syrian women in Waterville, Maine, and Boston respectively. Despite this, Arab families in the U.S. still debate whether women should work outside their homes, and if so, which kind of work is appropriate for them (Alldredge, 1984; Cainkar, 1994).

Many first generation, Arab immigrants, male and female, lack the education, skills, or language required for participating in the work force. One of the possibilities apparently open for them is working as waiters in restaurants. Usually they refrain from such jobs where they might have to serve alcohol and pork, which is forbidden in Islam (Haddad & Smith, 1996) and women might have to work late nights shifts, which is forbidden by society norms.

Husbands are supposed to be the breadwinners and the disciplinary figures in their families (Budman, Lipson, & Meleis, 1992). Albeit, in some families women are the main decision makers in the privacy of their homes, while they have to maintain a low profile and display submissiveness in public (Simon, 1996). Alldredge (1984) finds that couples' education usually reflects their style of decision making: The more they are both

educated, the more they share in the process of decision making. However, they still leave the notion of the "last word" for the male. With less educated couples, women make decisions concerning daily life needs in their household and for their children, while other kinds of decisions are made by males.

Comparing spousal relationships between Arab and American families, Arab Palestinian women are astonished that American extended families do not interfere in the marital relationship when husbands misbehave or mistreat their wives. Palestinian women believe that American extended families abandon American women, putting them in vulnerable positions in which they must face their husbands alone. Palestinian women consider their own lives better than those of American women for two additional reasons: (a) American men force women to work, while Arab men respect women who do not want to work outside their homes, wanting to care for their children, and (b) American women do not feel secure enough in their marriages (Cainkar, 1996).

The interdependent socialization of Arabs (Dwairy & Van Sickle, 1996) causes them difficulty in understanding the nature of relationships among American family members. It is expected that elderly parents will be taken care of by their children (mainly daughters or daughters-in-law will take the actual care of the aged person). People within the community will badly criticize any person who neglects his or her parents, or any elderly relative, when they are in need. Social, economic, and political support is expected from relatives, be they right or wrong in their decisions. Cainkar (1996) states, "[Palestinian women] perceive that Americans are raised to be more

concerned about themselves, while Palestinians are raised to care for one another” (p. 50).

When Palestinian women compare themselves to American women regarding freedom in society, Cainkar (1996) concludes that

Palestinian women comply with the rules of the cultural system in which they must live, whether they like all of them or not, because to defy them means to lose the support structures the culture provides. Without this structure, they feel vulnerable and empty. Loss of family, for them, is the greatest loss. (pp. 50-51)

Maintaining good relationships with both the family of origin and the husband’s extended family provides women with assurance of personal, legal, and social support, especially regarding any marital problems with their spouses. However, they often feel that traditions may work against them. Therefore, Cainkar (1996) cites Arab women who state that the ideal situation may be to gain legal rights similar to that of American women while keeping the respect that Arabic culture has for them, especially for mothers and elderly women.

Influenced by their American experience, Arab women in the U.S. declare that they are willing to raise and treat their children, both boys and girls, equally, which differs greatly from the traditional way in the Middle East. However, they still expect total obedience and respect from their children. This means that all girls must help in the household, and all boys must take care of their sisters. All children are supposed to refrain from having friends of the opposite sex. All daughters are expected to remain virgins until marriage, according to the chastity and modesty cultural laws (Aswad &

Gray, 1996). Interestingly, the Arab community tolerates young male teenagers and young men who experience sex with non-Arab women, but have rigorous sanctions against Arab women who behave the same way (Swanson, 1996).

Modesty laws are among the most significant in the Arab family, and usually women are expected to follow them, teaching them to their children, especially daughters. Among those laws are social segregation between men and women, women's respect for males' authority in private and in public, decency and dressing codes, and to obey sexual taboos (Cainkar, 1994; Haddad & Smith, 1996; Swanson, 1996).

All Arab women are expected to marry Muslim men, while Muslim men are encouraged to marry Muslim women. According to the interpretation of Islam, Muslim women are forbidden to marry Christians or Jews. However, Muslim men can marry from another faiths because in Islam children belong to their fathers according to the patrilineal linkage (Haddad & Smith, 1996). These authors estimate that the percentage of interfaith marriages among Muslim women in the U.S. is about 10%-15% and about 30% in Canada. Parents relate to their daughters' interfaith marriages as a heavy burden, while the community relates to it as the parents' "failure" to raise daughters properly (Haddad & Smith, p. 26). Cainkar (1996) relates a discussion where Arab women in Dearborn, Michigan debate whether they may allow their daughters to marry non-Muslims. The content of the answers was influenced by the political attitudes of the women, with those who were politically traditional refusing the idea and standing against it. Politically active women who were pan-Arabist stated that they would permit their

daughters to marry an Arab man who is not from their religion but from their same nationality (Cainkar, 1996). This stance is still rare in Middle Eastern societies.

Polygamy is very rare in the Arab World (Barakat, 1985) and forbidden in some Arab countries such as Tunisia and some Islamic countries such as Turkey (Sabbagh, 1996), yet some Arab men who emigrate alone, leaving their wives in their homeland, may desert them and marry other Arab or American women. Some Arab men, gaining the agreement of their wives, marry American women to gain their green card, deserting either or both women afterwards (Aswad & Gray, 1996). In some cases, women who never lived away from their family of origin feel alienated and depressed and fail to withstand all the difficulties of adjustment and acclimation. They may desert their husbands and children, returning to their families of origin in their homeland (Aswad & Gray, 1996).

Men and women. Social life in the Arab World is segregated according to sex roles and age. The degree of segregation varies according to economic, religious, and familial norms and laws. Men socialize with each other in segregated praying halls, salon rooms in private houses, or coffeehouses in their neighborhoods. Arabs brought these religious and social institutions with them to America. The first mosques built by immigrants functioned as social centers, gathering the community for weddings, funerals, holiday celebrations, and other community needs. The mosque resembled the American church rather than the Middle Eastern mosque. Women took an essential role in all mosque activities, including fund raising. Following the religious reform in Iran and subsequently, in the Middle East, conservative religious leaders from the Arab World

came to replace American born ones, bringing back with them the religious constrictions regarding segregation between genders (Haddad, 1983).

The oldest member of a family, or among people who immigrated as individuals from the same village, is supposed to open his house to all family or community members to gather each night. This is the main social activity for many families after a work day. People discuss their daily activities, ideas, problems, and share news from the homeland. The host's wife and daughters are supposed to wait on them, without languishing, for long hours (Walbridge, 1996).

Coffeehouses are a familiar institution in the Arab countries. They serve as bars in some European and American communities, however alcohol is not served in them. Men in Dearborn, Michigan, after making a small stop at home for dinner, gather in Arabic style coffeehouses which are segregated, not just according to gender, but also according to national and political affiliation. Social and economic stratification is obvious in each coffeehouse where elderly and community leaders are given the central location where they can discuss, consult, and give advice in matters of community life. Coffeehouses also function as a place where community members can learn about religio-political changes in the Arab World. Oftentimes, coffeehouses host the organization and outburst of political demonstrations in American cities (Abraham, Abraham, & Aswad, 1983).

Women socialize within a group of Arab neighbors and extended family members. They often visit each other daily, during the mornings or the afternoons, rotating their meetings among all the women in the group. When women live isolated from other community members, their husbands are willing to spend more time with

them instead of joining the men's gatherings (Cainkar, 1996). Some women become active in women's organizations. Shakir (1987) reports the story of the establishment of "The Syrian Ladies' Aid Society" in Boston, in 1917, as a women's community endeavor to support people in the homeland during War World I. Activities in the organization consumed all women's leisure time. The organization changed its name in 1962 to become "Lebanese-Syrian Ladies' Aid Society" which still supports local, national, and international activities.

Since the religious and cultural segregation laws forbid men and women to meet and there is a cultural preference to ethnoreligious marriage, some mosques, churches, and religious students' associations established activities which function as matchmakers to maintain endogamy (Barazangi, 1996; Haddad, 1996; Kayal, 1983). Men and women tend to advertise their need to find a match in well distributed Arab newspapers. The advertisements reflect the most important requirements for men and women from their future spouses. Following is a translation of some examples of the advertisements:

(a) An Arab Christian Palestinian young man, American citizen, 35 years, an employee, would like to marry an Arab Christian young lady from Palestine or Syria or Lebanon. Her age should be less than 27 years, and she has to agree to live with me in Dallas, Texas. (Arab Times, August 10, 1993, p. 5).

(b) Radi Hammad (Queens, New York). 41 years. Muslim Egyptian, BA engineering, never married before, excellent financial situation, with thanks to God. Requires an Egyptian or Arab Muslim wife who lives with her family, never married before, or

previously married, without children, between the ages 30-35, educated. Those who find themselves qualified please call . . . (Almanassa Alarabia, July 1996, p. 2).

(c) A lady from Morocco who has American citizenship, 32, would like to marry an Arab Muslim man between the ages of 35-45 who has good manners and hallows marriage life. Please call . . . (Arab Times, July 20, 1996, p. 24).

(d) A young Syrian man, 34, handsome, Muslim, engineer in a private company, would like to become acquainted for a marriage purpose to an educated Arab young lady from Europe or North or South America, or Canada. She must be less than 30-years-old. Please write to . . . (Arab Times, November 1996, issue no. 233, p. 16).

Teenagers. The phenomenon of teenagers is a new one in the Middle East. Until 50 years ago, the age for marriage in most Arab societies was 14 for girls and 16 for boys. Also, many male and female children had to work in the family fields or household after school, leaving no free time for them to develop their own sub-culture. Therefore, teenage lifestyle is a new experience for Arab parents. However, this experience is more intense for parents who live in America.

There are both commonalities and dissimilarities throughout the Middle Eastern Arab countries regarding the practice of Arab heritage and culture. It is also the case with understanding, interpreting, and practicing Islam. Thus, Arabs carry these similarities and differences with them to their countries of immigration. When a heterogeneous Arab community decides to treat their children according to the Islamic or Arab heritage and culture, they have to decide according to which aspects of each and how. This is one of

the main problems facing parents who want to carry on their traditions in the host country.

Another problem is that children are acculturated faster than their parents in American society, a tendency that causes conflicting points of view between children and their parents (Barazangi, 1996). Investigating the perception and practice of Islam in North America, Barazangi (1996) concluded that, "Arab youth are being reared in two different environments at the same time, the familial and communal Muslim or nationalistic Arab and the school or host-societal secular" (p. 133).

Shame and honor are two of the pillars of the socialization in the Arab society (Haddad & Smith, 1996). Besides antisocial behavior, women's sexual premarital misconduct brings shame to the extended family for generations to come. In the U.S., parents are mainly concerned for their daughters' reputation. The Arab community expects individuals to follow the cultural norms strictly, otherwise, they will be punished by rumors which will ruin their future chances to marry or be accepted by the community. Parents, brothers, married sisters, and uncles keep open eyes on daughters in the family. Usually, high school female students are not allowed to participate in after-school activities where boys are involved or if transportation is not promised by the school system. Any sport activity which compels girls to show their bodies, such as swimming and tennis, is not allowed. If Arab girls are caught having relationships with boyfriends, they typically will be beaten and prohibited from attending school. In cases of lost reputation among the Arab community, they will be sent back to their homeland to find husbands. Parents who allow their daughters to participate in activities, have

American friends, or work after school, implore their daughters to behave according to the norm of the Arabic culture in order not to evoke community criticism against the family. Community criticism may classify the daughter as an "outcast" (Eisenlohr, 1996, p. 262).

As a result of the severe restrictions, some teenage girls lie to their parents, attend school without wearing the cultural/religious scarf, and skip some classes to meet boys and girls. A dissonance exists between parents and daughters, and between parents and school, in terms of each other's expectations (Eisenlohr, 1996).

High school female Arab students who composed between 40% (Eisenlohr, 1996) to 98% (A. Hamed, personal communication, February 3, 1997) of students in the Michigan school system preferred to socialize with Arab rather than American students because they claim that Arab friends can understand them and their situation at home better than the Americans can. Further, Arab students who had American friends were isolated and despised by other Arab students.

Due to parental concerns regarding teenage daughters, parents tend to prefer them to marry shortly after high school (Cainkar, 1994). This is not the case currently in the Middle East, where the age of marriage is increasing. In such cases, mothers, mothers-in-law, and other women in the family and neighborhood may help young brides to learn their duties as housewives and future mothers. For the large number of teenage marriages in Dearborn, Michigan, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) established educational programs for such young mothers (Aswad & Gray, 1996).

Parents value teaching of the Arabic language to their children, allowing the young generation to learn Arabic culture and history and to communicate with grandparents and other relatives in the home country. Very few of them see learning Arabic as essential to understanding the Qur'an. However, for many of them, learning Arabic creates another dissonant situation. Barazangi (1996) states:

As these youth attempt to conceptualize and practice Islam and the Arabic heritage as presented to them by their parents within the framework of Western secular society, they tend to become confused by their parents' application of the Islamic principles of the "Arabic heritage." (p. 139)

No studies have been found discussing the life of teenage Arab boys. This is probably true because they are allowed somehow to live similarly to their American peer groups. Also, they are an invisible minority, since they are not asked, according to the religion or culture, to wear any special dress that may identify them as Arab or Muslim.

Mental Health Within the Arab Immigrants

Compared with anthropological and sociological research, very few studies have been written about the mental health of Arab immigrants in America (Abudabbeh, 1994; Meleis, 1981). After the Gulf War, and as a result of the traumatized Arab immigrant population, a few more publications came to light (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993).

Belonging to two cultures simultaneously causes social and psychological stress for children who were born or brought up most their lives in the U.S. They are expected to behave as Americans during the day and Arabs at night (Eisenlohr, 1996). The transition is not always easy, especially when there are many personal decisions to be

made which carry fundamental contradictions between the two cultures. Parents, especially mothers, must always be aware of their children's behavior and correct it whenever any Americanized behavior is evident. The social control of the close knit community helps parents in this mission.

Elders in the Arab society are responsible for problem solving in their families and communities. Couples bring their problems to their parents, uncles, aunts, neighbors, and friends, who act as mediators and peacemakers. Often when elders listen to a problem, they volunteer to talk with the counterpart in the dispute. If they abstain from offering help, it will be interpreted as unwillingness to support family members in time of need. In this case, they may be seen as refusing to put the well-being of the extended family before their own. As a result, they may be isolated and socially boycotted. Therefore, usually when a spouse shares with another person his or her marital or familial problem, that person considers him or herself spontaneously assigned to help in resolving it.

The absence of the extended family in the U.S. makes it more important for Arab families to consult each other in their daily life problems when they meet in their social gatherings with family and friends. As a result, immigration has added a new role to "Imams" (religious leaders), unknown in the Arab countries, as family counselors. Lacking the necessary training, these "Imams" provide Islamic answers based on theological law, which do not serve the needs of second and third-generation Arab Muslims (Haddad, 1983). Haddad and Smith (1996) state:

It is not surprising to find that requests for marriage counseling are on the rise among Arab-American Muslims. While some feel that intervention in the personal realities of a Muslim family by someone who is not part of that family is inappropriate, many others realize that the pressures of accommodating a society with very different values makes some kind of outside counseling urgent. (pp. 27-28)

It is expected that one should share personal problems with all peer and older family members and friends (Simon, 1996). Privacy in these matters is interpreted as distrust for adequate support from the kin group. However, when going to a therapist who is not a family or community member, people tend to keep information in secrecy to save face and reputation. They do not consider the personal issues to be relevant to help the therapist understand the problem. This causes the therapist to work extra hard to establish a rapport with the family (Abudabbeh, 1994).

Arabs' ideas about the function of a therapist are influenced--when they seek therapy for psychological, marital, or parental problems--by their familiarity with the role of family members and friends as mediators and peacemakers. Not only do they expect the therapist to mediate among all parties involved (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993), but often they expect the therapist to take sides. Therefore, Simon (1996) advises therapists to clarify the meaning of neutrality in the profession when meeting an Arab family; otherwise, neutrality may be interpreted by them as indifference, betrayal, lack of concern, and opposition. Therapists are conceived of as expert doctors who are expected to diagnose and find solutions for people's problems (Abudabbeh, 1996). Thus, family

members consider the therapists, not the clients, responsible for the therapy process and its consequences (Meleis, 1981). Therefore, a non-directive approach in therapy is disappointing and considered by Arab clients as useless.

Approaching mental health professionals who are unfamiliar to the family is still alien to Arab people (Meleis & LaFever, 1984). Apart from psychiatric institutions, very few psychotherapists provide their services in Arab countries (Al-Issa, 1966, 1989, 1990; Okasha, 1993). Immigrants have transferred this notion with them to the U.S. However, the literature written about some Arab centers--established for providing services for Arab immigrants--points to their success in accessing the community, the family, and individuals, in the above order.

Aswad and Gray (1996) summarize a unique experience of the first and largest center established by immigrant Arabs to help the Arab community with their mental and social needs. The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) was established in Dearborn, Michigan, in 1971. Its initial goal was to support Arab immigrants in their legal needs, since their ignorance in this aspect caused them many problems with the immigration authorities (A. Hamed, personal communication, February 3, 1997). Over the years, the center developed from one that offered English courses and interpretation services, to a multi-service center that employs 100 professionals and 250 volunteers--all bilingual. This center is partially funded by city and governmental funds (A. Hamed, personal communication, February 3, 1997). The center provided services in 1993-1994 to 62,415 Arabs, Muslims and Christians. ACCESS includes many different programs: Family counseling, health, employment, tutoring,

vocational training, physical and mental disability, teen parenting, immigrants' assistance, economic, and cultural. The programs vary in content each year and reflect the community's needs.

Poverty and immigration were the main complaints of most families who sought help in the family counseling center. Close to 70% of all families who came to therapy earned an annual income of less than \$10,000. Among them, 46% were on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Aswad and Gray (1996) claim that AFDC played an important role in the decision of Arab women in poor families to ask for divorce. This changed the traditional lifestyle, since their husbands were not needed to provide additional money.

Among 1,000 persons who sought therapy in one year, 38% complained of violent arguments with spouses, 14% of threatened divorce, 10% of separation, 10% of substance abuse, and 7% of abuse by spouses or in-laws, and mistreatment by brothers and children. Other kinds of help that the center offered related to parental problems such as discipline (17% of all problems), mourning (14%), or guilt and blame regarding a child left in the home country (15%) (Aswad & Gray, 1996). Currently, the number of cases seen in the family counseling center is about 400 weekly, treated by a staff of 13 therapists. The main issues of the clients are: Depression, anxiety, ADD, and school related problems. Regarding marital problems, women are the primary complainants, expecting the therapist to intercede as mediator in their marital situation (M. Farag, personal communication, February 1997). This places ACCESS in the position of an

extension to the extended family, or as the knowledgeable elderly members in the community.

Aswad and Gray (1996) presume that changing the economic lifestyle and community lifestyle will cause a change in parenthood roles. Mothers and fathers who moved to the Dearborn area from small villages and towns in the Arab countries, were surrounded by family members who shared the motherhood and fatherhood roles interchangeably. After immigrating, both parents had to relearn their responsibilities under the new circumstances. ACCESS developed intervention programs for such families utilizing the Arab cable television stations. In addition, they offered educational programs such as workshops, seminars, and lectures (Aswad & Gray, 1996; M. Farag, personal communication, February, 1997). Farag credits the high numbers of clients in ACCESS to the intensive educational programs that institution built during the last years to help the community become familiar with the services delivered by mental health providers. Furthermore, ACCESS reflects the needs of the community in its programs, opening or changing them in accordance with those needs.

Another example of using community resources to serve Arab clients is the Naim Foundation located in Washington, D.C. It offers complimentary services for the Arab community. The foundation was established in 1987 by Nuha Abudabbeh, an Arab Palestinian clinical and forensic psychologist who herself emigrated to the U.S. about 30 years ago from Lebanon. A group of mainly bilingual Arab mental health workers volunteer in the foundation. Abudabbeh has a weekly mental health program on the local Arab radio station where Arabic speaking people can call and ask questions about their

concerns. Abudabbeh tries to educate the community on mental health issues, teaching that popular psychosomatic complaints used commonly by Arabs may indicate the need for help with mental health concerns. From her observations, she believes that the Naim Foundation has succeeded in its mission, especially with poor Arab populations. Most wealthy Arab families feel too ashamed about their personal and family problems, preferring the help of non-Arab clinicians. Abudabbeh points to differences between the kinds of problems of poor and wealthy Arab families in her area. While the poor struggle with acclimation to a new country, wealthy educated Arabs suffer from “western problems” such as eating disorders, (N. Abudabbeh, personal communication, January 19, 1997) which are very rare in Arab societies.

Other examples of community centers are the SIHA, which exists in San Francisco and provides medical services for the Arab community, and the Chaldeon which provides psychosocial services for the Chaldenian-Iraqi community in Dearborn, Michigan (Abudabbeh, 1994). One or two more centers may be in the process of establishment in the Washington, D.C. area (N. Abudabbeh, personal communication, January 19, 1997).

Impact of Ecological Contexts on Migrants' Mental Health

Arab immigrants live simultaneously in two worlds, the host country, and the home country. Political, social, and economic events that take place in both contexts reflect on their well-being (Abudabbeh, 1994; Budman, Lipson, & Meleis, 1992). Abudabbeh and Nydell (1993) report how the news of the Gulf War caused post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, panic attack, and depression for immigrants

and students who were originally from Iraq, Kuwait, Palestine, and Lebanon. The Naim Foundation established a hot line to reduce personal and community tension, prepared an intervention handbook in Arabic, and organized lectures and support groups as well as a psychological weekly radio broadcast.

The sociopolitical background of therapists also influences the relationship between them and Arab immigrants. If the therapist shows disrespect or criticizes the Arabic culture or values, the client may become defensive and terminate the relationship. In other cases, when the therapist is Jewish, some suspicion and mistrust may arise (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993).

The type of problems reported by Abudabbeh and Nydell (1993) resemble those of other ethnic immigrant groups. The major complaints are:

Intergenerational value conflicts, parenting problems, changes in the role of family members, physical abuse, cultural agoraphobia (especially among women unaccustomed to going out alone), identity confusion, adjusting to a lower social and economic status. [and] loss of extended family support system. (p. 275)

The most typical discussions in therapy are family debates about socializing, discrimination between male and female members, personal freedom, and conformity with traditional roles and norms (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993). Parents, especially fathers, expect their children to totally obey them. Arab teenagers are expected to “shape themselves to fit their family environments on the basis of a cultural imperative that requires individuals to subordinate themselves to their families or clan” (Budman, Lipson, & Meleis, 1992). When trying to solve a problem with their children, parents

may lecture them, yet not discuss specifics with them. Oftentimes, children are afraid to communicate with their fathers; they aim for their mother's mediation. In such cases, therapeutic intervention may be misjudged as interference with the father's authority who, in response, may reject family therapy (Abudabbeh, 1996). Further, Abudabbeh and Nydell (1993) note that clients whose authority is at stake show resistance to therapy, assuming that therapists, even Arab ones, are more Westernized and would take sides with the younger generation or with the liberal party within the family.

Abudabbeh (1996) suggests that therapists utilize the social visiting custom highly practiced and respected in Arab societies as an attempt to show personal and social appreciation, an alternative way to build a therapeutic rapport. When a visit is paid to a family, all family members may reconsider the relationship with the therapist.

Abudabbeh and Nydell (1993) find that there are differences in the openness of Arab immigrants in therapy according to their home country. In their experience, Lebanese and Egyptians are the most cooperative, followed by Syrians, Palestinians, and some Saudis. They also find no significant differences between men and women in seeking therapy. The authors indicate some essential differences when meeting Arab clients. For example, it is not socially appropriate to maintain continuous eye contact, especially between two members of the opposite sex. Also one should be aware of the unacceptability of physical touch and use of social distances (some traditional or Muslim religious people do not shake hands with the opposite sex, however, they may stand very close, and find it acceptable to touch a person of the same sex). Meleis (1981)

emphasizes the importance of verbal communication and the significant codes of body movements to enhance social or professional relationships.

Case Examples

Among the cases of Arabs in America seen by mental health workers, Swanson (1996) tells the story of Abdallah, a 40-year-old Muslim man who went as a child to an American school where all his peers were non Arabs and non-Muslims. After graduation, he served four years in the army and gained a bachelor's degree. Abdallah lived with an African American woman for three years, but he was certain that his family would not agree to his marrying an American woman, especially a black one. He sought therapy, suffering from severe headaches and gastrointestinal difficulties, as a result of the acute stress associated with his role conflicts as an independent adult in American society and as a first born son of an Arab family. This case illustrates the influence of the family in the Arab individual's life, and the struggle that one experiences when socialized in two polarized norm sets, the individuated and the interdependent. According to the Arab codes, Abdallah knew that he might reach self-fulfillment only if he behaved according to his family's expectations. However, according to his American codes, he might feel self-fulfillment by doing what suited him personally, not taking others into consideration.

Some other clients that Swanson worked with postponed important decisions in their lives, escaped to substance abuse, or even became suicidal. In such cases, according to Swanson (1996), the goal of therapy "should be to help [clients] arrive at the solution that is most appropriate for [them] and to resolve the guilt and grief which must inevitably accompany [their] choice" (p. 247).

Arabs in therapy may suffer from misdiagnosis as a result of cultural barriers, miscommunication as a result of language difficulties, or from the therapist's unfamiliarity with the culturally-bonded behaviors of the client and his or her family. Budman, Lipson and Meleis (1992) narrate the clinical story of Omar, a 17-year-old who fled with his family from Iraq in an attempt to avoid being sent to the war between Iran and Iraq. Omar was referred to a local community mental health facility for assessment regarding weight and sleep disorders, anxiety, isolation, and unusual behavior. The local facility did not have an interpreter, and neither Omar nor his family were able to express themselves properly in English. Omar was then referred to a psychiatric institute where he was diagnosed as having schizoaffective disorder with underlying thought disorder. Omar was prescribed several kinds of psychotic drugs that had acute side effects and made his behavior look strange to his family members and to the staff. When an Arabic-speaking therapist joined the team, she functioned as a "cultural consultant" or a "cultural broker" (p. 363). The therapist was able to interpret Omar's thoughts and feelings to the team members and to put Omar's conversation and behavior into his own cultural context, normalizing it. The team became convinced that the main "disorder" was Omar's command of the English language and not his thoughts. An Arab psychologist then was asked to run diagnostic tests again on Omar, taking into consideration his cultural background. The results were that Omar scored low on psychosis and high on anxiety and depression. The cultural consultant was able to include Omar and his family as partners in the new treatment plan, which ensured their cooperation. The cultural consultant explained the American larger systems to the family and helped them to connect with

other Arab immigrants. Consequently, they became integrated socially, which improved their psychological well-being (Budman et al., 1992).

Therapists who work with Arab clients may wisely combine the professional American ethics codes and the Arab social ethics codes. Abudabbeh (1996) tells the story of Fadwa, a Jordanian immigrant woman who sought help as a result of her husband's physical abuse. Arranging help with a third party, the therapist advised Fadwa to threaten her husband with abandonment if he continued the abuse or did not agreed to counseling. The husband agreed to see the therapist who started couple therapy with both spouses. The therapist visited the family and agreed to participate in the family celebrations as an attempt to further gain their trust. For this couple, isolation and loneliness were the main problem. The therapist's behavior helped the couple to socialize more and to keep the marriage intact.

When relating to immigrant groups in family therapy, naturally one talks about working with clients from other cultures which are alien to the American dominant culture and often, to the therapists'. The literature has several names for this therapy: Therapy with minorities, multicultural therapy, cross-cultural family therapy, or therapy with ethnic minorities. The next sub-chapter will review the different approaches in the family therapy field regarding this issue. I will attempt to remain close to the authors' descriptions and interpretations of their concepts.

Family Therapy Theories

The invitation to build a theory guiding family therapists' work with clients from other cultures has generated several studies that have become classic works in the field.

Reviewing these works, one may conclude that (a) authors introduced all theories known in the field of family therapy as suitable to work with this population (see for example Berg & Jaya, 1993; Falicov, 1988a; Sue & Sue, 1990; Turner, 1991; Veer, 1992; Vontress, 1985), (b) most of the work (e.g., Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Ho, 1987; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Pearce, 1996; McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989) tend to teach therapists anthropological, social, historical, and political facts about diverse ethnic groups, emphasizing how therapists might do successful work with that specific group, and (c) few studies tried to scrutinize themes among diverse ethnic groups such as working with women, alcoholism, or children in minority groups (e.g., Aponte, Rivers, & Wohl, 1995; Carter, & McGoldrick, 1989; Imber-Black, 1988). The common theme which projects from these studies is ethnicity.

When individuals live in their home country, their identity develops from a combination of several components. However, when migrating to the host country, ethnicity becomes their dominant identity, the major lens through which they see themselves and others, and are often seen by others in the host country. McGoldrick, Giordano, and Pearce (1996) consider ethnicity as:

The story of our connections to our heritage and our ancestors, [it] is always also a story of the evolution of group identities as we migrate, organize, and reorganize ourselves to meet changing historical and geographic circumstances. Ethnicity patterns our thinking, feeling, and behavior in both obvious and subtle ways, although generally we are not aware of it. (p. ix)

McGoldrick and Giordano (1996) assume that ethnicity is deeply connected to families and affects the way they identify themselves. According to McGoldrick and Giordano, ethnicity also provides a basic psychological need of belonging and continuity. Families who do not belong to a dominant culture feel forced to give up some or all of their values and adopt the host culture's value system. McGoldrick and Giordano analyze the relationship between the mainstream white, Euro-American population and other immigrants in the U.S., unveiling covert and overt racism in daily life, including the family therapy relationship. They criticize the family therapy field because it "has been developed and conducted by White Americans for other White Americans, without reference to people of color" (p. 15).

Saba, Karrer, and Hardy (1989) consider the lack of theories in family therapy about minorities an act of racism, sexism, and oppression. They relate to the phenomena as "epistemological blindspots" led by the Western dualistic approach to life. To change this notion, they claim we "need to incorporate such valuable notions of cybernetics, constructivism and system into a broader canvas that includes an appreciation of context, a sense of history, a clarification of values, and understanding of politics, and the complexity of societal emotions" (p. 10).

McGoldrick (1982), Vontress (1985), Ho (1987), Saba, Karrer, and Hardy (1989), and Veer (1992) point out the importance of having a comprehensive theory for family therapy with other cultures. Since the early 1970's, articles were written about the issue of cultural diversity in the field of family therapy. However, the main intention of the literature focuses on describing the culture of various groups and discussing how cultural

differences effect traditional mental health techniques and approaches (Vontress, 1985).

In the following, I will try to introduce the main approaches in the family therapy field that may understand, assess, and treat immigrants' problems and clarify them under the most dominant element that governs them. It is very well-understood that, because of the richness of each approach or theory, it may be classified under more than one classification.

Anthropological Approach

The main thrust of this approach is the emphasis on the therapists' self awareness, empathy toward clients, and unconditional openness to learn from them. Several studies introduced classical theories in the field as suitable for the work with ethnic groups; however, the common message that these studies repeatedly emphasize is the self awareness of the therapists. It seems that therapists' awareness of their own ethnicity, race/racism, class, gender, political affiliation, and relationship with own family is prerequisite to their own training to be culturally sensitive (Baptiste, 1990; Boyd-Franklin, 1989). One may identify two streams in this approach:

(a) The Anthrotherapist: This approach focuses mainly on learning how to prepare oneself as a therapist to work with other cultures. By training themselves properly, they will be able to work with clients about whose cultural background they know little or nothing. For more than a decade, Falicov and Karrer (1984) have regarded anthropology as the main gate in providing information, with respect to cultures' behaviors and value systems, for family therapists. Despite that, they believe anthropology is not capable of creating cross-cultural knowledge relevant to the

therapeutic context. They advise therapists to use some anthropological elements in therapeutic work or become, what I refer to as, “anthrotherapists.” When the therapist is totally ignorant about the family’s culture, Falicov and Karrer (1984) suggest adopting the “anthropological approach” (p. 20) which means watching and imitating others’ courtesy behavior, being curious, and learning from the family members about their own expectations and meanings of “normal” behavior (p. 20). The authors believe that therapists who seek to join successfully with their alien clients should have a personal interest in the family that “goes beyond the professional protocol” (p. 20).

Falicov and Karrer (1984) consider that when therapists meet families in a therapeutic relationship, the two parties’ value systems also meet (see also Sluzki, 1979). They believe that all current therapeutic approaches in the field of family therapy are able to work successfully with minorities if they add a cultural layer to their usual lenses, to aid in understanding families who are from different cultures. The authors consider therapists’ skills and experience as basic and necessary prerequisites.

Subsequently, the authors invite therapists to expand their focus when working with culturally different clients, to include not just their culture, but also the larger system (see also, Gibbs & Huang, 1989; Imber-Black, 1989; Tseng & Hsu, 1990). They advise therapists to better interview, assess and intervene, while taking into consideration the socio-cultural background and the normative expectations of the minority population. They ask clinicians to be more aware of the influence of culturally bound behavior and norms on treatment. Falicov and Karrer (1984) assert that cultural strategies may include cultural reframing, rituals, philosophy, remedies, and language usage.

When therapists share the same cultural background with clients, or they are knowledgeable of that culture, they may mediate between their clients and the host culture and function as cultural observers (Budman, Lipson, & Meleis, 1992). Therapists' knowledge about the norms, family roles, rules, customs, and rituals is necessary for assessment and treatment. However, the family always needs to be allowed to have the final word regarding its chosen values and norms. When working with clients from a different culture, it is recommended that therapists be aware of the multiple cultural layers in which clients simultaneously live.

Sometimes, culturally sensitive family therapists overlook some dysfunctions, interpreting them as culturally-bonded behavior and leaving the family to live in its turmoil. Falicov and Karrer (1984) propose to differentiate between four types of behavioral patterns when assessing families from different cultures:

1. Cultural patterns: It is very important to learn the values, norms, roles, and rules of the original culture of the family. In doing so, therapists learn about expected and appropriate behavior dictated by the culture, and also move away from ethnocentrism; "There is a need to develop models that will help therapists distinguish between functional and dysfunctional behavior in cultural context" (p. 23).
2. Situational stress patterns: As a result of the immigration, families may feel isolated, impoverished, frustrated, disappointed, and torn between home normative expectations and host culture normative expectations.
3. Transitional dysfunctional patterns: While immigrating and living through cultural transition, some dysfunctions may evolve while helping the immigrants accomplish some

objectives, such as, children becoming mediators or translators between the host culture and their families. Over time, these patterns may generate some family conflicts.

4. Dysfunctional transcultural patterns that existed while in the country of origin and were aggravated during the immigration process. Many of these problems may be categorized as transcultural human problems and should not be overlooked as a result of cultural more than sensitivity issues.

The authors regard the first type as a micro level intervention--because therapists work with the family--while the other three types are recognized as macro level interventions--because therapists work with larger systems (Falicov & Karrer, 1984).

Ho (1995) suggests a model for multicultural counseling. He suggests:

As counselors, we need to be informed of anthropological description of modal and normative patterns of behavior. More important, we need to be concerned with individual differences, both qualitative and quantitative, in how people are actually exposed to, learn from, and are influenced by the culture to which they are exposed--that is, individual differences in enculturation. (p. 5)

Ho (1995) believes that culture is translated by individuals from an anthropological concept to a psychological or individual-level concept by virtue of internalizing it. When learning clients' internalized culture, therapists avoid overgeneralization and stereotypes. In addition to being culturally sensitive, they may be able to practice client-specific counseling. Ho supports other voices (Falicov, 1988; Hardy, 1989) that claim to reexamine training programs. He believes that a training program

should be guided in its entirety by a theoretical orientation that gives full recognition to the importance of cultural and multicultural processes. It is insufficient to relegate multicultural training to designated courses alone, leaving the rest of the program untouched. (p. 20)

(b) Ethnic Family Therapy: The main trait of this approach is that therapists learn intensively about ethnic groups before and while working with them. The literature in family therapy mainly focuses on teaching other therapists how to approach and be helpful to diverse ethnic groups. Although there is rich literature in cross cultural counseling regarding therapy with diverse populations, Vontress (1985) found that literature obscure and confusing. He claims that techniques, processes, procedures, skills, tactics, and strategies are often used interchangeably when referring to a partial or complete methodology. "How cross-cultural counselors help clients cannot be separated from their perception of human nature, how people acquire culture, and the definition of what constitutes bizarre or unacceptable behavior" (p. 22). Subsequently, Vontress emphasizes the need to learn the clients' culture, stating that no behavior is deviant, since "the human psyche is culturally loaded" (p. 26) and "maladaptive behavior is culture-specific" (p. 24). Besides that, "individuals are socialized according to the requirements of their native groups. As a result of socialization, they learn to perceive a culturally-determined reality; therefore, culture influences [people's] thinking process" (p. 23). To implement his ideas, Vontress advises therapists who work with clients from other cultures to explore with them (a) the nature of daily life condition, (b) the significance of culture on clients' thoughts and behaviors, (c) what constitutes

psychosocial difficulty at home and abroad, and (d) the methodology for therapeutic intervention (p. 20).

Sue and Sue (1990) consider gathering significant knowledge about the culture of the clients as crucial when working with immigrants or minorities. They believe that lacking such knowledge may lead to negative impressions and misjudgment of the family's behavior. This may explain why the majority of literature reporting family therapy experiences with culturally different clients is mainly informative and descriptive, teaching about the cultural background of the clients and their larger systems. Sue and Sue invite therapists who work with culturally different clients to escape from their own "cultural encapsulation" (p. 122) by understanding the sociopolitical forces that affect minority families and being aware of differences in value systems, family structures, and family relationships--in the therapists' as well as the clients' culture. Effective cross-cultural family counseling needs to incorporate the many racial/cultural/economic/class issues of each family that comes to therapy. The authors claim that it is very important for therapists to learn about (a) ethnic minority reality, its history, and current life conditions, (b) conflicting value systems imposed by the larger system the family encounters, (c) influences and conflicts of biculturalism, (d) ethnic differences in minority status, (e) symbolism of language bonding, and (f) impact of the social class differences between therapists and ethnic minority clients.

Sue and Sue (1990) are aware that it is extremely difficult to speak specifically about the application of cross-cultural strategies and techniques in minority families, because of the great variations among and within each culture (see also, Berg & Jaya,

1993; Ho, 1995). If therapists suggest principles of cross-cultural family counseling or therapy that have equal validity to all groups, the overgeneralization may border on being stereotypic. Likewise, to attempt an extremely specific discussion would mean dealing with literally thousands of racial, ethnic and cultural combinations, a task that is humanly impossible. What seems to be required for the therapists is a balance of these two extremes: A framework that would help therapists understand differences in communication styles and family structure and, at the same time, help them pinpoint cultural differences that exist within a particular family. Once that is accomplished, therapists will be creatively able to develop approaches and strategies of family counseling, which then will be appropriate to the lifestyle of the minority family (Sue & Sue, 1990).

Berg and Jaya (1993) warn therapists about generalizing outcome treatments with minority clients. Therapists have to approach each family as “unique and require[ing] individualized treatment approaches” (p. 32). Therefore, Berg and Jaya believe, that “it is imperative that family therapists acknowledge cultural differences, see the value of [cultural] practices, and not assume that they are a ‘problem’ to the family” (p. 33). In order to show cultural sensitivity and respect, Berg and Jaya advise, “it is best for a therapist to defer when possible to the wisdom of family elders, always keeping them in the position of ‘family sage,’ ‘advisor,’ or ‘consultant’ (p. 36).

Developmental Family Therapy Approach

This approach focuses mainly on the family as a dynamic, evolving and growing entity. Therapists work as facilitators who diagnose and assist the developmental marker

as it occurs in the family's life, examining its impact on each member of the family.

Developmental family therapy suggests a framework for perceiving the stress that immigrating families undergo. Ramifications of developmental family therapy are the "family life history model," a functional developmental model, suggested by Steinglass (1987) and the "structural developmental model" suggested by Carter and McGoldrick (1989).

The developmental family therapy model postulates that problems evolve when immigration or other traumatic cause blocks the normal family development (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Cornille & Brotherton, 1993; Landau-Stanton, 1990). McGoldrick (1982) believes that the act of migration adds an additional life stage to the normal developmental stages--one that must be negotiated by the family.

Each culture has its own normal life cycle, which is a system moving through time that all families in that particular culture experience. Examples of life cycles are: Marriage, children's birth and rearing, children's creation of their own families, aging, and death. Migration, an act of interruption in a family cycle, causes stress to immigrant family members, and as a result, symptoms often appear. According to the family life cycle perspective, symptoms and dysfunctions are viewed in relation to normal functioning over time (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

As mentioned earlier, the act of migration influences the life of each member of the immigrated family. It affects the function and dynamics of the family, as a unit, in the host country. In light of this pivotal change in the immigrants' life, McGoldrick (1982),

Carter and McGoldrick (1989), and McGoldrick and Giordano (1996) consider immigration as a developmental stage in the family life cycle. McGoldrick (1982) states:

The readjustment to a new culture is by no means a single event, it is a prolonged developmental process of adjustment, which will affect family members differently, depending on the life cycle phase they are in at the time of the transition. (p. 17)

Earlier, it was highlighted that studies show readjustment, or acculturation, is also a developmental process (Berry, 1990; Lonner & Ibrahim, 1996; Paniagua, 1994). This readjustment affects all family members differently according to their ages, reason for migration, and previous relationships among family members (McGoldrick, 1989). The role of therapy is to facilitate families' reestablishment and reorganization of their developmental momentum (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989) and to help them classify their cultural conflicts, especially the intergenerational ones. Ethnic identity conflict may be caused during any life cycle transition, or marker, such as relocation, divorce, illness, unemployment, death, and retirement. These markers will cause changes in the development of the family structure (McGoldrick, 1989; Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

Therapists have to work in three ecological systems, the intrafamilial, the interfamilial, and the social. Therapists, functioning as culture brokers, coach families to select and categorize values and traditions that family members want to retain and those they want to relinquish. It is imperative that therapists appreciate the importance of therapeutic understanding of the role of ethnicity and migration in relation to life cycle transition (McGoldrick, 1989).

Cornille and Brotherton (1993) state:

Families try to develop predictable patterns for dealing with day to day events and problems that arise. These patterns provide the stability that individuals require for normal development; while family patterns must be flexible enough to adapt to developmental changes of the members. When families experience excessive stress, they develop patterns that are too rigid and inflexible. When rigidity sets in, members become locked into roles that interfere with individual growth. When a family migrates from one culture to another, developmental tasks become substantially more stressful than under normal circumstances. (p. 326)

The immigrant family unit, and each individual in it, has to simultaneously use old traditions and learn new skills in the host country. When this developmental process does not occur, family members often develop symptoms (Cornille & Brotherton, 1993).

Those family therapists, who are followers of the developmental approach, emphasize family empowerment and the reestablishment of a notion of balance in the new environment as fundamental therapeutic principles. Cornille and Brotherton (1993) believe that "family therapy becomes more effective if an appreciation of the developmental phases that the family experiences and the tasks that it must accomplish in order to provide a nurturing environment for growth, guides the therapy" (p. 339).

Studies show that the major causes of the problems in migrated individuals and families are disharmony and tension between the value systems of the homeland country versus the host country. Tension may also appear in relationships between family and larger systems, such as schools and health care systems (Cornille & Brotherton, 1993;

Stein, 1985). Therefore, Stein (1985) finds it vital to explore, for assessment and treatment plans, the value system of therapist, client, and all other contexts affecting their value system, including the value system of the family therapy field, as a profound role in the healing relationship. "The clinical issue is not whether values affect the entire treatment process, but how [emphases in original] we can put into use knowledge of that process (Stein, 1985, p. 202).

Similarly, Carter and McGoldrick (1989) and Cornille and Brotherton (1993) regard therapists as culture brokers and culture mediators. They believe that therapists must have an active role in helping families acculturate. They consider family therapy a context which enables migrated families to assess their homeland values as well as their host country values. In therapy, families may negotiate their value system intentionally--retaining some values from the old culture and adopting some new values from the host culture--to facilitate development of a changed family identity. Drawing on Spiegel's findings, these authors assert that "families in transition must move from an investment in traditional cultural values to a new set of values congruent with their new residence" (Cornille & Brotherton, 1993, p. 328).

While the "ethnotherapist model" and "ethnic family therapy model" focus on finding solutions to clients' problems from within the culture without challenging its stability, the developmental family therapy approach emphasizes change and importance of adaptation to the new context within each developmental stage.

Ecosystemic Approach

This approach takes into consideration the therapists, the families, and their environments, and ecosystems, when perceiving, conducting, or analyzing therapy. This approach relates to culture, not as one solid entity, but as a complex of cultural units, functioning according to the contexts, influenced by, and having influence on its environment. Since it includes some elements mentioned before, it is logical to find some ideas or concepts highlighted in the previous two major approaches. The following subdivisions are evident within this approach:

(a) The Myth of Sameness Theory

Several studies have noted that the family therapy field claims systems epistemology, yet understands, treats, and teaches about families from a narrow, lineal view, neglecting families' contexts (Hardy, 1989; Ho, 1995; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989). Hardy (1989) ridicules the meta epistemology of family therapists who describe themselves by embracing one therapy model. Believing that this one therapy is universal, answering all families' needs regardless of their background, results in the neglect of families' contexts. Hardy calls this tendency "the myth of sameness" in the family therapy field and accuses it of being insensitive to differences and sameness among and within minorities. Hardy suggests "the myth of sameness" theory as an alternative epistemology to the one prevalent in the field. He assures that his concept is a way of thinking about minorities who are non Euro-American mainstream, including women, gays, lesbians and other groups. Hardy pinpoints two aspects as the most important for family therapists when working with families (a) being able to learn in depth about the

background of the family in therapy, and (b) increasing therapists' awareness that families are not the same. Therefore, theories, training programs, clinicians, and organizations should be aware not to relate to and treat families the same. Hardy further suggests adopting the notion of "the myth of sameness" when planning courses in training programs, including literature which emphasizes the diversity of families when teaching all courses, and all theories--rather than relying on one diversity course (Hardy, 1989).

(b) Emic Ecosystemic/Structural Theory

Ho (1987) believes:

[Ethnic minority] is more than a categorical description of race, culture, or color.

It is the boundaries of separation and, in particular, how these boundaries are managed, protected, ritualized through stereotyping, and sometimes violated that is of primary interest and concern for family therapy. (p. 7)

Ho (1987) affirms that therapists have to learn from their clients about their culture in order to make the meeting between both parties a therapeutic encounter. Ho maintains that it is appropriate to search for cultural remedies for family problems rather than trying to impose therapy language or regularities strange to the family. In his work with ethnic minorities, Ho utilizes premises of three models: (a) "person-in environment," (b) communication model, and (c) structural model. In his approach, he takes into consideration "the ethnic minority's reality, culture, biculturalism, ethnicity status, language, and social class" (p. 11) of the clients.

To use the ecosystemic frame, according to Ho (1987), therapists have to be aware of four principles which also may affect their relationship with ethnic minorities:

1. "Problems or difficulties are understood as a lack or deficit in the environment, . . . as dysfunctional transactions between systems, . . . as adaptive strategies, . . . or as a result of interrupted growth and development rather than perceiving them as diseases in individuals or families" (p. 20).
2. Therapists have to be flexible and creative by applying multiple sorts of interventions according to the nature of each system and the relationships within it. It is preferable to learn about the client's approach to change, which Ho calls "emic-approach" (p. 20) and to apply it.
3. Therapists have to utilize the nature of the family as a genuine helping system and instrument of change.
4. One should not work with the whole system to cause change, since creating change in one system probably will result in a chain of changes in all other systems. Thus, Ho postulates that, when working with ethnic minority clients, therapists should not limit themselves to working unsuccessfully with all family members. It is preferable to work with one member who is most acculturated or most motivated to change.

Working according to the ecosystemic approach, therapists gather data about each system, analyze it, identify family systems, subsystems, and environmental systems. Ho (1987) adds two theoretical lenses to the ecosystemic approach: The communication model, developed by Satir (1967) and Haley (1976), and the structural model, developed by Minuchin (1974) and Bowen (1978). By assessing the type of communication

interchanged among all subsystems, therapists identify “the structure, sources, pathways, repository sites, and integrative function of messages” (Ho, 1987, p. 21). Utilizing the framework of the structural model, they are capable of working on two levels of intervention: The intrafamilial and the larger system. When therapists work with individuals or families who are ethnic minorities, Ho believes that therapy should be directed to the issues of conflict, anxiety, and defense. Ho states:

The ecological approach maintains that imbalance and conflict within a family may arise from any point in the individual or family’s transaction with the environment. For ethnic minority families undergoing acculturation and survival in a mainstream society, cultural values should be the focus from which to begin the therapeutic process. (p. 231)

(c) Family in Context Model

Family therapy scholars have searched for approaches in which they can perceive families in their own cultural contexts (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Falicov, 1988; Ho, 1987; McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982; Sue & Sue, 1990). Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the approach of a “person in context” which shares many principles with the ecosystemic approach. He believes that human systems are organized to include multiple complex layers of individuals, families, communities, and societies that interact and interchange constantly with each other. He recognizes four contexts in which human beings live and/or are influenced by during their lifetime:

1. The first context is the microsystem, which Bronfenbrenner relates to all dyadic and cross-dyadic relationships within the family--the nucleus and the extended.

2. The second context is the mesosystem which Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines as “a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant.” Examples of the mesosystems are: School systems (including dyadic relationship between the family unit and children, parents, and staff), work relationship (including interrelationships between individuals, families, and staff), neighborhood clubs, peer groups, and so forth. Bronfenbrenner regards all relationships and activities on the level of the immediate neighborhood as a mesosystem.
3. The third context is the exosystem which Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines as “consisting of one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in that setting” (p. 237). Bronfenbrenner includes the mass media, academic research, and all other mediums that affect peoples’ attitudes regarding groups in society (including minorities, handicapped, and retarded.) Exosystem is distinguished mainly by its ability to use power, and to influence the lives of individuals in the microsystem and mesosystems levels.
4. The fourth context is the macrosystem which refers, according to Bronfenbrenner, to “the consistency observed within a given culture or subculture in the form and content of its constituent micro-, meso-, and exosystems, as well as any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies” (p. 258).

Taking into consideration only a small aspect of the cultural influence, when conducting research or when assessing a case, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979), is similar to “provid[ing] a marker, a sign on the door of an environmental context that

leaves its nature unspecified" (p. 259). Bronfenbrenner affirms that all dyadic contacts which occur in one system, or between two systems, influence all other systems.

In line with Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) model "person in context" Falicov (1988) suggests studying the family in its context. Falicov considers the relationship between family and all systems a kind of "fit" (p. 340). This is not the case, however, in cultural transitions caused by migration or relocation. The most salient factors in cases of instability, such as in cases of immigration, are cultural issues. Families often experience cultural dissonance in a number of personal, social, and institutional types of encounters. The family's attempts to contact others socially become points of cleavage instead of points of consonance. All four ecosystems go through major changes after migration. Families have to relearn to fit their behavior to each level of ecosystem, to its functions, roles, and expectations.

Falicov (1988a) claims that:

The family's organizational and developmental norms, beliefs, and other crucial aspects of family (microlevel) life are, in fact, interactive adaptations that fit more or less well with other levels (macro-exo- and mesolevels). Although the "ecological fit" is never perfect, a pronounced lack of fit seriously impairs family functioning. (p.340)

Figure i illustrates cultural influences immigrated families experience, inspired by Falicov's (1988a) "family in context's" theory. It also describes dynamics of acculturation challenges immigrant families experience. Upon immigration, each person in the family has diverse relationships with micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems, in the

home country and the host country. Family therapy is considered an additional culture which family members encounter (see figure i).

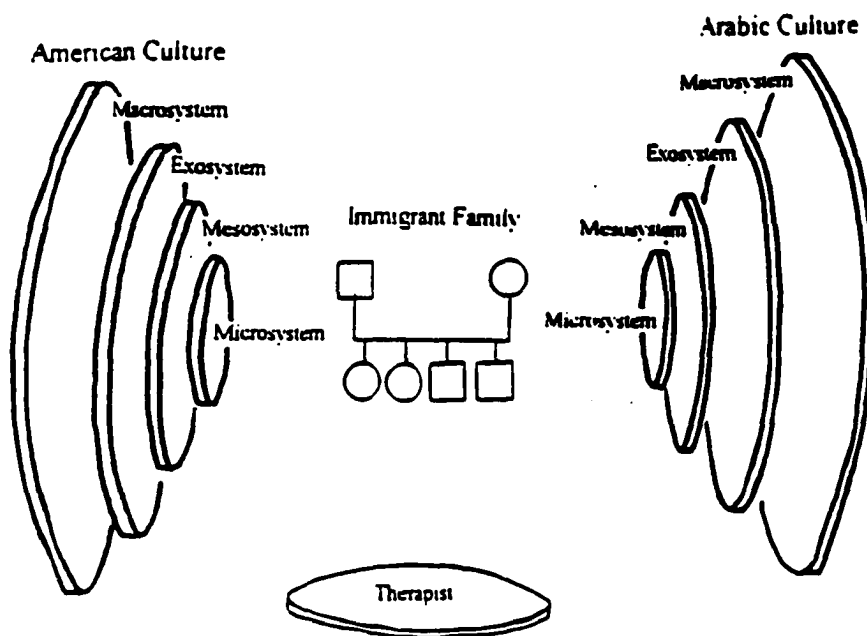


Figure i. Cultural contexts influence immigrated families. The immigrated family continues to be influenced by their home country culture, while gradually forced to be under the influence of the host culture. It is important to indicate that each family member experiences the influence in a unique way. The type of this influence, in return, impacts family relationships. Family therapy becomes another culture influences immigrant families in therapy.

Therapist who work with ethnic, religious, or other minority groups, have to inquire about several aspects in the immigrant family's past and present life experiences. Among the major elements questioned are: The history of immigration, previous ecological setting, the reasons for immigration, the experiences of separations and reunions, families' necessity for adaptations, quality of reception of the host community and host culture, and the immigrants' support networks.

Therapists also have to relate to the current ecological context by asking questions regarding: Families' socioeconomic conditions, employment situation, quality of relationships between parents and children, quality of relationships with extended family and friends network, relationships with the school system, and the adaptation to the cultural norms of the surrounding community. Therapists may be assisted by drawing an eco-map that delineates family relationships in variant contexts. It is crucial to draw an eco-map for each member of the family, since each generation is expected to experience the immigration and encounter the ecological environment in a unique way. This helps therapists not to overgeneralize family experiences, leaving out individuals' experiences. Profound and comprehensive information helps therapists design their therapeutic interventions. The therapists' role varies in accordance with the families' needs. When helping the family to acclimate with the larger systems, the therapist's role becomes a "social intermediary." In some cases when the therapist works on intergenerational conflicts, he or she takes on the role of "family intermediary" (p. 344). In all cases, therapists have to be aware of their own ethnocentrism in understanding, assessing, and treating immigrant families (Falicov, 1988a).

Lee (1982) offers another example of taking the personal, community, and the cultural contexts into consideration when working with Chinese families. The author shows how pivotal it is to combine the three contexts carefully and knowledgeably. Otherwise, clients will not be able to trust and connect with the therapist.

(d) Wholeness Model:

In agreement with the Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) model, Cornille and Brotherton (1993) believe that individuals and families, when migrating from one society to another, should reexamine their relationship with the larger systems, such as the schools, the peer groups, the places of worship, and media, which may be different from those in the home country.

According to Farella (1985), systemic family therapy is based on the assumptions of wholeness and the importance of the process. Wholeness orientation leads to the strategy of antireductionist, while process orientation leads to the structure in addition to the meaning. The search for wholeness and effectiveness in family therapy must be conducted at a "level of all involved systems or contexts. Most often this is implicit in the intervention, or more precisely, on the structure of the intervention; otherwise, it will create an error in the conceptualization of level of abstraction" (p. 261). Family and culture are both open systems where information passes bidirectionally between these entities and their contexts. "The most common epistemological error that is made in analyzing family and culture is to ignore this characteristic and its implications" (p. 274).

(e) Stability and Change Model

Bateson (1972) understands the relationship between change and stability as a complementary relationship which exists between the part and the whole. According to Bateson “the whole is always in a metarelationship with its parts” (p. 267). There can be no stability, if there is no change, and the opposite. Bateson (1979) observes change as constantly evolving in families. Frequently we are unaware of this type of change, which progresses throughout individual and family stages of development.

In light of Bateson’s ideas, Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) suggest that persistence and change must be considered together, despite their opposing nature. They have offered a notion of change that is embraced by most systemic therapists: There are two different types, or levels of change. One type is referred to as “first-order change,” or change that occurs within a given system, without changing the system itself. It is a change in quantity, not quality.

The other type of change is called “second order change.” It is a change that converts the system itself. This type of change is thus a “change of change.” In second-order change, there are actual alterations in the rules that govern the system, and therefore the system is transmuted structurally and/or communicationally. Second-order change always involves a termination of a phenomenon and tends to be radical; it represents a leap in the system to a different level of functioning. Systemic therapy focuses on facilitating second-order change (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch 1974). In cases of migration, according to this theory, therapists have to sort all the changes that happened in the family life as a result of relocation and find counter situations which

promote stability. Also, they have to facilitate the “second order” adaptation of the migrant family to their new contexts. That may be done by offering suggestions in which the family can find solutions to their acclimation problems in a way that helps the family learn how to acclimate and how to discover their own solutions to stabilize in the new country.

Immigration, as a type of major change in family life, may create a second order change that leads to variations in the nature of the family relationships (Walsh, 1985). In traditional societies, family values and norms are maintained for generations, sometimes for centuries, sustained and supported by religion and culture. This tendency supports stability and continuity. When a sudden change occurs, as in the case of immigration, “fundamental values and assumptions are challenged and the continuity of the [family] system is threatened” (p. 249).

Cornille and Brotherton (1993) define stability within families as “the development of patterns of interaction that reflect the family’s work view” (p. 331). They define change as “an unplanned adjustment to pressures from either members or environment, which can be either first or second order in level” (p. 331). They consider problems that the family had a previous solution to as first order problems, while a second order problem would be a new sort of problem that requires a major shift in the family’s world view. These kinds of problems cause family systems more distress, and furthermore, change its structure or communication patterns (Cornille & Brotherton, 1993).

Wright and Watson (1988) believe that change is a systems/cybernetic phenomenon; change within a family may occur within the cognitive, affective, or behavioral domains. However, change in any one domain will have an impact on the other ones. They also assume that major transformations of an entire family system can be triggered by major life events and/or interventions by a family therapist. However, they believe that the most significant and sustaining change will be that which occurs in the level of cognition, within the family's belief system. Wright and Watson consider developmental change as the most important kind. They believe that there are two notable concepts which are of importance regarding change:

1. Both the families and family therapists must have the ability to revise their understanding of a problem.
 2. Solutions to problems change as the family's beliefs and interactional patterns change.
- Major changes or improvements regarding developmental issues rarely occur by elaborating a family's view of the problem. Systemic therapy avoids the search for lineal causes and seeks, instead, to provide systemic explanations of problems.

The role of a family therapist in cases where the family derails from its developmental cycle as a result of a traumatic event, such as migration, is not to return the family to its old track. Rather, the therapist's challenge is to create a context for change for the family, to help family members to decide which track may provide the best solution for problem solving and what may assist growth (Wright & Watson, 1988). Systemic interventions that create a context for developmental change must offer alternate realities such as:

1. Information and advice. Frequently, information about developmental issues can liberate a family so that the members are then able to resolve their own problems.
2. Systemic opinion (reframing). A systemic opinion is offered by conceptualizing the presenting symptom as a solution to some other hypothetical or implied problem that would or could occur should the symptom not be present.
3. Redefinition of the context of therapy. The family may be told that family therapy will be discontinued and developmental sessions will begin. The work of the therapist will remain the same, while the context, or the name of the work, will be changed.
4. Commendation for family and individual strength.
5. Split opinion. Normally, a split opinion offers the family two or more different and opposing views. Each point of view is equally valued (Wright & Watson, 1988).

If a family has its own crystallized identity, this may provide a sense of stability when there are many changes. Family identity is the family's subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character. It contains all the qualities and attributes to make it a distinctive family and differentiate it from other families.

In the case of uprooting life events, as when families move to new states or countries, family identity can serve to tie the family to old routines and traditions. This helps family members feel comfortable despite their unfamiliar new setting. This stability is extremely important for the family's mental health, collectively and individually, especially as the family encounters new experiences where it can assert little control over the external alien world. Families with a strong cultural identity experience the changes in less traumatic ways, since family identity serves as "a port in the storm of uncertainty

in the external world. In an adaptable family, family identity becomes as a rudder, which the family uses to direct its course" (Bennett, Wolin, & McAvity, 1988, p. 232).

In conclusion, ecosystemic theories all agree regarding the influence of the past and the present environments on the well-being of the immigrated family. However, they differ in their attitudes toward the connection of clients to their own or to the therapists' cultures and environments. They also vary in their understanding of stability and change within immigrant families. These same differences occur also on a wider level among the major three approaches mentioned above: The anthropological, the developmental, and the ecosystemic approach. One more distinctive difference among the three approaches is the focus of each one. The anthropological theories paid attention to the self of the therapist and elaborated on the level of the microsystem. Specifically, they focused on the quality of training therapists to become self aware, culturally competent, and professionally sensitive.

The developmental theories focused on the family or the level of the mesosystem. According to this approach, therapists have to be aware of the "normal" developmental stages within the culture of the families they work with. Therapists have an important function in empowering families in distress and coaching them toward a change that helps them adapt to their new environments.

The ecosystemic approach includes all environmental influences in the immigrated family's system. It focused on the macrosystem. This includes the family, the therapist, and the larger systems. They examine changes occurring in the family during the immigration experience and steer them toward stability in their new environment.

Summary

In this chapter I highlighted the difficulties and challenges immigrants face as individuals and families. The literature presented the idea that immigration has a deep psychosocial impact on people. Immigrants experience cross-cultural changes emotionally, intellectually, and behaviorally. From the moment people arrive in the host country, they start living simultaneously in two cultures: The original culture that they carry within themselves, and the host culture that they try to assimilate. When people immigrate, their self identity changes, ethnicity becomes the most influential and dominant identity or lens. Immigrants will observe the host culture and be seen through their ethnic identities.

Arab immigrants started arriving in the U.S. by the mid 19th century. They left their home countries fleeing famine, religious discrimination, poverty, and war. They arrived in two major waves, the first was between 1870 and 1917, and the second after World War II. The majority of the first migration were Christians, however, of today's estimated three million Arabs in the U.S., half are Muslims and half Christians.

Arabs' main identity is the family or the clan. The extended family and the group come before individuals' needs. Children are supposed to highly respect and obey their parents and other elders in the community, and women are expected to maintain a chaste lifestyle, teaching it to their children, especially their daughters. Differences between Arab and American lifestyles cause individual, couple, and family problems for Arabs.

Some Arab institutions have established special programs to serve Arab clients, emphasizing education, prevention, and cultural understanding in therapy.

This chapter examined family therapy theories suitable for use with immigrants. A review of literature written about working with clients from other cultures was introduced. Principles of three main theories regarding working with immigrants were discussed: (a) the anthropological approach, which focuses on the therapists' self awareness or the microlevel, (b) the developmental approach, which emphasizes the families' self maturation or the mesolevel, and (c) the ecosystemic approach or the macrolevel, which considers changes in all aspects of the environment, including families, therapists, and sociopolitical influences.

After reviewing the literature--that discussed (a) the influence of migration on families, (b) Arab immigration to the U. S., and (c) theories in family therapy adequate to interpret, assess, and treat changes occurring in families subsequent to immigration--the research question which emerges is: "How does the experience of immigration influence family relationships among Arab immigrants in South Florida?" In chapter three which will discuss the methodology used to investigate this issue, I will indicate how I served as a researching therapist within two sites, the clinic, and the Arab community. I will discuss into details the usage of all clinical cases of Arab clients as a case study, and the usage of my relationship with the Arab community as an ethnography. The combination of the two methodologies helped completing this research.

Chapter Three

People of Mecca are most acquainted with its routes.

An Arabic Proverb

Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss the method I followed while gathering data for this research and the methods I will use to analyze the interviews. I will detail my access to the population researched, my field relationships, patterns of involvement, patterns of participant observations, and sampling of interviewees. I will also address the trustworthiness of the research.

Grand Tour Question

Initially, I entered the field with an exploratory grand tour question: "How do Arab families maintain their Arabic culture in the U. S.?" I started showing interest and gathering information about this population from the very first moment I moved to the U. S. in June, 1994. In January, 1996, I started volunteer work as an educational counselor in an Islamic Center. I hoped that this work would provide a good access for me as a researcher. Later when I started working as a family therapist with Arab clients, I became aware of the significance of the immigration act on family problems. Thus, my grand tour question became "How does immigration influence family relationships among Arab immigrants?"

When I worked as a family therapist with the first Arab family, I perceived that my knowledge about their cultural background was not sufficient to understand the nature of their current problems. I needed to understand their context in their American life as immigrants. I remained aware of the recursive feedback between my tacit knowledge as a native born Arab Muslim, as a family therapist, and as a researcher/volunteer in the Islamic center.

My research plan is influenced by Falicov's theory "family in context" (1988) founded upon Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic ideas (1979). My research plan also is influenced by Guba's and Lincoln's (1994) epistemology regarding qualitative research, stating that the nature of psychological or social phenomenon in research is situational and influenced by diverse events.

Figure ii illustrates the research design founded on Falicov's theory "family in context." The "case study" population is part of the ethnography population--they both are a sample of Arab immigrants in South Florida. While in therapy and research, this population is under the influence of three cultures: The Arab, American, and family therapy. While the influence of each culture is clear on the participants, the influence of the family therapy is visible only on the researching therapist. It takes another research question and specific tools to measure the impact of the family therapy field on the clients/researchers (see figure ii).

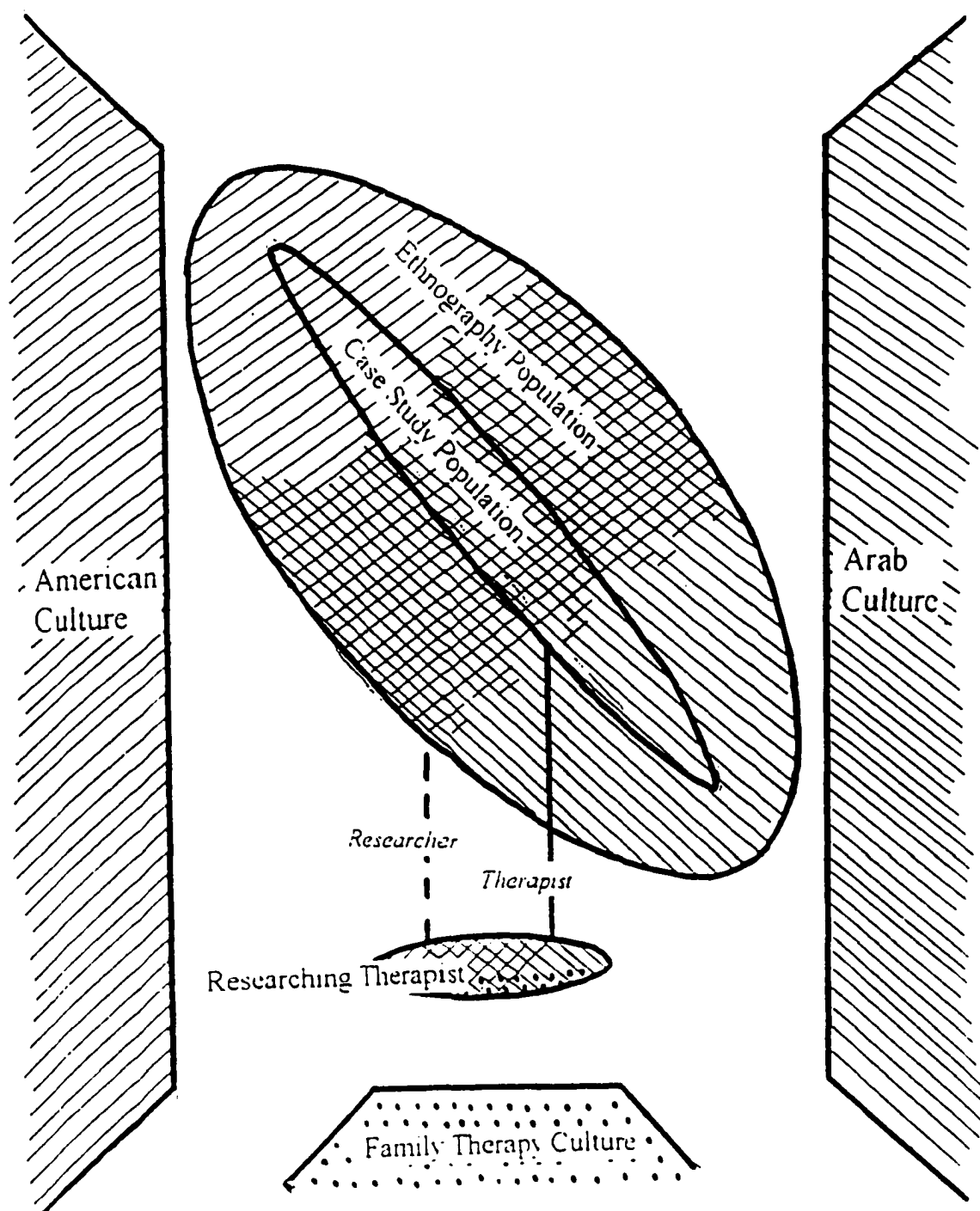


Figure 11 Cultures influence the research populations. The line shapes and the dots indicate the cultural influences. The gradient of the ovals indicate the degree of individuals' influence by either or all cultures.

Qualitative Research

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as: "A field of inquiry in its own right. It cuts across disciplines, field, and subject matter" (p. 1). The qualitative paradigm is also termed the constructivist, naturalistic, interpretive, or postmodern approach (Creswell, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1985) mention other terms known in the field under the umbrella of naturalistic research such as "the postpositivistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, subjective, case study, hermeneutic, [and] humanistic" (p. 7).

The essence of qualitative philosophy is that people construct and understand their own realities. Therefore, qualitative researchers believe in the existence of multiple realities, including the researcher's, the researchees', and the readers'. Being an integral part of the research setting, researchers should be aware of the value-laden nature of the study, theirs and their interviewees (Creswell, 1994). Creswell emphasizes the importance of directive interaction between researchers and researchees as an epistemological stance. As a result, the learning process is inductive-based; researchers learn to discover informants' wisdom. The language used in qualitative research is reflective, personal, informal, and inductive. The nature of qualitative methods varies according to the type of research and the goal of the researcher. However, adequate, accurate, academic, and ethical preparations are needed before, during, and after being in the field (Punch, 1994).

Case Study Research

Case study is defined by the researcher's interest in simple individual cases or complex ones, rather than by the methods of inquiry used. It is similar in its essence to

other field work, whether qualitative or quantitative, except that it deals with a single or few cases, which in itself, limits the ability to generalize. However, significant findings of case studies have the potential to prevent generalization done by other field work. A case study is both the process and the final product of the researcher's work (Stake, 1994). It is important to point out that "certain features are within the system within the boundaries of the case, and other features outside. Some are significant as context" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). Stake differentiates among three kinds of case studies: (a) intrinsic, where a researcher wants to understand more of a particular case, (b) instrumental, where a researcher uses a case study to question, develop, build, or disprove a theory, and (c) collective, which is an instrumental study extended to several cases to furnish the researcher with a more profound understanding of a phenomenon, and subsequently, clearer grounded theory. Holistic case study requires examining of complex contexts such as physical, economic, ethical, and aesthetic. This is the same way that most qualitative researchers conduct their work (Stake, 1994).

In the current research, I have combined intrinsic and instrumental interest in the case study. I started this research with genuine curiosity about the research question. However, by the end of this research project, I hope that I will be able to add to the body of theoretical knowledge, both in the field of Arab clients in family therapy and in cultural family therapy.

Clinical Work as Qualitative Research

Steinglass (1995) stresses that often practitioners may influence the researches in a therapeutic way when they do research, therefore, they must adhere to the therapists'

ethical codes and responsibilities when they conduct research (see also Bussel, Matsey, Reiss, & Hetherington, 1995). Similarly, applied anthropology opened, for many practitioners, the possibility to observe their clinical work as research work (Chenail, 1993; Miller & Crabtree, 1994; Morris & Chenail, 1995). Research may also be perceived as an integral part of therapy work. Chenail and Morris (1995) state:

In the privatization of heretofore public communication research method in clinical practice, the research becomes part of the clinical practice, not a postsession or posttreatment inquiry, but an in-session, real-time integral part of the therapy; and sometimes the research itself can become therapeutic. [Then] practitioners can ask their client to join them in this in-session inquiry; if clients accept, they have taken an important step in de-constructing the clinician-client relationship and reconstructing it as a co-researching one. (p. 3)

Other clinicians highlight the importance of research as part of the clinical work, functioning as recursive feedback between research and therapy. Sells, Smith, and Moon (1996) and Shilts and Knapik-Esposito (1993) share the notion that inquiring about clients' experience in therapy may benefit therapists in learning from clients about therapy work, and as a result, improve it. Ultimately, "the research is judged by the clinical difference it makes" (Miller & Crabtree, 1994, p. 349).

Miller and Crabtree (1994) count at least six clinical research styles: Experimental, survey, documentary-historical, field, philosophical, and action/participatory. They believe that researchers should be free to mix and match qualitative research methods

according to their clinically based question(s). In this research, I will be using the field qualitative style of ethnographic work, coupled with clinical research.

Ethnography

Drawing on Wallen and Fraenkel (1991), Creswell (1994) defines ethnography as research conducted on “an intact cultural group in a natural setting during a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational data” (p. 11). Characteristic markers of the ethnographic research process are flexibility and contextual emergence, in response to the lived realities met in the field setting. Fetterman (1989) suggests a more general definition: “Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture” (p. 11). Researchers conduct ethnographies in social and cultural anthropology, sociology, human geography, organization studies, educational research, and cultural studies. However, there is no single philosophical or theoretical orientation in-field conduct, or participant observation rationale (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). Thus, Lincoln and Guba (1985) conclude that one must do naturalistic inquiry naturally. This does not mean that researchers should not be prepared for the field. On the contrary, they believe that the researchers, as human instruments, carry their tacit knowledge, preparing the ground for inquiring, learning, and interpreting observations. Fetterman (1989) describes the prepared researcher as one who “enters the field with an open mind, not an empty head” (p. 11). Fetterman goes on describing how researchers prepare themselves stating, “Before asking the first question in the field, the ethnographer begins with a problem, a theory or mode, a research design, specific data collection techniques, tools for analysis, and a specific writing style” (p. 11).

Ethnographic research is a holistic paradigm. Researchers tend to include information about the group's history, religion, politics, economy, and environment. It is the researcher's mission to include representative and generic information of all the above while writing the final report (Fetterman, 1989).

In this research, I entered the field as an ethnographic researcher with curiosity, and with rich tacit knowledge, as a native born to the Arab culture and a Muslim family from the Middle East. I used my previous training as sociologist and anthropologist, as well as my experience in research with the Arab population as tacit knowledge for this project.

Participant observation is the main medium of ethnographic research. It occurs when "the researcher is playing an established participant role in the scene studied" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p. 248). Fetterman (1989) conceives participant observation as a combination of "participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data" (p. 45). Sometimes researchers decide to be non-participant observers. Literature discussion regarding this matter was not able to underestimate the importance of the non-participant observer, since it may be considered the best choice in some researched topics. However, it is assumed that all social research may be considered patterns of participant observation, since researchers cannot investigate any setting without being part of it (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1985). Gold (as cited in Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994) outlined four modes of observation in naturalistic research: Complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant. Researchers who adopt

Gold's complete observer role remove themselves fundamentally from the setting and are never seen or noticed. Researchers who conduct their research by noninteractive videotaping or audiotaping belong to the above type. On the other hand, those who adopt the observer-as-participant role may observe their researchees for very short periods, mainly when conducting formal interviews.

A combination of methods in research is an acceptable approach. Researchers can combine quantitative and qualitative procedures, or combine different approaches within the qualitative research. Creswell (1994) counts five advantages for combining methods in a single study: (a) triangulation of information, (b) complimentary of unclear phenomena, (c) developmental influence of sequential method, (d) usage of the first method as initiation, and the second as fresh perspective, and (e) expanding the first method by another one to add scope and breadth to the research. In this research, I believe that combining two methods may contribute the first two benefits to the study. Triangulation and complimentary information were important aspects for me as a therapist. They helped me normalize discourse regarding family problems brought to therapy by Arab clients, placing problems in their wider sociopolitical contexts.

In addition to the complimentary nature of the two procedures, I experienced recursive feedback between the two methods adapted in this research. Moving back and forth between the case study and the ethnographic work, I was able to normalize complaints brought to therapy by clients, as I heard the same talk in the community. For example, when I heard from a client that she prohibits her children from socializing with American children outside school, I thought she had problems acculturating in the

American culture, thus posing obstacles for her children's acculturation. However, when I learned that all community members put the same restrictions on their children, I was able to understand the importance of this stance for my client.

On other occasions, I learned about phenomena while conducting ethnographic work, and drew from that experience in my work with the clients. For example, I learned about the community's ignorance regarding U. S. laws, especially in regard to abuse within the family. In my clinical work, I started asking questions in this regard, helping clients to better understand the legal system in their new context.

Figure iii shows the movement of the recursive loop between the community population and the clinic population. The starting point was the ethnography work with the community population. There my role was a researcher. That led me to my other role as a therapist, which in return taught me more about the community population.

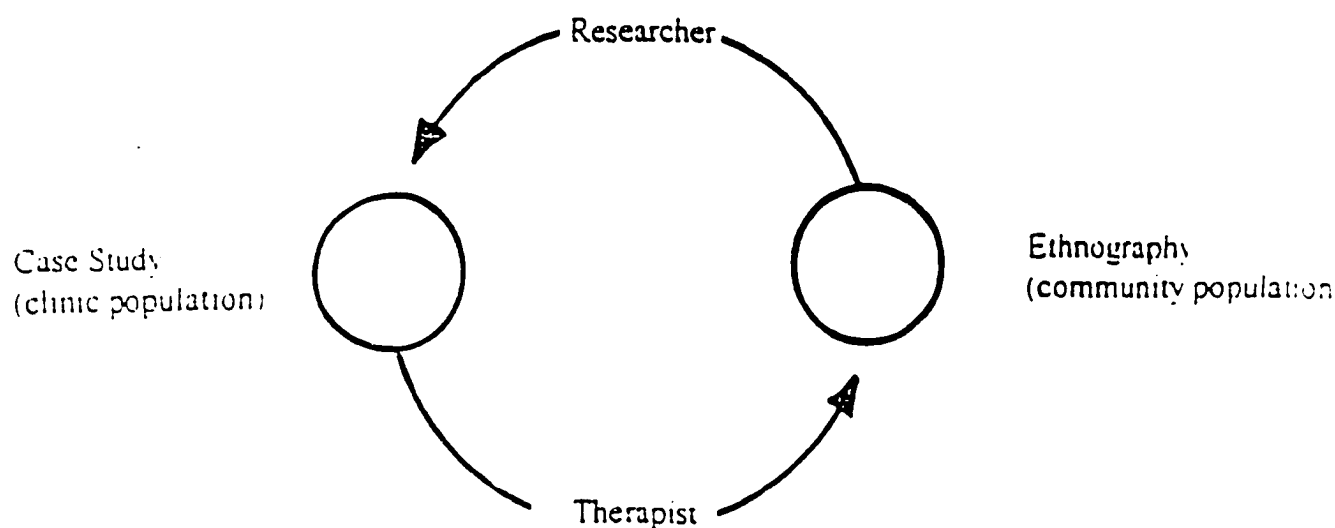


Figure iii. The therapist's role and the recursive relationship between research sites. As a researcher the therapist learns how to relate to the clinical population, and as a therapist, she learns which questions to ask in the ethnographic research.

The Researcher's Role

The discussion whether a researcher should adopt a stance which is "marginal native" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p. 249), "complete-member-researcher," "active-member-researcher," or "the peripheral-member-researcher" (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 379), does not yet enable one to advocate one stance over the other. Researchers find advantages and disadvantages in each of the above types, according to the nature of the research and the researcher's epistemology. In a case study, the important role of the researcher is to observe and to reflect what is known as "local meanings" (Stake, 1994) or "emic" meaning (Schwandt, 1994).

In regard to my role as a researcher, I agree with Stake's stance "In being ever reflective, the researcher [in a case study] is committed to pondering the impressions, deliberating recollection and records--but not necessarily following the conceptualizations of theorists, actors, or audiences" (Stake, 1994, p. 242). I participated in the case study as a therapist and a researcher. Previously, I worked as a therapist in an Arab community for about ten years. I worked with all populations: Kindergarten children, high school students, and adults. As a therapist in the case study site, I had a "complete-member-researcher" relationship with my clients, because I took an active role in the encounter, according to my theoretical understanding of the therapeutic relationship. However, when I reviewed the videotapes of the therapy sessions, I was able to adopt Gold's definition "participant as observer" type. This allowed me to detach a little from intensive participation, to be able to observe myself, as well as my clients/interviewees with an open

and criticizing mind. This distance enabled me to be more helpful in my two roles, as a therapist and as a researcher.

Regarding my position in the ethnographic work, I moved between the “active-member-researcher” and the “peripheral-member-researcher” according to the context. I was never a “complete-member-researcher,” since I deliberately put limitations on myself and on the community in their relationship with me. I participated in the normal daily activities of the community. I met people in the grocery store, worked with teachers in the Islamic School, became a student in a religion class in the Islamic Center with a group of 15 women, talked with women intensively on the telephone, met families, especially mothers and children in the Islamic Center, and drank coffee with women in their morning visits. I participated in religious ceremonies such as holiday ceremonies and Ramadan dinners and attended social occasions, such as weddings and fund raising dinners. I participated as a community member and as an Arab immigrant who lives in South Florida (emic position). When I met people in the community I was always careful to respect the dress code and to appear in proper attire. When I visited the Islamic Center, I wore the veil in congruence with the strict laws of the site. In all those experiences, I also acted as a researcher: I observed and collected data (etic position). Since I was always aware of the importance of data gathering from each encounter with the Arab population, my observations remained systematic and purposeful (Adler & Adler, 1994), yet never interfered with the authenticity of the participation.

When I started my encounter with the community, I was aware that I had to gain their trust gradually. They became acquainted with me simply from our interaction in the

Islamic Center, or when I interviewed them. Usually Arab people have more trust when they invite and meet each other in their homes. I never invited any of the community members to my home, and I was aware that I was experiencing a slow process in gaining their trust because of that. Also, I introduced myself as a Palestinian from Israel. The women who visited the Islamic Center were immigrants of various Arab countries, yet there were no Palestinians from Israel. A woman who immigrated 29 years ago from the West Bank, because her husband was imprisoned after the Israeli occupation, suspected me, for a while, of being an Israeli Jew. After visiting the Islamic Center for a few months, I was able to talk to her without evoking her suspicions about my background. After ten months, I was able to interview her and her two daughters-in-law.

In all my encounters with the Arab population, either in the clinic or in other sites, I was open to answer their questions regarding my study, my profession, or my family, both nuclear and extended. Occasionally, people started "interviewing" me. I accepted that and was interested in learning about their interests in me.

Also, I had several experiences when interviewees wanted to "make me native." I interviewed a woman, Um Nidal⁶, and her married daughter, Sara. We agreed to call Um Nidal again, in order to set a meeting to interview her husband. When I called her, she invited me to visit them with my spouse, saying that they were also willing to visit us. I

⁶The prefix "Um" which translated to "mother of" will often appear preceding women's names, while the prefix "Abu" which means "father of" will often appear preceding men's names. Some mothers and fathers will be known by the name of their first born son from a certain period in their lives. After that, very few people will continue calling them by their first names.

apologized, explaining that we were too busy at that time. Later, she let me know that she was not interested in continuing the interviews, if a mutual social visitation would not be encouraged. Another woman was often very concerned about me: Why do you have ‘just two daughters?’ She assumed that I should try to have boys as well, otherwise I would have marital problems. The teacher for Islamic religion tried several times to persuade me to wear the veil permanently, not just when I visited the Islamic Center. Halla, the wife of a grocery store worker, decided to make it her mission to persuade me to adopt a strictly religious lifestyle. Samyia was interested in what and how I cooked. She often wanted to get recipes from me. Zeynab tried to involve me in her sexual jokes, an indication of having an informal relationship among Arab women. However, I had chosen not to “become totally native,” limiting my participation in some aspects of the community social life. For example, I had chosen not to conduct daily visitations, which is highly practiced and appreciated among community members, especially women. From my knowledge of the Arab culture, I was aware that I would not meet the community’s expectations in this regard. Choosing this path, I am aware that I kept myself, to a certain extent, a peripheral member in the community’s social life.

In writing the final report about the research, I would like to follow what Van Maanen calls the “confessional” wherein researchers share their experiences with their audience, versus the “realistic” style wherein the researchers remain invisible and their experience remains detached from the didactic facts of the final report (Weiss, 1994).

Protecting Participants' Privacy

I will continue trying rigorously to protect participants' privacy both in the clinical relationship and in the community relationship. I intend to store all therapy tapes, transcriptions, and disks in a locked safe, after writing the final document to prevent any incidental access to them. Despite my awareness that all participants were connected by kin or friendship relationships, I was careful not to share any type of information I gathered regarding any person. This ethical part of my work was strange to the community and the culture. Participants often noted to me that this caution was not necessary, since they share, with each other, topics of their conversations with me. I explained to them the ethical codes I worked under as a therapist and a researcher. They understood and respected my limitations. Later I felt that this made them more open and personal with me.

I wrote all consent forms in Arabic and in English⁷, providing both for the interviewees' signing. Some interviewees did not know English and were happy to read the consent in Arabic. One interviewee, Shadia, a second-generation-Arab immigrant, was only able to read English and appreciated having the English form. I intend to change all names to protect participants' privacy. However, some interviewees, especially people who had official positions within the community, asked to refer to them using their real names.

During the fourteen months of my work with the community, I was eager to respect people's time, privacy, and natural activities. I observed them living their regular

⁷Copies in both languages will be included in the Appendices.

lives. I never asked people to "perform" anything for the sake of the research. Oftentimes, people offered to invite me to dinner or to do things for me such as help me with my home chores. I always kindly refused and thanked them, explaining that I already appreciated what they had provided: Their time and experience. However, sometimes I found, upon arriving to interview a family, they had already prepared a feast. I accepted that as part of the Arab hospitality, a very important aspect in the culture. In return, based on the same Arabic norms, I brought gifts, educational games, and books for the children.

Gaining Access

I had several gatekeepers who opened different gates for me to meet the research population. The first gatekeepers were the two Arab grocery store owners. Because of their daily contact with the Arab community, they became the center of the social web. In addition to selling ethnic Arab food and merchandise, they function as unofficial information centers. During the first week of my stay in South Florida, I had my first trip to the grocery store, which I will call "Arab Palms". The owner, Abu Hisham, asked me many personal questions to gather some information about me and my family. He then provided some important guidance: Where to find Arab professionals for different needs, such as doctors, lawyers, and mechanics. Later, when I needed to know anything about the area or the community, I asked Abu Hisham. Abu Hisham introduced me to the Arab newspapers, both local and nationally published. Later, he connected me to the editor of the local newspaper.

The editor led me to the second gatekeeper, Sheik Hasan Sabri⁸, the Imam of the mosque. I introduced myself to Sheik Hasan as a family therapy student in graduate studies who would like to conduct research in the Arab community, using the Islamic Center as a springboard. Sheik Hasan, a graduate of an American university himself, understood the project and supported it. After a long conversation about my project, he asked me where I came from. I told him about the name of my hometown. He asked me about a person he knows from my town. I knew that person as a former colleague. Now that we had a common acquaintance, Sheik Hasan accompanied me to the hall where about eighty women gathered. He introduced me to the group. "This is our sister Khawla. She is a student at the University. She lives in the area. I hope that you accept her well and help her in whatever she needs." He then left me to the hospitality of this group of women.

After two weeks, Sheik Nitham Hasan⁹, the director of the Islamic Center returned from a fund-raising trip in the Middle East. I introduced myself to him, and talked to him about the research I had in mind. I also told him about my conversation with Sheik Hasan and the help he had offered. Sheik Nitham offered to provide all the help I might need in the future. I continued to visit each of them for about 10 to 30 minutes each time I visited the Islamic Center. I also called on holidays to wish them happy holidays.

The other gatekeeper (I consider her the inner gatekeeper) was a teacher who worked in the Islamic School. After a few conversations with Sheik Hasan, I volunteered

⁸His name is mentioned with his permission.

⁹His name is mentioned with his permission.

to work with the school teachers. However, at that time, I did not know what their needs were. Therefore, I suggested to Sheik Hasan, who was also the director of the school, that I accompany each teacher and observe their work with their students for awhile. Zeynab was the first teacher that I accompanied. During the lunch break, she asked me for suggestions concerning her work with kindergarten students, since she had no previous experience at working with this age group. I offered a few ideas, and she asked me to observe in her class again. By the end of the day, she gave me her phone number and asked about mine. Two days later she called, asking whether I had publications in Arabic about teaching in grammar school. I said that I had none here, but I offered my help if she had any questions. When we met the following week in the Islamic Center, I suggested a few more ideas for her use. I spent the morning class with her and the afternoon class observing another teacher. By the end of the day, Zeynab asked me if we could meet at her home to teach her how to prepare audiovisual tools for her students. I agreed.

At that time, upon consultation with my advisor and the clinic director, I advertised in the Arabic newspaper the Family Therapy Associate clinic¹⁰ and spread by word of mouth information about my work as a family therapist among women in the Islamic Center. I also put that advertisement on the notice board in the Islamic Center. Zeynab asked if she could bring her child to therapy, thus becoming my first Arab client among the community members. Later, Zeynab introduced me to other women and teachers, whom I had never met, and sent other clients to the clinic.

¹⁰

A photocopy is provided in the Appendices.

When I terminated therapy with Zeynab, I asked her if she would be my informant in my research project. I explained to her the goal of the research. Zeynab thought that such research might help parents who were living away from their homeland learn to treat their children better. She also thought that, if such a document would be published, American teachers would be more acquainted with the unique socialization needs of Arab children. She agreed to help me gain access to the community. For a period of about eight months she called her family members and friends, arranging our meetings together. She asked me to let her talk about the goals of the research with the participants. She said "I know the people, and I know how to introduce the topic to each one of them. I agreed. However, I started each meeting with the opening, "As Zeynab explained to you, the goal of my research is" Many times Zeynab chose to accompany me to those meetings and enjoyed this role. When she was busy, she made the connection with the family and gave me their phone number to make the final arrangements with them. When I needed to visit the same family more than once, I called Zeynab and told her about my plans, asking her to join me if she wished to. I did that because I wanted her to feel that I still consulted with her even though now I could proceed independently. I wanted her to feel respected and appreciated for what she was able to offer me.

When Zeynab had a gathering at her home, she called me and asked if I could attend. She was anxious to allow me to meet more people or to observe them in a new activity that I had never observed before. I used to meet Zeynab several times a week, either in the Islamic School, in the clinic, at her home, or while visiting Arab families for the purpose of interviewing them. After a while, when I gathered my data, I maintained

telephone contact with her. Also, she called whenever she wanted to share any of her family or social problems. This happened on the average of twice a week.

Zeynab knew that whenever I talked to her or to other community members, I wrote down the conversations in my notes. Whenever she observed things in the community that she assumed to be of importance for me, she called trying to give me a detailed description of the event. For example, one Saturday, I was not able to go to the Islamic Center. On that day, there was a funeral of a young man who had immigrated from Jordan two months before. He was shot in a store. Zeynab knew that I had never observed an Islamic funeral in the U. S. She called me immediately, and when she was not able to locate me, she called the next day, detailing what she was able to observe and recall.

From time to time, when I was arranging my data gathering summary or my conclusions, I met with Zeynab and shared my findings with her. I did not mention the interviewees' names; rather, I talked about phenomena observed. I emphasized the importance of her feedback and her thoughtfulness in these kinds of conversations.

What does the Researcher Offer the Gatekeepers?

When I first met Sheik Hasan, I promised him that I would volunteer in the Islamic Center whenever I recognized the sort of help I could offer. After about a month of observations, I offered some workshops for the teachers and a parenting group for the mothers. Sheik Hasan thought that I should start with the workshops, in addition to private consultation for teachers, responding to specific questions regarding their work. Sheik Hasan was not sure how women would relate to a parenting group. I assumed that he knew the needs of the site very well, therefore, I agreed with his point of view. For the next four

months, I offered both the workshops and the consultations. Among nine teachers, I worked intensively with the five female teachers, I met less with two male teachers and had no contact with the remaining two. All of the teachers knew that they could talk to or call me when they needed any guidance. Three teachers called me for consultation regarding their teaching.

In September, when a new director was assigned to the Islamic School, I met with him and talked about my previous relationship with the former director and the teachers. Some old teachers left and some new ones took their positions. The new director asked me to hold a new workshop and to help him choose a curriculum for the whole school. I agreed. I spent a few weeks reading school curricula published in Arab countries, and made a decision regarding one curriculum. Later I helped the director order the books from that Arab country. I arranged a workshop to introduce the teachers to the new curriculum. I also shared with the director information about publishers in the U. S. who publish either Arabic and/or Islamic books.

Sheik Nitham holds the position of religious judge as well as the director of the Islamic Center. Holding this position, he is authorized to arrange marriage and divorce agreements. I offered my help as a family therapist or mediator in cases of divorce. After a few months, when I asked Sheik Nitham about these cases, he mentioned that the people who come to him seeking divorce have already made up their minds and have discussed their cases with their extended families.

Throughout our relationship, Zeynab knew that she could consult with me regarding any concern. She consulted with me about her children and relationships with

her husband, extended family, and friends. I also brought her, or her children, gifts on several occasions, such as when her son had an operation, when she invited me to a holiday party, and when I received books about education in Arabic.

The other families I met asked me questions regarding child rearing, couples, and parent-filial relationships. I answered all their questions, presuming that this was part of the reciprocal relationship and information bartering.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, data collection procedures contain four basic types:

Observations, interviews, documents, and visual images (Creswell, 1994). In the case study, I will use all videotapes of clinical sessions with Arab families as the main source of data. Although conversations in therapy have a schematic pattern and laws of their own, one might consider them as authentic conversations of people's concerns (Chenail & Morris, 1995). Recording all therapy discourse generates a richness of information that opens a significant gate to people's lives. Chenail and Morris (1995) suggest that "The revolution began when audio tape recorders, movie cameras, and video cameras were first used to capture clinical encounters for repeated review and analysis, and skilled observers used these records to understand how clinical interactions work" (p. 2).

I will transcribe fifteen clinical sessions--which are all therapy sessions with Arab clients that have been videotaped. These videotapes include therapy sessions with four different families seen in therapy during about a year long. The length of therapy with each family extended between one session to six session. The sessions were held mostly in Arabic. Although, when I worked with children, they spoke English. During the sessions,

some English expressions or sentences in English were used. I intend to translate only excerpts which I will be using as illustrations in the body of the final report. One family, two parents and two children, were seen for four sessions but did not allow videotaping. I will use case notes for recalling topics discussed with them in therapy. Also, as a social support mechanism, I maintained telephone conversations on a weekly basis with one client after terminating therapy with her. I had her consent to audiotape our conversations. I have about fifteen recorded conversations with her. For all audiotaped interviews and conversations, I will listen several times to each tape and transcribe only exemplars which will illustrate significant topics.

Doing ethnographic work, I had conversations or interviews with about 55 people. I will differentiate between conversations, non-taped interviews, and taped interviews. I audiotaped fourteen interviews. I had many conversations with store owners, their workers, and their clients. Also, I had numerous conversations with teachers, students, and their mothers. After each encounter I documented, in detail, all the conversation. In some cases, especially in the first months of my appearance in the Islamic Center, I wanted to gain the trust of the staff and the parents. I asked Sheik Hasan, and one woman, how other women would feel if I decided to tape my conversations with them. They thought that the women would stop talking to me. I decided not to tape those conversations. I held interviews with teachers and with the principal of the Islamic School without audio taping those interviews. However, after about ten months, when I interviewed the director of the Islamic Center for the second time, he encouraged me to audiotape the conversation. The same process occurred with the families I visited. I held all meetings with the first families

I met without audio taping. Toward the end of the interview process, I went back to some families and interviewed them, audiotaping our conversation. Zeynab's family was the first to be audiotaped. When she gave me her permission to do so, I started asking other families whether they were willing to permit audiotaping. At that stage, I never faced any refusal. I assume that by then, families were very familiar with the type of project I was doing.

All interviews, audiotaped or not, were conducted with open ended questions. When I had conversations with people, I followed their topic, merging into it, trying to learn about it as much as I could, such as the work schedule of Arab men working in stores. I also initiated topics of my interest such as teenage marriage.

In addition to documenting all recalled conversations, I kept a journal in which I documented all events, including my plans, thoughts, emerging questions, and instant insights. Also I kept an audit trail, in which I documented all preparations toward each encounter and a description of it afterwards. I added some theoretical analysis and insights to some documents when I was able to.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that "every human action leaves a track" (p. 278). Thus, they suggest the use of multiple modes for collecting data. For the ethnographic part of the research, I used newspapers, speeches, and photographs as a source to collect data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) put these means under the rubric of "documents." I also used school curriculum, newsletters, brochures, school grade reports, and a fund raising schedule. Lincoln and Guba called these means "records."

Purposive Sampling

I included all Arab clients with whom I worked in the clinic in the case study. Their overall number is five families whom I saw together for 19 sessions. In the ethnography work, I started sampling people with whom I connected naturally, such as Zeynab, Sheik Hasan, Sheik Nitham, and Abu Hisham. Later, Zeynab suggested people whom she thought I should meet. I trusted her decisions. Even though I became familiar with community relationships, I continued to consult with Zeynab to decide whether I should meet a person whose stories were told again and again in my meetings. Furthermore, other interviewees allowed me to utilize their own social nets; persons that I interviewed introduced me to their family or friends. Later, they became included in Zeynab's social web. Also, some women invited me to interview them. Two persons told Zeynab that they were not interested in being interviewed, while I had a similar experience with only one.

With the exception of the clinic population, all interviewees were met in their homes, or in the Islamic Center, during the times that they decided were the most convenient for them. I met some of the people several times, in different places, such as the clinic, the Islamic Center, and their homes. Meetings with the same interviewee varied from one meeting to about twenty meetings. I exclude Zeynab and her nuclear family from this, since I met with them numerous times over the course of 14 months.

Data Recording Procedures

The clinical research: Clinical encounters with four clients were fully videotaped. These tapes will be transcribed verbatim. Excerpts which will be chosen for illustration in

the final report of the study will be translated from Arabic to English verbatim. I am aware that the original conversations may lose some of their richness and vitality in the translation. I will try to maintain all significant personal and cultural characteristics of the discourse. Also, I have kept private notes on cases, written immediately after each session. In these notes, I included summaries of the session, main events, and important conversations. I tried to recall the clinical discourse and recorded it in the clients' words and dialect.

Transcribing all 15 videotaped sessions will give a clear picture about the concerns of Arab clients seeking therapy. It will also speak to the community's natural life outside therapy. Chenail and Morris (1995) conclude,

Discourse and conversation researchers focus on naturally occurring talk and use recording and transcripts of the talk to reach a level of detail that would otherwise be impossible. The validity and richness of descriptions produced by these means are unmatched by other ways of working. (p. 2)

I will take notes while observing the videotapes, while listening to the audiotapes of the sessions, and while reading the transcripts. This cross-checking will help me identify the most important themes emerging from therapy encounters.

I documented the field notes for ethnography research in the following ways:

1. At the first stage of my relationship with community members, I never took notes in front of them because I felt that this might generate suspicion and offend them. I tried to put events or conversations I witnessed into codes that helped me remember the contents later. I wrote notes in the form of codes in my car and wrote detailed notes on my

computer as soon as I arrived home. This way I was able to reconstruct conversations in detail. In order to feel the fluency and genuineness of the conversations, I documented in the spoken dialect of each person, not in the classical form of written Arabic¹¹. I am aware that this documentation is not as accurate as recorded conversations; however, the number of conversations I held with people over a course of about 16 months covers many areas from the community's life.

2. I often had interviews with community members. These interviews took two shapes: Formal and informal. Sometimes I arranged to visit a family to talk to the wife, husband, or both. Oftentimes, arriving at the meeting, I found that the families had invited other family or friends to meet me. On these occasions, I initiated talking about a subject important to me and listened to the discussion held among the attendees. In other meetings, when I was able to talk to one person, I wrote code notes, after asking the permission of the interviewee.

3. I audiotaped ten, one-on-one interviews with community members. In addition, I audiotaped four telephone interviews with Arab professionals (psychiatrist, psychologist, family practitioner, and coordinator for cultural affairs).

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There are considerable differences between spoken Arabic and written Arabic. Also there are difference between dialects of different Arab countries and within these countries. A person may be recognized where he or she is from by listening to their dialect. However, when writing any document, all Arabs have to "translate" their spoken dialects to one type of writing which is called "Classical Arabic" or "Written Arabic." Writing an academic document in spoken Arabic is unacceptable in the Arab World.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process that accompanies the research from the first day in the field, beginning with the very first data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Dey (1993), the first step of qualitative analysis is the development of "thorough and comprehensive descriptions of the phenomenon under study" (p. 31). He perceives that process as a recursive relationship among describing, classifying, and connecting processes into their contexts. Also, Huberman and Miles (1994) perceive data analysis as interaction between four stages of the data: Collection, display, reduction, and conclusion. Creswell (1994) identifies the researchers' comfort as the main yardstick for choosing a suitable procedure for data analysis in any research setting. Choosing a particular analytical approach should depend on the goals of the analysis and the stage of the research (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

To analyze the clinical discourse and the ethnographic interviews, I will use content analysis. Patton (1990) defines content analysis as "the process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data. This means analyzing the content of interviews and observations" (p. 381). When I feel saturated with transcriptions from the clinic and data collection from the field work with the community, then the process of comprehension becomes efficient and generic. The focus in ethnography is on the participants' experience. According to Morse (1994) "such research is punctuated with informants' stories and with case studies that illuminate and illustrate each point in the presentation of the data" (p. 38).

Since ethnography is rooted in cultural theory, researchers focus, during the data analysis phase, on cultural norms, beliefs, and values of the participants. Researchers establish macro-micro linkage, or etic-emic distinctions between themselves and the researchees, and between the culture of the researchees and another culture with which they may compare their findings. Researchers identify differences and similarities between this researched site and another cultural group. Then concepts, which have emerged from the data, will be analyzed and compared with those in the literature. The extent of comparing and contrasting between cases or cultures depends on the purpose of the evaluation (Patton, 1990).

Categorization of information is the essence of content analysis and is led by an inductive process. Through this process, the researcher constructs and deconstructs, back and forth, information gathered. Dey (1993) suggests a detailed method of cutting all information gathered into bits and pieces, to gather it, then to shuffle it several times until creating permanent categories. Creswell (1994) believes that this treatment leads to a "higher level" of analysis (p. 154).

Constas (1992) defends researchers' rights to work according to their own logic and judgments, as long as they open all their records and data to the public. I will provide all needed documents to any public review or examination.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) examine trustworthiness by testing internal validity (or credibility), external validity (or transferability), reliability (or dependability), and objectivity (or confirmability). To examine internal validity, Lincoln and Guba pose the

question "How can one establish confidence in the 'truth' of the findings of an inquiry for the respondents with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?" (p. 218). I will embrace the following steps to examine internal validity in the current research:

- (a) I will use triangulation comparing information gathered from the clinical discourse and from the ethnography interviews.
- (b) I will do member checking, by comparing the content of the discourses of several people regarding the same topic.
- (c) I will juxtapose information told by several people regarding one event.
- (d) I will use "vertical" triangulating by testing the content of conversations with the same person in regard to one topic over the course of several months.

To examine external validity, I must answer Lincoln and Guba's (1985) question, "How can one determine the degree to which the findings of an inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other respondents?" (p. 218). The literature contains rich descriptions of research done on ethnic groups who have resided in alien cultures and have come to therapy to solve their problems. I assume that thick descriptions of the findings of the current research may be applicable for other Arab communities residing nationwide in the U. S., or in any other country outside the Middle East. Arabs share some cultural components and family structure with other Asian and Latin American cultures. Thus, research findings might be of interest to therapists/researchers who work with these populations.

To test reliability, I must answer the question "How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) respondents in the same (or similar) context?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 218). In order to have "scientific" qualitative research, I have followed all steps recommended in the literature. These main guidelines are public knowledge that all researchers may follow. I will strive to write all methodology process in a detailed manner to mark all steps which were taken in this research. I intend to keep all transcriptions, journals, audit trails, and card notes that include all emerged categories, brochures, newspapers, and all other material collected from the field open to public review (yet, preserved in a private safe). Any researcher who would like to replicate the grand tour question may use this material. However, I assume that the same respondent in the same context will relate to questions regarding their families in a way different than when responding to my questions. Reasons for this difference may be: (a) because they would be at a different point in time, which means that they would have different family dynamics, (b) because their answers to my questions, and my answers to theirs, changed them as they changed me, and (c) because the new researcher will have different relationships with each person, depending on such variables as his or her age, interest, gender, culture, nationality, and professional background.

To examine objectivity I must be able to answer the question, "How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry stem from the characteristics of the respondents and the context and not from the biases, motivations, interest, and perspectives of the inquirer?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 218). To demonstrate

objectivity in this research I acted in accordance with several procedures along the research process: (a) I made four copies of each document I typed or hand wrote (interviews, audit trail, and journal). Immediately after finishing the writing, I analyzed the document for its content and searched for categories emerging from it. I wrote those categories in the five inch margins I left on each document. After about two months, I read another copy of the same document and went through the process again. When I finished the categorization, I compared them with the previous copy. I repeated the same process after two more months. The fourth copy of each document will be read when I write chapter four of this document. I repeated the same process with the transcriptions I had already transcribed and will continue categorizing according to the same procedure. This kind of rereading allows me to test my judgments over time. If I had consistency in the categories and topics I marked, I believed that I was objective. If not, I reread all the marked copies to find out where the inconsistencies were, then tried to learn why that occurred. This sort of inner testing helped me remind myself about objectivity before reading any document.

(b) Every few weeks I held a conversation with Zeynab, the key informant in this research. I shared my findings and conclusions with her and asked for her feedback. Zeynab used her own wisdom to interpret events and relationships. She taught me to think like her, besides thinking like myself, when I considered the respondents in the research.

(c) Peer debriefing: I consulted four professionals who had extensive experience with Arab immigrants in the U. S. about my findings and considered several more questions.

These conversations helped me see topics I researched from another perspective. Those professionals were willing to continue discussing any topics that emerged about the research population. This opportunity has added an external locus of control to the internal one, adding objectivity to the final findings.

Summary

In this chapter, I tried to introduce the main ideas from the qualitative research field that were applicable to this research. I linked the literature background and the methodology adopted in this research. I explained how I will use the clinical work, as a case study, and the community research as ethnography. I explained the recursive process of data gathering from the two sites and their impact on each other, and on the modification of the grand tour question. Later, I explained in detail, the data gathering process, analysis, and how I built in trustworthiness. Also, I reviewed developments of my access to the community and my role as a researcher.

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Chapter Four

Those who leave their homeland decrease their worth.

Egyptian proverb.

We will return to our neighborhood. And be drawn in our warm wishes. We will return, despite time and distances.

Feyroz, Lebanese singer.

Ethnography

Arabs began living in Florida about forty years ago. They live in the big cities such as Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa, and Jacksonville. In the 1990 Bureau of Census figures for Florida, the number of Arab immigrants was estimated to be about 65,000.

About one thousand Arab families, numbering about six thousand people, reside in Fort Lauderdale and its suburbs (Estimation of the Islamic Center, Sheikh Nitham Hasan). The first Arab immigrants who arrived in Florida moved from other states to search for job opportunities and to reside in a climate similar to the Middle East. Others immigrated from the Middle East following relatives in family chain migration.

People's Stories of their Reasons of Immigration

Arabs immigrated to the southern part of Florida for several reasons, similar to the earlier Arab immigrants in all other parts of the U. S. A.:

1. Education. Kareem arrived in Miami from Amman, Jordan twenty years ago. He was a high school graduate who wanted to learn architecture. As many high school students in his country also did, he wrote to several universities in the Arab World and in Western

countries. The first answer that he got was from The University of Miami. He decided to immigrate immediately. In the next five years of his life he became a student, met his future wife at the university, married, had two children, established his office, and became the first chain in his extended family's immigration process to the area. During the last twenty years, he helped other family members immigrate to South Florida.

Among those people were the nuclear families of his two uncles, an aunt, two brothers, two nephews, one niece, his mother's uncle, and two brothers of his brother-in-law.

2. Political instability. Abu Hisham immigrated a few months after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. As a young teacher, he was active in the resistance movement against the occupation. When several members in the movement were arrested and were put in jail, he decided to immigrate to America. At that time he was single. Abu Hisham helped his brother to immigrate, as well as his sister's family, his three brothers-in-law, and his two sons-in-law.

3. Work and economic opportunities. Zakria graduated from an American university as an environmental engineer. After graduation, he returned to the West Bank. Because of the high unemployment he was unable to find a proper job. Five months later, he decided to return to America hoping to find a decent position. He decided to immigrate to Florida since he heard that the area had new developments and good job opportunities.

4. Health issues. Nadia suffered from a rare case of reaction to anaesthesia. She lost her voice for about three years and was not able to breathe normally. Doctors in her country advised her to seek a remedy in America or in Europe. She wrote to her cousin in South Florida who helped her to contact a doctor in the area. For three years she was in therapy

which helped her regain her ability to speak. She needs more years in therapy to regain her ability to breathe on her own.

5. Unification with extended family. Kamilia's "Ahl"¹²--parents, brothers and sister--immigrated to America before and during the Gulf War. She was with her family, safe, in Amman, Jordan. However, because she had no immediate family members left in the Middle East, and because the Christian community in Amman was very small, she convinced her husband to join her "Ahl" in America.

6. Unification with children. Fahim and Hanriette are two Arab Christians from Israel, who sent their oldest son to Florida, to be close to his uncles and to attend undergraduate school. Soon the son convinced his three sisters to join him. When the last son graduated from high school he also joined his brother and sisters. The parents failed to convince their children to return back home to Israel, especially after the oldest son and the oldest daughter married Arab immigrants. The only way left for the parents to be close to their children was to immigrate, leaving behind their jobs, their "Ahl," and their friends. They both had to begin a new life in America at their late fifties.

7. Marriage. Najat worked in a shopping center in Amman, Jordan. A woman saw her and thought that Najat would be a good candidate as a future wife for her brother. The brother, Taufiq, was a businessman who had lived in America for the last 17 years. He

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The Arabic expression for family of origin. Because of the intensive relationship among family members, and the various role and rules of each, it is important in Arabic to differentiate between "nuclear family," "family of origin," and "extended family." The simple expression "family" does not provide these distinctions.

was visiting Amman at that time to find a suitable bride for himself. Within two weeks, Najat became Taufiq's wife, on her way to her new home in America.

8. Searching for a new start. Safaa and Shahira are two sisters who immigrated from Morocco eight years ago. Their father, who was a judge, left them a large inheritance. Since their parents died when they were minors, their relatives stole their rights to their inheritance. When they grew up and failed to receive their rights, they decided to cut off their relationship with their extended family and to immigrate "as far as possible" from them.

The Arab community in the Fort Lauderdale area is characterized mainly as new bourgeois immigrants who were small businessmen or lower middle class employees in their home countries. Although there are highly educated people who work in the academic institutions or have their own businesses, some wealthy persons who do belong to the upper class are a minority in the community.

Most Arab immigrants who arrive with much capital invest their money in gas stations. Those who have less capital buy grocery stores. It is believed that this kind of business guarantees the fastest profit for capital investment. Besides, these businesses need very little effort for paperwork and licences. The grocery shops are open in some cases from 15 to 24 hours a day. In these cases the owner hires other Arab immigrants to work for him. In other cases, husbands share the work responsibilities with their wives or with other brothers or relatives. Abdelkader's family, who immigrated from the West Bank, divided the grocery store into two parts and lived in the back storeroom for seven years. Abdelkader's wife was able to take care of her infants and also to help in the store.

Later they were able to move to a small house and to buy a bigger grocery store in a better location. Today they own four grocery stores in which family members work. Abdelkader is the manager of the business and his wife enjoys the luxury of the wealthy life. Most grocery stores are located in low socioeconomic neighborhoods, mainly inhabited by African-Americans.

Immigration Difficulties

Immigrants face different kinds of problems when they first arrive in America whether they decide to immigrate permanently, or for a few years. The main challenges they face are in the language, legal status, work, social status, social life, and family structure. All the above challenges also influence the immigrant's family relationships.

Language

The English language is the second language in most countries in the Middle East. Students have to study it in the school systems for several years. However, that does not adequately enable immigrants from the Arab World to communicate in English or to understand the American accents. Therefore, Arab immigrants who studied English and those who did not, face a serious problem when they arrive in the country.

The inability to master the language causes Arab immigrants to be anxious and sometimes suspicious when they have to encounter Americans. Zakria arrived in Texas three months after finishing high school. He attended a three-month English course for foreign students. Afterwards, he had to register for school. He called his uncle, who lived in Michigan, asking him how to spell the words for the subject he wanted to study. His wife Nahla, who finished middle school, has very poor English. Upon arriving in the

country, she was not able to communicate, or understand the TV or answer the telephone. Also, she was unable to learn to drive since she was not able to take the written exam or to read the street signs. Nahla felt paralyzed and dysfunctional outside her home. She had to do her shopping with Zakria since she was not able to read the signs in the supermarket and the ingredients on the merchandise.

For Um Nidal, who immigrated from The Arab Emirates, it was urgent for her to learn English as fast as she could. She stated:

When we first arrived here, I was very busy helping the children settle down. I could not go to school to learn English. I postponed that several times and was busy with the children and the grandchildren. Recently, Abu Nidal told me that I had to hurry up since the immigration authority may invite us to take the citizenship test anytime now. It is not exactly a test, but they ask a few questions from a list of about 100 questions. I have to be prepared to answer any of them.

Now I go to two courses, an English course and a citizenship course. You have to understand, I finished elementary school in Lebanon. I am 55 years old now. It is not easy to start now. However, I want to do everything in my ability to help my family settle down in this country. Therefore, it is important for me to study English.

Um Raja and her daughter-in-law, Taroob, work together in a small Middle Eastern confectionery. Um Raja, who immigrated from the West Bank, never learned English in school. When she first immigrated she had a short English course for about three months. However, she was frustrated with her slow progress and dropped the

course. At their business, Um Raja works mainly in the kitchen since she is not able to understand the American shoppers. On the other hand, Taroob, who was born in Syria and immigrated to America after her marriage, learned to be a chef in a private culinary school. She recalled her experience:

I called to ask about the school. The lady encouraged me to go and meet her. I said that I am too afraid to register since I don't understand English. She said that is OK. She just wanted me to have an exam which determines whether I can be accepted or not. I had to pass 55% of the questions. I did not know that she gets a commission for each student she convinces to register. She helped me with the test. I thought then that she was a nice person who wanted to help foreigners. When school began, I was not able to understand what the teacher talked about. After three weeks, I told Raja, my husband, that I would quit. I felt that I was not learning. Raja thought that I had to give myself another chance. He said that people here learn differently than in the Middle East: They have to understand what they learn, not just learn everything by heart. He also said that their tests are easier than ours in the Middle East. He advised me to stay until the end of the Fall semester. I did. Little by little I started understanding and communicating. But until today, I feel that I am not able to understand everything said to me. Not in school or on TV. However, you know, I feel that I am much better in English now. I have been in school for 18 months by now. I will graduate in a month and a half.

The language deficiency causes new immigrants to feel a decrease in their self-esteem. Zeynab who graduated as a lab technician in Jordan, found that after immigration she was not able to mother her children the way she did back home. She had to walk her two daughters daily to their school and was not able to understand the teachers' notes and comments. She said:

I used to say that my mother was very unfortunate because she was not able to read and write. She used to hold a letter and ask us to tell her what its contents were. I became like my illiterate mother. Oh, what happened to me. When teachers talked to me I felt that I wanted to disappear. Now that my children can understand English fluently, I am very shy to ask them to read their teachers' notes and to translate them for me. I don't want them to think of me what I thought of my mother.

Rima, Zeynab's daughter, immigrated with her family when she was six years old. Four days after arriving in America the school year opened. Rima cannot forget what it meant not to be able to speak the language:

I needed to go to the bathroom but I was not able to speak or understand English. I looked at the teacher as if she would understand what I wanted. Then I started to cry. The teacher tried to talk to me. I cried more. The teacher sent for my sister who is a year older than I. I told my sister what I wanted. But my sister also did not know English. My sister started crying with me. Then, the teacher remembered that there were two Arab children at the school. She called a girl who translated to the teacher what I wanted. It took me about a month to start

understanding. I don't remember when I was able to speak and to understand everything said in English. Because I couldn't understand the language, I stayed with my sister during the breaks. Other kids hate us because they thought we didn't like them. But we were not able to talk to them.

Proficiency in English is the first step for Arab immigrants to regain their self-esteem and to relax from their continuous tension. Also, it is the most important tool immigrants need to communicate, work, and maintain an active life in a foreign country. Although other activities, such as work, may enable immigrants to gain the language, most immigrants think that they have to master the language before they do other activities. Niveen, a 23 year old woman from the West Bank, was agoraphobic for the whole first year of immigration. She was not able to step outside her home since she was afraid she would lose her way and not be able to ask for directions. She was afraid to open the door to the mailman since she did not know what he might say to her. After a year, she decided to overcome her miserable situation. She studied the language by listening carefully to the TV. Today, she goes to undergraduate school and is able to travel all over Florida to visit her family members who reside in several locations.

Legal Status

Many Arab immigrants arrived in America on a tourist's visa and decided to stay, trying to gain legal status afterwards. The lack of legal status influences the mental health of the illegal immigrant families as well as the type of work adults may do. Subsequently, it impacts the families lifestyle. Most illegal immigrants moved to America to join other family members, friends, or relatives. However, they usually underestimated the type of

problems they may face as a result of their illegal status, beside underestimating the difficulty of gaining legal status.

Waheb arrived in America on a student's visa. He went to school for about four years. During that time he rejected the idea of marrying an American woman in order to get a permanent status in the country. Also, he refused what other immigrants do: To have a fictive marriage. By the end of the fourth year, he decided to go to Jordan to get married. He married a second cousin and came back with her to America. She had a tourist visa. Waheb started working and was not able to go back to school. He soon lost his visa status. But he kept working on his legal status and with a lawyer's help and lot of expense he gained permission to work. Meanwhile, he lost his permanent residency in the West Bank. His wife's status has been illegal for the last five years. She is not able to work, nor to leave the country. On top of all this, according to the Jordanian laws, a wife cannot give her husband the right to citizenship status. The couple now has three children. They live in constant tension, especially after the new immigration laws. They are afraid of any type of illegal mistake such as an IRS report. The ghost of deportation lives in their house and colors their daily life. They are unable to live like a family either in the wife's country or in the husband's country.

Basima arrived illegally in America 10 years ago to join her husband. Later, her Jordanian passport was stolen. Because of their marital disputes, her husband refused to arrange her legal status. A year ago, the husband kidnapped her two daughters and went back to the West Bank. Legally, Basima does not exist in America; she lacks any personal identification such as social security, driving license, passport and such. With

this lack of status, she was not able to file against her estranged husband who still refuses to return her daughters to America.

Fatina and her husband, Rashid, arrived in America from Jordan eight months ago on tourists visas. They planned beforehand to stay in the country for a while and try to gain legal status. They are first cousins and both have several relatives in the area. They tried to gather information about the possibilities of gaining legal status while at home. Then, their relatives gave them the wrong impression that it is possible to gain some kind of legal status within the first year of their staying in America. Fatina told their story in this regard:

People told us that Rashid might arrange a fictive marriage. But with the new laws, it is almost impossible to gain a legal status this way. Then, my uncle said that I may announce that I am engaged to a man who has residency. We seriously considered this, but I would have to go back to Amman, Jordan and to get a new visa. They may refuse me a new visa, and then I might end up staying there with no possibility of coming back to this country because I had already broken the law by staying illegally all these months. Before we arrived, everyone said it was very easy. Now we feel that the axe has already crashed our heads (this action is final). We are trapped here. My uncle thought that I might get a work visa. He could offer me a job in his office. But he did not know that also for that kind of visa I would have to go back to Jordan. Also, this kind of visa needs about two years to be completed in Jordan. I did not know that. With this situation, I am not able to go to graduate studies and Rashid cannot work any place except in grocery

stores owned by Arabs. We left our child in Amman, thinking that we will bring him soon. I haven't seen him for 8 months.

Work

Arab immigrants who arrived illegally in America are not able to find jobs in their professions since they lack the proper documentation. The only jobs they may find are in family businesses or as manual laborers in businesses owned by other Arabs. That causes a lessening of their social and professional status. Employers pay less than the legal minimum wage, claiming that they do a favor for the Arab immigrant by risking their own license and exposing themselves to high fines. Illegal immigrants are usually so desperate to find any job that they agree with any offer. They do so to solve the problem of their unemployment, causing themselves other kinds of problems. The most serious one is the tension they and their families live in as a result of their illegal status. Each day they stay at work they take the risk of being caught by the immigration officials, and being deported with their families. Also they have to work long hours, sometimes 15 hours a day, in order to gain a decent weekly salary, enough for their families' needs. That creates family tension. Fauzi was a chemistry engineer in Syria. When he immigrated to find a cure for his wife, Nadia, he started working in her relative's grocery store. After a while, Nadia became very upset with her husband. She reflected on their experience:

During our three years of marriage in Syria we never fought. But, we did after coming here. Fauzi is very shy and doesn't fight for his rights. People here took advantage of him, first my relative and then his new employer. He works about 13

hours a day. In the first year of our arrival, during the whole month of Ramadan (the fast month), he never had dinner with me at home. He had to stay at his work. Each night when he arrives home, he has no energy to do anything. He wants to eat and go to bed. I push him to ask for a promotion and for better conditions, but he is afraid he will lose his job. We didn't live like that in Syria. We worked in the same company. We worked from 8 a. m. to 2 p. m. Fauzi had a small lab where he worked until 7 p. m. We then spent the whole evening together. I never recall that we fought before we immigrated.

Since Arab families tend to live as extended families, they also immigrate as extended families. Some other families immigrate gradually as nuclear families, then regather in America as extended families. Usually, they establish family businesses where several brothers put all their capital together and divide the labor among them. In cases where the business succeeds, all family members benefit from their common effort and family-based business. However, when all adults in the extended family experience great tension from the immigration adjustment, working together becomes an emotionally charged activity. Also, in cases of financial problems, such as crippling debts or business bankruptcy, all extended family members suffer without having an outside safety net. Abu Raja shared with his son a family business that is a financial failure. Now, that they are sinking in debts, they can not find outside help, and cannot be supportive to each other as a family, either financially or psychosocially.

When one family member communicates well in English and understands the system more than others, then he (usually, not she) suffers in the family business as the

one with the most responsibilities. Mahdi, Niveen's husband, took care of all family business. That kept him busy all day long and on weekends. Also, it kept him away from his wife and two small daughters. Niveen often blamed him and asked him to disconnect himself from the family business. Mahdi's family blamed Niveen for trying to divide the united family. They claimed that the extended family's needs are more important than Niveen's needs. They had tense relationships with her for a while and ended by severing their relationship with her. Niveen suffered from the social boycott until she started school.

Another kind of family problem arises when a child wants to take responsibility for the family business and asks the elder father to step aside. Fahim and his wife, Henriette, were teachers in Israel for more than 35 years. When they moved to America, their son who graduated from business school convinced them that the best investment for them was to own two grocery stores. The son himself owned another two stores. Dissatisfied with the father's skills in business, the son asked his father to let him run the business. With the son's determined insistence, Fahim was forced to step aside. Fahim summarized his experience with his son saying:

I know that he wants my well-being. He is afraid that I cannot run the store properly. Also, he thinks that this business is not proper for a dignified man my age. I know how to speak English, but I have difficulty understanding Black people. So, he politely forced me to retire. He said to me, "Daddy, you took care of us all your life. Now it is your turn to get some rest and let us take care of you." I know that he wants our well-being. I try to be active in some of the Arab

organizations in the area. It makes me feel needed. I came here to be with my children, not to fight with them.

Social Status

Work opportunities which open for illegal Arab immigrants have an extended impact on many aspects of their lives such as their income, their professional self-esteem, and their social life. Survival needs force people to work in jobs that are different from their professional training, causing a decrease in their professional status. Many of them feel shy and degraded by the work they do. In order to save face, they prefer to reframe the type of jobs they do, telling others that they work as “a supermarket manager” or “a business accountant.” These are respectful professions that their families back home would be proud that their faraway immigrant children work in. For some immigrants it is very important that their acquaintances back home continue thinking about the immigrant family member’s professional position in America as a respectful one. Shafiq immigrated from Jordan to find a cure for his infertile wife. In Jordan, he belongs to a very famous and powerful family. He reflected on the change in his social status resulting from immigration:

I had the highest position of airplane mechanic in the Kingdom. The army sent me abroad several times for updating my education. One time I studied for about 18 months in England and another time I stayed for about 6 months in America. After I came to live here, I sent my resume’ to several companies. They said that I am qualified to work if I had the proper legal status. So, the only job I found was in a grocery store. First, I worked with someone from 4 a. m. to 4 p. m. I didn’t

respect the grocery owner. So I found another place. I work now from 12 noon to 12 midnight. I don't have friends here. I can't socialize with the other workers. No one knows my personal status back home. I have such a strong family with extensive political and social ties that I think, God forbid, if I should kill someone, no one dares to put me in jail. When I return back home I will have income from my retirement and from two houses I rent. I don't need to work anymore. However, I did not expect that Aisha's treatment was going to be so expensive. I paid 75% of my retirement money for one fertilization procedure. It failed and we have to try again. Therefore, I have to continue working in the same job.

His wife, Aisha, who belonged in Jordan to the upper class, as the wife of a high profile officer in the army, also changed her social status in America:

In American I am spending all days and nights alone. The first year I did not know anyone in this country. No one visited and no one called. I don't drive. I don't understand their TV. I felt that I would lose my mind. Then I met Nadia. She drives. She let me meet other Arabs. Now I work as a babysitter for some Arab families. I also help them with their housework. It is OK. I don't tell people in my "Alblad¹³" of this. I have to help make money for my treatment. Also I have to help myself by going out for a few hours.

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The Arabic word for home country. People use it interchangeably also to mention their hometown or local community in their home country.

People in the Middle East live within small communities and stay in the same location for generations. Some neighborhoods are known by the name of the extended family or the clan. People who leave their village will continue to be recognized by the name of their village instead of their last names. Anonymity in America is a psychosocial situation alien to the traditional lifestyle within small communities. For some immigrants it is difficult to face and deal with this reality. For Shahira and Buthayna anonymity in America is a condition they are not able to compromise. They said:

In Morocco, it was enough to mention our last name to gain respect and special treatment from everyone. People knew my father who was a judge and knew that our genealogy went back to Prophet Mohammed. We belong to the Moslem nobles. We have a family tree that shows the relationship. When we moved to America, we knew that we would have to work for our living. It was OK. But, what we find disagreeable is that people think that we have to agree to marry anyone just because we are two Arab females who live away from their extended family. That is not right. One leadership figure in the community tried to convince Shahira to marry an Egyptian worker, who has no legal status, no money, no reputation, nothing. We both became very angry with him. We asked him "Don't you know who we are? Don't you know the family, whose daughters we are?" He was so disrespectful and answered "I don't. If you want to use your family reputation in your social life, go back to your hometown in Morocco. If you want to stay here, you have to understand the new social conditions." Well, I don't agree with him. Do you think that we are wrong and not realistic?

Although the standard of living in America is much higher than most of the countries in the Middle East, people compare themselves both to their social status back home and to their actual social status in America. For new immigrants, whether their status is legal or otherwise, in the first few years they may feel a decrease in their social status that effects their mental health. Career women in particular feel the change and suffer deeply from it. They are not able to work in grocery stores as men do. And usually, they have small children whom they cannot put in daycare, since they do not have the financial ability. Fatina worked as a high school teacher in Amman, Jordan. Her husband worked in a private company. They both earned triple the average income of the middle class employee in their society. However, they wanted to be able to “gather some capital when we are still young, which enables us to have our own business.” Upon arriving in America, the husband’s uncles arranged a job for him in a grocery store while Fatina stayed home. She lived in her uncle’s home for the first five months after her arrival. She said:

My uncle tried to let me feel that I am staying in my own home. However, I had to get up each morning and clean and cook and to be there for his children when they returned from school. Back in Amman, I had my own career, my own home, my own son, my own schedule, my own friends, and my own social life. Here I became a housemaid. He never treated me like that, but I felt this way. What is the difference between my life now and the life of illiterate old women in Jordan? Nothing. Had I come to America for this? Had I sacrificed my job and my stability for this?

Also Samya was a career woman in Jordan who is not able to find a proper job in America because she is an illegal immigrant and because she has three little children under 5 years of age. Samya suffers from severe depression that she explains is due to the tremendous changes in the nature of her social life:

I used to be very active and full of life. My father is a principal of a high school. Our home was always full of visitors, very educated people. I had five sisters and two brothers. That alone kept our home full of life and friends, like a beehive. When I arrived in America, suddenly I had to stay home. Alone. I lived in a small apartment in a poor neighborhood. I had no Arab neighbors. I didn't yet have my driving licence. Suddenly, I was immobile. The only Arabs that visited us from time to time were the people that my husband worked with. You know, people that were forced on us, not people whom I was able to pick. They caused me a lot of troubles because they had a different mentality than mine. We were not able to get along. They like rumors and tittle-tattle. It took me a while until I got rid of them. But also I was deeply hurt by them. Then I had no one. For about 9 months I talked on the telephone with one woman whose number I had. She was nice and we got along very well. But neither she nor I had cars. So we were not able to meet. After 9 months I had my driving licence and could visit her from time to time. I had to drive for about an hour to arrive at her place. Now she has moved again. It may take me two hours to reach her place. So I am lonely again. There are a lot of Arab women in the surrounding area. It is easy to go to the Islamic Center on Saturdays and meet about 100 Arab women. The problem is to find

someone from my own type and social status. I feel sad and tired all the time. I don't have energy for the kids. I have pain in my head and in the left part of my body. The doctor ran several tests then gave me some medication for depression. He asked me to go to a psychologist.

Families who live in poor neighborhoods and send their children to public school, often prohibit their children from socializing with other American children, especially African-Americans. They believe that Americans have very low social values that may influence Arab children, leaving them with bad manners. This leaves Arab children completely isolated from peer social life and from after-school activities. Um Nabil stated with pride, about the social segregation she created for her family in America:

This is the 29th year that I have lived in this country. My children were born here. In all our time here we never entered an American home and no American person entered our home. We socialize within the Arab community. Even the children learned that what we want to have from the American schools is just the education, not the social relationships. When my oldest son was in the second grade, my husband heard him talking over the telephone with an American kid giving him our phone number. He used a belt on him. He told him "don't you have a brain in your head? Do you want American boys to call you here? Aren't you afraid for your sisters? Do you want them to socialize with American boys? Do you want them to have boyfriends in the future? And so, I swear to God, he never did it again. Neither he nor the girls.

Social Life

Arab people in the Middle East have a very tightly knit social life. They often meet with family members and neighbors on a daily basis. Some extended families have a meeting place which is called "Dewan," that functions as the extended family's club directed by the oldest person in the extended family and run by monthly fees paid by all working men. Visiting neighbors and friends is a religious expectation as well as a social custom that is an inherent aspect of the daily social life and lifestyle. Upon immigrating to America, Arab immigrants, especially women who have a lot of free time, face difficulty filling their day with new activities. Individual lifestyle is very strange to the interdependent Arab society. Using the reasoning of the Middle Eastern context, people judge the lack of active social life in America as a personal failure. A person who stays away from social life is believed to have psychological problems (Arabs call him or her "ma'qad," or complicated with problems). Niveen, who immigrated after her marriage from a town in the West Bank, described her first days in America:

My husband used to get up at 9 a.m. and leave for his work at 9:30 a.m. Suddenly, I was able to listen to the silence at home. In all my life, I never experienced staying alone at home. Never, never. Our home never was empty. I had eight siblings and both of my parents worked. We lived in the same neighborhood with all our relatives. The neighbors were like close relatives. We always had people at home all day long. My mom's neighbors brought their pot of coffee and drank with her before she left for her work. They also came in the afternoon to help her prepare dinner. We had guests each night. How could I possibly live between four

empty walls? I almost lost my mind during that period. I often called my mom crying. When I knew that they are gathered the way they used to, I cried more.

Immigrants who moved to America with their extended family faced fewer problems regarding their social life. They were able to maintain their social life within their extended family. Those gatherings also protected their children from feeling bored or feeling in need of outside friends. Jacklyn immigrated from Kuwait with her husband and children during the Gulf War. Her parents and her four brothers immigrated shortly before that from Lebanon and from Kuwait. They were able to settle and succeed financially in America. After a while, the youngest sister, who stayed in Jordan, decided to join her parents and siblings. The parents and their six siblings now live in the same neighborhood. The women meet each morning for the daily morning coffee conversation. Sometimes they prepare food for their families together. All adults spend the evenings together rotating between households. All families spend all weekends and vacations together. Mothers say that all their children spend time together playing or taking care of each other. They think that for many years they have not lived a better family life, since the “Ahl” never lived in the same neighborhood. Instead, they lived in three Middle Eastern countries.

Shadia compared her life, as an only member of her family who lives in the Fort Lauderdale suburbs, to the wife of her uncle who lives very close to her “Ahl”:

I live here and I have just one sister who lives an hour away. She is often very busy because she works with her husband in their grocery. My mother and other siblings live in Cleveland, Ohio. Sometimes I feel very lonely. I feel down. Even

the only uncle that I have here doesn't pay me social visits as expected because of his responsibilities as my uncle. His social life is with his wife's "Ahl". But they don't need him there like I do. They can have a whole wedding by themselves without inviting any outsider. She gave a birthday party for her son and invited just her siblings and uncles and their children and their spouses. About a hundred people showed up. They can party together each day. I can't. I don't have anyone but my close friend Jamila. If she were not in my life, I don't know how my life would be. She is the best thing I have in America. The best thing I have in my life. Everything I was able to overcome or accomplish is due to her help. She is more than a family to me.

The structure of the family's relationship, type of adults' work, and the distance between households determine the type of social life for a family. Sara is a 20 year old young mother who was married a year ago to her first cousin. When her husband leaves for work, she comes to her mother and spends the whole day with her. Her other sister and two brothers each bring one child to Um Nidal to take care of while their mothers go to work. All married children with their wives and spouses come after work to take their children and to see their parents. The daily visits keep Um Nidal busy and her household filled with activities. During the weekends all children and their families gather for family lunch at their parent's home. In the evenings, Um Nidal and Abu Nidal either have guests from their Arab neighbors or they go themselves to visit them. Abu Nidal, who is retired, spends his mornings between short visits to his children's business and to the mosque.

Muslim women who send their children to the Islamic Center to learn Arabic and religion meet each Saturday for about four to six hours. Women tend to socialize in accordance with family or regional ties. Tables, which are located in different places in a big hall, become boundaries to social ties. Relatives sit together in one location, arranging the tables according to the number of the family members that may number 20. Among these groups, they tend to divide themselves also according to their ages: young women sit together, and old women sit together. Other groups gather on a regional basis; those who came from the West Bank sit together and those who arrived from Jordan sit together. Female teachers tend to sit together during the lunch break, while male teachers are not allowed to enter the women's gathering. Among the women there is a group of non-Arab women who are married to Arab Muslim men who sit either with their husbands' relatives or create their own group.

For many women, especially those who live within extended families, the weekly visit to the Islamic Center is the only social activity they have. Um Nabil lives with her two sons and their wives in the same household and spends all days with them. She does not feel lonely or bored during weekdays. She explained her daily schedule:

We live together. We built one building for the three families. Each house has its own entrance but we can open inner doors to reach each other. We get up daily at six o'clock. By nine we finish cleaning our homes. I am responsible for preparing the food while my daughters-in-law clean my house. At nine we prepare breakfast and sit together. Then we watch some Arab movies or plays that we rent. We rent tapes for all soap operas broadcasted on the Jordanian TV. Sometimes we rent

about 15 episodes. We don't see them all on the same day because we then would feel tired. On Saturdays, we all come here (to the Islamic Center) to meet other people. Sometimes we don't go to their houses unless there is some social occasion. We like to come and spend some time together. Instead of visiting each one in her place, we see all of them at the same time. I live very close to the Islamic Center. People live far from us. I also come here each Friday to pray and to listen to the Imam's preaching. Very few old women attend Friday's prayer. When we meet on Fridays, we talk about religious matters.

For Fahim and his wife Henriette, who were very active teachers in Israel, social visitations are not enough for them. They both became very active members in several clubs, especially for academic people, and for the Christian community. Often, they have to travel to the next city to participate in meetings and in activities, however they both feel very content with their active membership. Fahim explained:

In the club of the Arab academic immigrants we meet people from all parts of the Arab World, people with rich experience and intelligent minds. We discuss academic subjects besides discussing ways to improve our life in America. From time to time we invite Arab speakers who visit the area. This way, one meets people that one never dreamt to meet. On holidays and various occasions we also invite Arab singers who visit America on tours from the Middle East. Usually we learn about their arrival from other communities and make the contact with their agents. Between the children, their families, my wife's "Ahl," our friends, and the club we are very busy. It is not exactly what we had in Israel, because one has to

work very hard to move between one place and the other since the locations are very far from each other. But, what else can we do? This is what we have. If we are going to spend the rest of our lives here, it is better to find a satisfactory social life, or else we will feel drained.

Part of the social life of Arab immigrants is accepting guests from their home countries or visiting their families back home. The average stay of each visit is between two and three months which affects the daily life of the family. These visits are among the most important activities for the immigrants to stay close to the non-immigrated part of their families. Also these visits are occasions to freshen the children's Arabic language, norms and values. When a family receives a guest from the "Alblad," all the family's friends in the community pay visits to the family and invite them with their guest to a feast. Although most people report that they feel very satisfied with the visits of their guests, women, in particular, have to ignore their tiredness and exhaustion, especially if they had several guests at the same time or one family after the other. In some cases, family members who live in small apartments have to leave their own bedroom for the guest to show further hospitality. Sometimes, especially when the guests are the couple's parents, an unmarried sister, or a very poor family member, the host family will pay for the tickets and all gifts the guest takes back home for other family members. For many families this becomes a heavy financial burden. When this situation extends more than one month, it affects all family members: Husbands are more tired in their jobs as a result of less sleep hours, children show a decrease in their grades because their mothers are busy with the guests and because the house is always full with many

people, and mothers become less patient. It is enough for Arab immigrants to say, "I have guests from 'Alblad'," for people to get the whole picture of the social life of that family during that period.

Family Structure

Immigration influences the structure of the family in many ways. Several factors such as the immigration circumstances, the financial situation of the immigrants, the linkage between the extended family and the relationship among the close community members, all play a crucial role in influencing the family structure.

Many people who plan to immigrate from poor Arab countries lack the financial means to buy the tickets and move to America together as a nuclear family. In such cases, the father moves first, and after a few years he gathers enough money to send tickets for his family. Mustafa worked as a mechanic in Amman, Jordan for about seven years. By the end of the seventh year his income never increased, while during the same period he got married and had four children. Occasionally he borrowed money from his employer. Finally he decided to immigrate. He recalled that decision:

I asked myself whether in the next ten years my situation would be better. I found that that was impossible. Meanwhile, the kids' financial needs kept growing. I borrowed the money for the ticket from my boss and arrived in this area. I lived with my brother Kareem and his American wife. I started working as a mechanic and within six months I had three raises. I saved all my salary. My brother was very generous and never asked me to pay anything for my stay. I sent to Zeynab the same amount of money that she used to spend when I was in Jordan. I visited

my family for two weeks each six months. By the end of the third year I was able to bring them here. When they arrived I had already bought a small house and furnished it. It was very difficult for Zeynab to be alone with the kids in Jordan. It was difficult for me also. Some nights I cried. Each time I finished a phone conversation with them I cried. When I saw my brother with his kids I cried. Don't tell Zeynab that. But one has to sacrifice. I did, and Zeynab did. It is not easy to live without your kids or without the father of the family.

Temporarily fatherless families soon experience another change when a substitute father figure steps in to take the pater's role. This support system is important within interdependent society and very crucial in a patriarchal society, especially when it is not acceptable for women to arrange their needs with the larger systems. With this necessity, many women suffer from the new partners they have to have in their lives, which adds more agony to the suffering of being away from the husband. For Zeynab that period was a heavy load:

Mustafa decided to leave me with four children. I was not sure whether he was going to succeed or not. Also, I was very disturbed by the idea that he may marry an American woman. He is a man, you know. Men are not like women. They can't wait for their spouse as women do. You do understand! Right? Then he asked his father to take care of my finances. Each visit, Mustafa left me money with his father for six months. I had to go to him to ask for the monthly allowance. I felt like a small child. I was hurt. But what could I do? Once, I needed money badly. It was the 23rd of the month. My sister said "go and ask

your father-in-law to give you your allowance now instead of next week.” I went and he refused to give me the money. He said that I needed to learn how to manage with what I had. I felt furious.

Now that Zeynab’s husband was away, his father and his brothers felt that they had to take the disciplinary role. Also Zeynab’s brothers felt that they had to monitor the children’s behavior so people would not criticize them for abandoning their sister’s children. Zeynab had a lot of disciplinary figures for her children and she felt very well supported. She never had any problem with any child. However, as a woman, she felt very abandoned and very lonely.

When the family reunified, they had to relearn how to live as a family again. Mustafa had to fight for his role as the disciplinary parent. He felt that the children obeyed their mother more than they obeyed him. Zeynab, who during Mustafa’s life away from home learned to be more independent, felt helpless in her new environment.

Some other families split for the second time when the parents decide to send the children back to their home country in cases where they start to show assimilation with the American norms and values, such as having boyfriends, or using drugs. In families where mothers work in the family business with their husbands, they send the children to grandparents or to aunts to be parented by them. In other cases, mothers return back home with their children, while husbands stay a few more years to amass a bigger fortune before the final return home. From a financial aspect, people who immigrated to America to save money, the family split is the best, since with two hundred dollars per month a family can have a good standard of living in many poor Arab countries, such as Egypt or

Jordan. Husbands who stay by themselves in America tend to save larger amounts of money in a shorter time.

Um Raja's daughter returned to the West Bank with her six children, leaving her husband in Miami. Um Raja defended her daughter's decision:

For a long time, my son-in-law was not an honest man. He worked as a truck driver and learned the American behavior. He started drinking and going out with American women. A year ago, he said that he would change his ways. My daughter took care of her children. But they are almost teenagers now. She is afraid that they might be disobedient. She doesn't want the boys to learn from their father's behavior. The best solution was to take them back home. She lives now at her in-laws. They take care of the children and help my daughter. Her husband says that he will join them after a year. He says that he wants to go back with some capital. I will make sure that he will leave next year, indeed.

In some countries the process of issuing tourist visas to America is a very complicated and long process, in an attempt to limit the number of immigrants. However, an invitation from a family member who resides in America accelerates the process. In Jordan, to guarantee the parents' return to their country, the American embassy tends to issue visas to parents, not to all their children. In such cases, parents who planned to reside in America are forced to leave a child or more back home. Nazira waited in Jordan for about four years with her children until her husband was able to send for their tickets. However, the immigration authority refused to issue a visa to the youngest child, who was three years old. Nazira left him with his grandparents hoping to find a way to reunite

with him soon. All her attempts to get him another visa failed. After four years she convinced another Jordanian family to bring him illegally to America. During the four years, Nazira felt guilty because of her decision to leave him back home. Now that the child is seven, he still feels that he was abandoned by both his parents who left him in Jordan, and his grandparents, whom he loved as his only parents for four years.

Fatina's son also remained in Jordan because the authorities refused to issue a tourist visa for him. Fatina, who knew some stories about illegal entrance to America, thought that within a few weeks she would be able to reunite with her son. However, upon her arrival, she learned about the new immigration laws which harden the immigratory process. The only solution Fatina faces today is to go back to Jordan to be with her child. She criticized herself:

I believed in psychology theories and taught them to others. I talked about the importance of parent-child relationships during the childhood. And here I am, leaving my child for about nine months now. We examined all possibilities to bring him to America, but it seems to be an impossible mission. The new problem that I will face is to go back to Jordan, while Rashid will stay here. It means that either I unite with my son, or with my husband. I will become like all those women in Jordan who see their husbands every few months or years, spending their lives waiting for their visits. I don't know when or where we will be united again as a whole family.

Problems of Arab Immigrant Families

Husbands and Wives

Several factors influence the well-being of immigrated family life such as: (a) first order immigration problems--those that the family are used to--, (b) second order immigration problems--those which are caused by the immigratory act, and are new to the family environment, and (c) family's adjustment to changes caused by immigration. The nature of the problems Arab families face could be explained by their attempt to adopt some aspects of the surrounding cultural, economic practices, and law systems. This attempt to adopt aspects of the American meso-, exo-, and macrosystems evoke families' anxiety and fear that the Arab equivalent systems soon will be abandoned. This may be explained on the level of Arab individuals as a pragmatic usage of the larger systems; a tendency to learn how to adjust to life in America. While on the level of families and Arab community it would be judged, from the Arab context as a tendency to assimilate. The following are some community members' stories of causes to their marital problems:

Impact of changes within the cultural system: Some of the marital problems

Arabs face as immigrants are similar in their nature to problems Arab families have in the Middle East, while some others are caused directly by the immigration experience. The immigratory act causes drastic changes in the individuals' lives which influence their emotions, behaviors, belief systems, and thoughts. People usually are not prepared for such changes and live for a while in anomie until recreating their belief system and readjusting to their new situation. Among these changes:

1. Subjects like sexual freedom or cultural acceptance of alcohol and gambling are considered as delinquent behavior in the Middle East. Upon arriving, some men try to experience part or all of this aspect of the American culture (American context) while their Arab women respond in accordance with their Arabic culture (Middle Eastern context), blaming the husbands of a deviation from religious and traditional life and they blame them for trying to ruin the family.

2. Other aspects, such as women's work, is an acceptable new phenomenon within many communities in the Middle East. However, in the Middle Eastern context it is a change that happens within the same community in a gradual manner, preparing the surrounding society to accept and support it. When women who never worked before in their home countries decide, upon arriving in America, to find jobs, their spouses and their surrounding community blame the immigration process or the acculturation process or what they call "learning from Americans" rather than perceiving the act as an evolutionary process. When women are asked by their husbands to work with them in their businesses, this type of activity is judged positively as part of the traditional obligations of women: To help and support their husbands. Women in the Middle East often work in the family fields or businesses and contribute to the family income directly and indirectly. Therefore, the family problems do not arise when women decide to have jobs. Problems arise when women insist on working whether their spouses agreed, or not, with the idea. This act does not carry just a change in the family roles, but also in the family and social rules. Moreover, marital problems increase when women claim their income to themselves and refuse to share it with their husbands.

3. A third cause of second order problems is when American laws penetrate in the family's affair, causing a conflictual situation between the Arab traditional laws and the American civil laws.

Sheikh Nitham, the director of an Islamic Center and a Muslim authority for marriage and divorce agreements, talked about the changes Arab families face as immigrants which contribute to the families' problems:

I swear to God, the things that I tell you. Some women started misusing American women's rights and laws. Nowadays, Arab women can't accept any word told by their husbands. Therefore, husbands are astonished at what they see, especially when wives don't listen and don't obey them. What added dampness to this clay is that some of them went out to work. Women started having the notion that they can live independently from men as long as they have income and can finance themselves. It makes it appear that the relationship between husbands and wives is primarily materialistic, as if wives relate to their husbands as a treasurer who has to spend money on them. When women learned that they could dispense with this role of husbands, they wanted to get rid of the husbands themselves. This is a huge mistake. Women need men just as men need women. As a matter of fact, some women help their husbands in their grocery stores. Some other women work in the big stores such as K-mart and Sears. Most of this group are from women who are second generation immigrants. I don't think that it is a necessity for women to find jobs. When a woman remains at her home, her mood stays calm

then she treats her husband better. If she has small children, then her care of her children is an important job. Believe me, it is an exhausting job.

This is the most important subject I focus on when I talk with women.

“Don’t be deceived by the fact that this country gives women more rights. Don’t take advantage of this. Don’t misuse it by imposing a new reality on your husbands.” The first thing women learn in this country is the number 911, which is the police number. If her husband lifts a hand on her (beats her) or tells her a dry word (insults her) she calls the police and tells them what he does. Her behavior is not useful. Likewise I tell men that, “You came from an environment that gives more rights to men. You are in a country that has different rights. You have to use your mind. This environment doesn’t allow you to use your traditional rights the way you did in your home countries. You have to change.”

There are some men who made mistakes in this country. They met other women. That caused problems in the relationship with their wives. The other women know how to show love and caring. Men make the comparison between these women and their wives who treat them with coldness. Men thought that if they have their needs met from the other women they may abandon their wives. Both sides are wrong. The essence of marriage is a legal human relationship before it is an advantage. One connects to the other by a word in front of God.

4. Another cause of second order problems is due to the cross-cultural impact between sub-cultures. Taufiq, who works as a wholesaler for the last eight years, observed the changes which occurred to Arab merchandisers:

The problem is not that minority which has affairs with American women. The problem is that most Arab grocery owners work in a very poor and deprived neighborhood. All Arabs have their groceries in Black neighborhoods. I don't have anything against Blacks, as I don't have anything against Arabs. But I worked with Arabs for a long time and I know their nature. Arab men learn obscene talk from Blacks. Also, they sell them alcohol and pornography magazines. They hear Blacks swear and curse, using dirty language all the time. After a while this type of talk becomes the Arab's type. They get used to this environment. It stops being astonishing for them. They accept its values and get used to it.

Impact of changes in the economic system: The nature of the economic system (exosystem) in America is different than that in the Middle East. Workdays in the Middle East are limited to between six and eight hours, which insures adequate time for family members and community members to spend daily social time together. Whereas in America, some grocery stores and most gas stations open from 15 hours up to 24 hours a day. New immigrants who want to make more money, prefer to work two shifts a day. From their point of view, they believe that they are offering a great sacrifice to guarantee a better life for their families. From the wives' and children's point of view, they do believe that the fathers brought them to America and abandoned them. While being in the Middle East, although children were always women's responsibilities, fathers, uncles, grandparents, and even male neighbors were always around to take care of the "hard" disciplinary issues. Mothers bring up their children to see their fathers as authority

figures to be feared and obeyed. Upon immigration, wives and children have less physical encounter with fathers who become physically distant figures. On the other hand, they leave mothers with more new cumulative roles. Wives complain that the family burden in the new country is too heavy for them to carry alone. They often accuse the husbands of being unmoved by the family problems. Taroob, whose husband owns a grocery store, said about her experience with him:

Grocery business is the only thing in the minds of Arab men. My husband has to spend about 20 hours each day in his business. While being in his store, he forgets about the family. When he comes home, he wants to eat very fast and to go to bed. I was at school and asked my husband once to pick up our child from his school. He forgot. My child goes to his school when his father is asleep, and goes to bed before his father is back home. There are no weekends or holiday vacations. On our Islamic holidays, all grocery stores are open. All home and children's responsibilities are on me. If I want to see my husband I have to go to his store. This is not how a marital relationship should be. I came from Syria. There, women don't do their shopping. Men do. Women go to the market when they need to buy themselves their own needs, such as clothes or make-up. Here, I had to learn to do everything on my own. With his schedule, there is no place for social life. The best thing I did is to get a driving license. Otherwise, I will feel as if I am in jail.

Um Raja, Taroob's mother-in-law, thought that the financial challenges force Arab men to work as hard as they can, otherwise they may fail to pay all their bills:

My poor child stays on his feet more than 17 hours a day. He is very tired. You came to America and by now you know how expensive this country is. We have many debts for the store and the house which we have to pay. Taroob and I tried to help as much as we could. But, each day Raja becomes more tensed. He even is very unpolite now with me and with his wife. I don't agree with this. However, I can't blame him. Now, with both Taroob and me working to help him, his two kids suffer the most.

Women who immigrated to marry immigrant men, such as Taroob, had expectations from Arab men who reside in America. They expected to have a lifestyle more comfortable and with a higher standard than exists in the Middle East. When these couples face life challenges, women feel betrayed. They look to men to fulfill their promises of a dream life in America. On the other hand, couples who immigrated after being married for several years in their home countries face their immigratory problems in a sharing manner. The immigration challenges become a family project that the couple have to work on together. Shafiq and Aisha were married for 17 years before they moved to America in search of fertility treatment. Shafiq thought that the immigration experience brought him closer to his wife. He stated:

I feel that in America, we both don't have anyone except each other. We mitigate the feeling of foreignness for each other. We spend more time together than we used to back home. Therefore, being away from our country brought us closer. We had so many experiences here that no one in our families back home knows about. Just my wife does. I don't hide anything from my wife.

Aisha had her own take on her husband's observations which were similar in some ways but different in others:

We came to America as a married couple. Being both foreigners brought us closer. A wife has to take care of her husband's money because she knows how much expense he had to pay in order to arrive in this country. Moving to this country is a great discomfort that both spouses have to bear. That's why a woman appreciates her husband's efforts. This country keeps the person from his religion and the wife away from her husband. The work in the grocery until midnight keeps every member of the family apart from each other. Husbands feel closer to their wives because back home women are distracted from their husbands by their sisters, their sisters-in-law, their mother-in-law, and their neighbors. There are many people surrounding each wife. Her husband doesn't feel that she is there for him. Here, there is no family to distract the woman. He sits with her three or four hours before he goes to his job. Therefore she feels that she has to be unoccupied while waiting for him. Even her friends know that they shouldn't call at that time. Therefore, the husband feels that he is much closer to his wife. It is right that they get closer. However, the men's type of work makes them constantly away from each other. He comes home very tired and his head is filled with problems. He wants to get rest and sleep, while she spends the whole day alone, feeling bored and needing him full of life next to her. It is right that they spend hours together. However, each has different needs.

Loneliness: Arab men and women have different experiences with immigration, as if they were immigrating to different countries. While Arab men are very busy with their jobs, Arab women suffer from loneliness, especially during the first year. Their expectations of living in America are far away from the reality they face when they arrive. The descriptions of women, especially the newlyweds, of the type of emotional reactions they experienced during the first year of their arrival, indicate that they suffered from depression. That experience influences their marital and social relationship and colors it. They feel betrayed by their husbands which puts their trust in them into question. Besides the daily tension the couple experiences, their sexual relationship suffers from the tension and from the depression. Samyia did not know her husband, Waheb, before she married him, although he was a distant cousin. She talked about the circumstances of her agreement to marry and to move with him to America:

I had no feeling toward Waheb. I did not know him. However, I was thrilled that I would be moving to America. America for me was what I saw on TV and in the movies. When I arrived here [in America], he left me in a small apartment and went to his job. He had no furniture, no extra car, no money, nothing. He was still a student. I did not know English and did not have a driving license. I was spending whole days crying. When I was not able to endure that situation anymore, I called my mother. I told her that I wanted to divorce him. My mother was terrified by the idea, because people might think that I was impure or not a virgin and my husband decided to divorce me. My mother tried to convince me that the situation would soon change. I started feeling angry with Waheb.

Sometimes I feel guilty and pity him. I know that he does everything in his ability to change the situation. However, when I remember that six years have passed since I married him and he still has not gone back to school to finish his courses, and still does not have legal status in this country, and recently became unemployed, I feel furious. Our sexual relationship suffered from day one from this situation. When I felt that he betrayed me, I was not able to enjoy sex with him. However, I tried to follow religious norms so I never refused to sleep with him. I had pain from the sexual relationship for two years, until I gave birth. Later I did not feel pain, but I never felt any excitement that I hear people talk about.

Impact of religious value systems: Arab people, Muslims and Christians, are very religious in their socialization, whether they practice all religious duties or not, since religious values and folk norms overlap almost completely. Food is considered sacred in Islam. People believe that they have to feed their children food that came from a noble resource. Otherwise, parents will be cursed by God and get punished for causing harm to the children. Arab Muslim families who sell religiously prohibited merchandise such as alcohol, pork, or pornography magazines, feel that they commit a great sin. This belief system keeps family members, especially wives and mothers, very tense with the type of work their husbands and children do. Um Nidal and Abu Nidal preferred to leave the Emirates and join their two children who decided, upon graduating from school, to settle down in America. The two parents immigrated to be able to supervise their children's conduct:

We thought that to be with the children is the most important thing. We did not want them to enter the grocery business and do all the sinful things people do here. We fear God. We sold everything we had there; Abu Nidal received his retirement pension, and we came with some capital. Now, we have a store for electronics. Our three children and our son-in-law work there together. Abu Nidal goes daily to let them know that he keeps an eye on them. We lived as clean people all our lives and we want our food also to be pure.

Um Raja on the other hand, regrets the period when she and her family members had to be sinful due to their business. She explained:

When we first arrived, we went directly to New York City where my brother-in-law lived. He told us that if we wanted to buy a grocery store, we have to sell everything: beer, alcohol, pork, and those kind of magazines. We were desperate. We wanted to work and to succeed. Five years later, we were deep in debt. We thought that God wanted to punish us. We sold that grocery and went on the Hajj (pilgrimage) to ask God for forgiveness. We wanted to wash away all our sins. We moved to Florida to start over. May God help us this time and keep us from the sinful path.

Besides the religious proscription and the fear of its consequences, couples who possess or work in grocery stores live in fear of the American laws. Police authorities are a threat to such families as a result of one or both infractions: Offering jobs to illegal immigrants, and redeeming food stamps for money. Fauzi, who moved from Syria as a

result of his wife's medical condition, worked for about a year illegally. He recalled that period and its impact on his mental health and his wife's:

We arrived from Syria with about five thousand dollars. It is a huge amount of money in Syria. But soon we learned that it would be enough just for two nights in the hospital. I didn't want to be rich in America, but also I didn't want to break the law. I knew that I had to find a job. The only thing that was open for me was to work in a grocery. I understood my legal position. If I was caught, I would be deported and Nadia would never have a chance to be cured. I worked this way for a year. During that period, when a stranger stepped inside the shop, I suspected that he might be from the immigration authorities. Immediately, I sat aside, as if I were a guest, not a worker. If I didn't call Nadia during the day, she would be afraid. She suspected that something had happened to me. By the end of the year I decided to do something about this situation. I paid \$3000 for a lawyer to have a work permit. It is a lot of money. My heart broke when I paid it; however, my mind is quiet now.

Fadia's husband was caught trading food stamps. He was sentenced to six years.

Fadia, who had no other income, had to move with her four children to her brother's home. She was very angry with the events and tried to defend her husband:

He worked for someone. He had to do what the owner told him. If he did not do so he would lose his job. But when he redeemed food stamps, the owner denied that he knew about this trade. He even refused to pay for a lawyer. I warned my husband several times about this. I heard many stories in the news about such

unlawful practices. I was scared all the time. My husband's dream was to raise some money to buy his own grocery store. Now, he says that when he will be released, he will find any kind of job, but not this one. He also doesn't want any of our children to come close to it. He has been in jail for eight months. I have to wait about five more years. By then, my oldest son will be eighteen and my youngest twelve.

New bourgeois: Traditional norms encouraged each gender to develop recreational activities within its own group. This is a common custom in the Middle East. However, as a result of fast wealth of the new bourgeois which led to anomie, the new frames and contents of the recreation activities--unfamiliar to the Arab customs--evoke criticism among community members. Taufiq, a wholesaler, analyzed the impact of the fast wealth of Arab immigrants on family relationships:

People earn a lot of money from grocery stores. It depends on the area and on the number of stores one owns. A grocery owner may earn up to \$20,000 a month. It is a lot of money in America. Arabs, in comparison, earn more income than the average American. People here want to imitate Americans. They see American men go to dinner and to dance each night, and they want to do like them. Little by little, it becomes an integral part of their habits. Then it becomes natural for them to go directly from the store to the dance hall and then to the gambling casino. Meanwhile, they begin having affairs with other women and cheat on their wives. People want to gather money. They forget about their families. Arabs compete against each other. They show their competitiveness by what they buy for their

children and wives. They want to have a TV, VCR, and video games in each child's room. How will children appreciate what they have in the future? One man bought his son on his birthday a car estimated to have cost \$40,000 and bought himself another one worth \$42,000. With this car, girls in college were attracted to the son. The father made him marry a relative from their home country in an attempt to protect him from American girls. But the excessive wealth that the father poured on his son made the American girls stick to him. The son started going out with American girlfriends, came home very late or disappeared for days. This influenced his marital relationship and his studies.

Also, rich Arab women want to imitate the strangers [non-Arab people]. They saw their husbands go to the clubs after work, so they started going to Duncin Donuts to drink coffee each day. That is a suspicious place. Poor people and Black people go there because they offer a cheap breakfast. Unmarried men go there because they don't have anyone to prepare their breakfast. How do married women dare to go to these places? How do their husbands permit them to do so? The reality is that those husbands want their wives to get off their backs so they will be able to continue their lifestyles in clubs and gambling. What do these women talk about each day when they sit together? Instead of meeting in their houses in a respectful way they want to be like American women. But, when we try to imitate Americans, what do we chose? Do we understand what we do and why we do it?

Taufiq's wife, Najat added to the above:

There are also stories about Arab women who were forced by the circumstances to go out with men, Arabs and strangers. I don't know any of these women, but I have heard stories about them.

Intercultural marriage: Besides the fictive marriages that some Arabs arrange with American women, some Arab men, especially students, do marry American women. This may be a solution for their loneliness and exhaustion. Marriage, what seems to be a solution at one period starts to appear later as a problem for both spouses. Several factors play an important role in the structure and the texture of the intercultural marriage such as : (a) the gap between the daily lifestyle of the spouses, (b) important cultural aspects in their life, (c) different understandings of family values, and (d) the meaning of family ties with the "Ahl" or families of origin. The arguments, disagreements, and mutual accusations increase with the birth of the children. At the end, one partner draws back, preferring to disengage from the relationship. Kareem arrived in America after high school when he was 19 years old. He met his future wife at college. At the age of twenty they married. He described his experience:

During the first year of my stay in America I felt very lonely. Back home I felt the distinguished son among 12 siblings, and here I became bored and lonely. I was tired socially and psychologically. Besides, every one was telling me to marry an American woman in order to gain citizenship. When I met my future wife I did not think long. I hadn't anyone to guide me and give me good advice. It was a teenagers' marriage. I was twenty while she was 19.

From the very beginning I tried to establish a family which had as its essence the Arabic culture and Islamic religion. At that time, I felt that I was fighting silently for this. I felt that I was stealing the opportunities to let my children listen to an Arabic song or a tape of the Qura'n. The only time I felt free to share some Arabic culture with them was when I brought them back from their preschool.

I had my own rules at home that I never agreed to break. For example, I never agreed to keep alcohol in my home. On Thanksgiving, her mother brought a bottle of wine. I was furious. I told her either to throw the bottle outside or I would throw all the food in the swimming pool. There were plenty of such events.

The atmosphere at home became an Arabic one. I wanted Arabic food, so I cooked. I wanted a clean home, so I cleaned. I communicated with the children. Little by little I felt that my wife and I did not share things together. Some other things became a great problem. What I prohibited for my children by virtue of religious restrictions, she allowed them without taking my religion into consideration. Contradictions between my way of raising the kids and her's became obvious.

What added to the conflictual relationship between us was that my brother Mustafa stayed with us when he immigrated by himself. We thought that he would be able to arrange the paperwork for his wife and children in a few months. Instead, he stayed with us for three years. She felt that she did not have any privacy in her home. She talked several times with me about that, but I was very

determined. I said that Mustafa is my brother and I can't throw him in the street.

Once, I said that if she dared to talk about this subject again I would leave the house with my brother. She never talked about the subject again. However, she filed for divorce. I never told my brother that his stay contributed to the crash of the rest of my marital relationship.

The commitment to the family of origin (Ahl) and to the extended family causes a great portion of the argument among intercultural couples. Zakria also married his college colleague whom he respected and admired as a professional career woman. However, the nature of Zakria's wife's profession demanded her absence from home for several days each week. Zakria could not accept this kind of personal freedom, which he coupled with sexual freedom. His wife defended her right to do things that she believed in and were important for her. Zakria interpreted this as disobedience. Also, he was not able to agree with her lifestyle and some important values she carried and admired. For example, he could not agree with her to send her cat for an operation. Zakria, who came from a very poor family in the West Bank, claimed that with that amount of money he could help several families of his relatives to survive for many months. His suspicions of his wife's conduct and their constant arguments regarding daily life matters led to their divorce. When he had to explain to the judge his reasons for divorce Zakria said:

In every house you have to have a rooster and a chicken. You cannot have two chickens or two roosters. If you have two chickens, the place will not run right. If you have two roosters, they will kill each other.

When Muslim men marry Christian or Jewish women, they are not expected to convert to Islam. However, the long lasting intercultural marriages in the Arab community are those in which women decided to convert and help maintain traditional Arabic or Islamic lifestyle in their families. Non-Arab women who were accepted by women in the Islamic Center were those who had converted to Islam and wear the traditional long dress with the veil.

Parents and Children

Arab families have on average between five and six children with one to three year intervals between one child and the next. They like to have both genders, boys and girls. However, if the family has just one son, traditional families try to have a “brother for the son.” Religious families try to regulate the number of offspring, however, they abstain from aborting non-planned pregnancies. Children are believed to be “God’s gifts”, the “adornment of the life on earth,” and “the crutch of the parents in their old days.”

Parents-children value systems: Islamic doctrine puts the respect of parents next in importance to the worship of God. A person should treat his or her parents in a respectful way, especially in their old age. Disobeying or mistreating a parent is considered to be a sin¹⁴. Arab children are socialized according to two main pillars: the concepts of “Haram” which means sacrosanct or inviolate or taboo and “A’yb” which

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Although Arab families tend to stay away from relationships with Americans, the only initiated contact with neighbors conducted by Arab community members who participated in this ethnography was with lonely elders, whom their family members did not care for properly according to the Arab standards.

combines the meanings of “shame,” “disgrace,” “saving face,” and “honor.” The family system (microsystem) and the religious system (mesosystem) support and maintain each other and both preserve social values and norms (mesosystem).

In addition to religious and traditional values, agrarian economics in the Middle East caused the Arab family to depend on each other and on the support of the extended family. Even in modern communities, or those in transition between an agrarian and a modern lifestyle, the extended family is still the main provider of the individual’s needs when there is a lack of state services such as housing and kindergartens. This institutionalized two norms: (a) Parents have to take care of their children’s needs as long as they can provide help, regardless of the child’s age, position, or residency, and (b) Children have to obey their parents and their extended family since they know that they will not be able to survive without their psychological, social, and economic support. Into these social values Arab children are brought up.

When Arab families immigrate to America, one of their reasons is the search for better opportunities for their children, especially in the fields of democratic life and education. Since each Arab family holds the notion that a child, especially male, is a sort of capital or investment, they would like to see some benefits in his or her future. That is measured by (a) the child’s behavior as an adult, both toward his or her family, and toward society and (b) the profession he or she chooses. Arab parents judge and treat their children’s success or failure as their own. Parents scrimp from their own income and abstain from some life indulgences to provide a better start for their children. Parents, whose children succeed on personal and social levels, are judged as good parents.

Children's success means: to earn good professions, to be accepted in many social circles, and to be respected by their communities.

Upon immigration, investment in children is seen as the most important next to the business. However, Arab families soon realize that they do not live under the same circumstances as they did in the Middle East. Children go to American schools where they are exposed to another culture that has its own value system, norms, and behavioral codes. There is only one private Arab school in Florida, located in Tampa. There is a nucleus for a private Islamic school¹⁵ in Fort Lauderdale which includes classes from preschool ages to the fifth grade. The owner's plan is to expand it gradually to high school. Therefore, all Arab children go regularly to American schools, public and private. However, they are not allowed to develop friendships or social relationships with their American peers after school. Parents encourage their children to socialize with other Arab children and with their relatives.

Parents, mainly mothers, try to monitor school activities, holidays, and contents of special programs--such as sex education--in an attempt to keep track of their children's socialization process. They ask to check the curriculum of sex education programs before allowing their children to participate. Often, they allow their children to participate in school trips and sports. However, they do not allow girls to wear shorts for such activities. Arab parents tend to forbid their children to celebrate American holidays. On

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The Muslim community in Fort Lauderdale and its suburbs is estimated at 20,000 people, including the Arab Muslim community. Most of the pupils in the Islamic school are from the Pakistani community population.

the other hand, they send to their children's classes cookies and juice on Islamic holidays to help their children be proud of their heritage.

On Saturdays, about a hundred families send their children to learn Arabic and religion in the Islamic Center. There are other similar schools in Miami while some children have private tutors who go to the children's houses. Besides learning Arabic and religion, the Arabic school on Saturday creates an Arab community, not just for the adults, but also for the children. This is the only peer group that they are allowed to play with outside their schools. By keeping the children busy from 11 a. m. until about 7 p. m. they don't need to socialize during the weekends outside the Arab community.

These solutions create tension between parents and the school system on the one hand, and between them and their children on the other hand. Parents want to feel responsible and masters of their children's education. However, they feel sometimes that they have to compete with the school system. Zakria and Nahla sent their eldest daughter, Dima, to the first grade in a public school. They both decided to follow what they have learned from other Arab parents and not allow their daughter to participate in celebrating American holidays at school. Nahla told the story of Valentine's day:

I knew that the teacher was going to throw a party for the kids. I decided to go and get Dima before the party would start. I arrived exactly when the teacher was going to start. I asked her to let me take Dima home. She said "But she will miss the party. Can't you wait a little bit longer?" I said that I couldn't, and asked her to allow me to take my daughter. On our way out, she gave Dima a Valentine card. Dima held it and refused to throw it in the garbage.

Zakria: Do you understand what it means? A boy who is about six years old drew a Valentine card for my daughter. This is how these children learn to exchange love letters and love cards. They teach them sex education from this age. If I have to choose in the future between staying in this country or returning home, God knows better, but I think that I will choose to return home, because it is better for the children's education.

Um Raja immigrated with five children. Four of them were in the school system. She maintained an Arab Islamic lifestyle in her home. Um Raja succeeded in her mission due to several strategies she used. First, her family shared the same house with her two brothers-in-law. That helped them not feel lonely. Children kept each other company. Second, uncles and aunts helped in disciplining the children when fathers were away. Third, Um Raja did not allow her children to watch American TV or listen to American music. Rather, she played Arabic songs all day and Qura'n tapes. Fourth, children were not allowed to go out or to bring other children in. The moment that they stepped inside their houses they were isolated completely from the American culture and lifestyle.

Observing and supervising children's behavior inside and outside the home is the main element for parents, especially mothers, which enables them to ensure their children's isolation from the influence of the American culture. They do whatever it takes to be sure that their children are safe from "negative influences." Jacklyn, a Christian Arab who has five daughters and one son explained the precautions she follows with her children:

I listen to their phone calls. Now, my oldest daughters go to college. I can't tell them anymore that they are not allowed to give our phone number to their friends. Probably, they need something for their school. Therefore, I listen to the conversations. I want to be sure that these are female friends. I have heard that sometimes a third party can be on the line. I don't want their female friends to call and then open the line for some guy. I want to know what is going on with my daughters.

Once my youngest daughter cried and cried, begging me to allow her to invite a girlfriend to stay overnight. I had compassion for her. I gave her my permission. When the girl was here, I accompanied them all the time. They went to the kitchen. I went to the kitchen. They went to the girls' room, I went to the girls' room. Also, I did not allow them to go play outside. My children don't play outside. Before 6 p. m. the girl called her mom to pick her up. That was the only time any American kid came over. It never happened again.

I forced my son who is eight years old to be on a soccer team. It is difficult to keep boys inside. I chose a very tough coach. He is good. He doesn't allow all kinds of unacceptable behavior. My nephew is on the team also. The two children keep eyes on each other. Also, we told the coach to inform us about any suspected relationship between our children and any other person. This way we hope to keep them busy and under our control.

Shadia, a mother of five, whose oldest son, 13 years old, became troublesome at school, asked the school guard to watch him and call her whenever the son misbehaved

or socialized with a group of children that she did not agree to. She talked about her disagreement with the school discipline:

My son wanted to make friends. He told them that his father is a rich person.

They said to him "If your father is rich then bring some money from him." He started stealing money from his father. Children started gambling at school. When I knew what was going on I went to the vice principal. I told him that I am not going to shut up. I am blaming them for all that happened. School systems should know how to watch children's behavior. I often go to school without previous notice to watch my kids. We are Arabs and we can't accept such things. I told them "This happened under your nose. I demand that you fix the situation immediately. I will go to the Board of Education. I can't take it anymore." They were frightened. I said that they have to inform other parents. I threatened that I will file against the children to the police. I agreed to calm down just on one condition: To call other parents and to let them make sure that their children will not bother my child or talk to him anymore. Since then they have stayed away from him. I know that for sure because the school guard watches them for me.

Discipline: Although Islamic religion recommends parents be merciful and kind to their children, the folkway of discipline does believe in the benefit of harshness in bringing up obedient children. Most Arabs believe that children who do not feel intimidated by their parents will not listen to their advice. Parents tend to explain what they expect from their children's behavior and reasons for that. Later, they give orders to children which they believe the children understand the logic behind. In cases in which

the children refuse to obey, they will be scolded. If they continue to misbehave, they will be threatened to be punished physically. Usually, parents expect children to obey them at this stage and to behave. If they do not, they will be punished. Parents who do not punish their misbehaving children physically are accused by other traditional parents of neglecting their responsibilities in their children's discipline. In most countries in the Middle East physical punishment is regarded as educational punishment both at home and in the school systems.

Arab parents are astonished with the American laws forbidding children's physical discipline or punishment. Most Arab parents are accustomed to and acquainted with practicing one kind of socialization and children's rearing. It becomes very difficult for them to relearn their behavior as parents, especially when they lack other role models from whom they may learn. American family laws keep parents who continue punishing their children fearful of losing them. On the other hand, they deeply believe that if they quit disciplining their children according to their own traditional way, children will become "Americanized and parents will lose them."

Mustafa heard his wife Zeynab complaining about their son, Shadi who "said the 'F' word." Mustafa explained to his son why he forbids him to say that word at all, either at school or at home. After two days Shadi said the word again when swearing at his brother. Mustafa then bound Shadi to his bed, hit him with a belt, and put hot pepper in his mouth. He then ordered him to stay in that same position for the next four hours. Mustafa defended his behavior and expressed his anxiety saying:

I punish physically. Yes I do. I don't do this often, but when I feel that I am going to lose control over the children's behavior, I do beat them. I don't want the children to have the impression that it is OK to try everything they bring with them from school. I want him to cry now, so I will not cry in the future. Since that punishment I have never put a hand on him. Also, his brother learned from that so he will never dare to swear. But I don't feel safe with this. We have an Arab neighbor who was put in jail for a month because his son went to school with a blue mark on his cheek. I don't want to be put in jail for taking care of my children. Yet, I am aware that I am not in Jordan. So I really have to be careful and beat the children less and less.

The difference between the Arab understanding of children's discipline and the American understanding causes many Arab parents to feel that the American authorities "ambush" immigrant Arabs and spring unfamiliar regulations on them by surprise, instead of social services being supportive and complementary to the family, they become a threat to splitting the Arab family. Nahla, a mother of three young children said:

I watched a program about how the authorities took four children from an Arab family. They accused them of child abuse. They put the father in jail and took the children to Christian families. After five years the father was released. He was not able to locate his children. The family lost everything in America. God knows where their children are now or what they do. When I saw that program I was

scared. I held my children and cried. God forbid something like this happens to us here.

Often, Arab people who are put in jail for such reasons publish their stories in the local and national Arab newspapers. They seek several goals from such publication: (a) to raise the Arab public opinion regarding this matter, (b) to find a public stage to complain about the unfamiliar laws, and (c) to educate other Arab parents about the consequences of physical punishment in America. Sheikh Hasan urges the Arab community to inform him and other community leaders immediately when such problems emerge to take proper steps and try to keep the children within the care of the community.

Arab children in the school system learn that they may file against their parents who punish them physically. This creates a loyalty conflict between children and their parents. Also it reverses traditional parent-child roles, where parents threaten children. Children know that they hold a tool that weakens their parents' traditional authority. When children threaten to use it, parents feel furious about the disciplinary agencies of the American larger systems. Furthermore, parents feel hurt by public prejudice and disrespect against their cultural background. Shadia had several encounters with help providers from the larger systems. Her experience was very traumatic as an Arab parent:

My son Hakim continued stealing and lying. When his teacher could not help me, I took him to a psychologist. I said to the psychologist "I don't know why my child steals and lies." He answered, "Probably because you wear the veil." I said "What are you talking about? My child has a problem and my veil is not a

problem!” Then Hakim stole again while still in therapy. I beat him up. He told the psychologist. Then, the psychologist started messing up his mind with talk about laws and children’s rights. Then the psychologist started interrogating him: Did this happened? Did that happened? What right does the psychologist have to fill my child’s head against his parents? He told him “You also have your own rights.” How did he dare telling him, “If your parents did anything to you, go directly to the police.”? I went to the psychologist and told him “We are Arabs. If our son does not want to obey us we beat him.” Then I told my son, “Come here honey. If you say such things to the psychologist then they will take you away from us. Do you want strangers to take care of you? It was Sunday. I said “Do you see those people going to church? You will be put with them.”

Shadia had another experience with a social worker who tried to teach Shadia’s daughter sexual education without asking for Shadia’s consent.

My daughter Shaden is still wetting her bed. She is 9 years old. The social worker sent her to a support group. And what did they do to her there? They started asking her about sexual abuse. We are Arabs. They know nothing about us. I swear to God, I am ready to kill anyone who hurts my daughter sexually. They wanted to open her mind for sex. She is just 9. I think this is wrong. They told me that the goal of this group is to help her be more self-confident, to raise her self-esteem, and to have more friends. They did not tell me that they were going to talk about sexual abuse. One day, when she came back from the group she told me that they taught her about the penis. Oh, what kind of crisis I had! I went to

the school and told them that I want to drop her out of the program. I said "I don't want you to teach my daughter anything without my permission. She is not sexually abused. She is not physically abused. She became mind abused because of you people. When she will grow up and be able to understand about sex, I will talk to her about it. My daughter doesn't leave my home for any place. I even don't allow her father--whom I trust with my life--to help shower her or her sister. I don't allow my daughter to wear indecent clothes. I don't allow my son to bring boys home, because he has sisters. I don't need the school system to plant ideas in my children's heads. I don't need that. If the Arab community knows that the school system asked my daughter about sexual abuse, what will they think about my daughter? I live in real life. I want my daughters to grew up in a chaste environment and to be able to marry Arab Muslims in the future.

The children's perspective: Arab children tend to obey their parents without questioning their value system or challenging it. However, between the ages of 13 and 18 they start to compare between the American lifestyle of their American peer group and theirs. The most difficult task of this conflict with parents falls on the shoulders of the oldest son or daughter. Usually they are the ones who fight for gaining more rights and privileges. Sometimes they succeed, opening the opportunities for their siblings, other times they fail. It depends on the parents' reaction, whether to face these requests with total refusal, or to start allowing cultural change. Usually, parents treat sons' requests differently than those of their daughters, because they believe that a bad reputation for a

female will never be forgotten by the Arab community or their relatives in their home countries.

A group of teenage girls who meet each Saturday in the Islamic Center discussed these matters with their teacher. The following is a summary of their frustration talk:

Student 1: Why is everything for Arabs “A’yb” and “Haram?” All my classmates have their own cars. Why can’t I have mine? My brother had his when he was my age!

Teacher: Why do you need a car? Where do you go alone anyway?

Student 1: When I have my own car, I will be able to go places by myself.

Student 2: Are you dreaming or what? With our mothers, no one will go places alone until she gets married.

Student 3: Do you know how we spend our time? We stay at our boring school all week. We come to the “Jame’e” (mosque) all day Saturday, we clean our home on Sunday. And then, Sunday afternoon when we say that we never had fun on the weekend, my mom feels pity for us and says “OK, lets go to Wal-mart.” Give me a break! What can I see each week in Wal-mart?”

Teacher: It is for your own sake. You will appreciate that in the future. If you married and stayed in America, you would do the same thing with your own children.

Student 4: When your daughter will be our age, will you let her go places on her own?

Teacher: We plan to go back home this coming summer. I don't want my children to grow up in this country.

The strict discipline causes, in some cases, various degrees of cutoff in the relationship between parents and children after the children's marriage, especially after they compare their parents rigorous family laws with their peers. Um Raja thought that she had to treat her children in a very tough way since she thought that she "will make a good people from them in this foreign country." After her youngest daughter got married she stopped calling her mother, writing her letters, or visiting her. When the mother calls, the daughter treats her impatiently reminding her of her harsh discipline. The son-in-law told Um Raja that she caused her daughters to be "Ma'qad" (has a complicated psychological problems) resulting from Um Raja's beatings and punishments of her daughter. Um Raja's children also show no love to their father. "They don't say anything wrong to him. They fear God in this regard. They do show respect. But they don't love him." Um Raja who has an estrange relationship with her husband feels that she "lost the family in America. Each lives away from each other, no one cares for me or loves me as their mother."

Socialization of children of intercultural marriage is influenced by the significance each parents relates to some subjects in children's rearing rather than by the dominant culture. Bishara is a Christian Lebanese physician who has been married to an American woman for 21 years. Except for some Arabic dishes that his mother prepares, the family's life style is American. Neither the wife nor the children speak Arabic. The children never have been in Lebanon because of the civil war that took place for many

years. However, Bishara's two teenage daughters were not allowed to have boyfriends or to socialize with boys. They were not allowed to go to movies with a mixed group of boys and girls or to invite boys to their parties. Despite the arguments between him and his wife over the years, his attitude was "What my parents did not allow for my sisters, I will not allow for my daughters." Bishara tries very hard to convince his daughters to follow the traits of a chaste lifestyle.

Home language: Parents who are aware of the acculturation problems of children start their efforts to bring up their children as Arabs rather than as American from a very young age. The first decision they have to make is to choose the names of the children who are born in America. They usually choose Arabic names that may be pronounced easily in English. Other parents choose names that are similar in Arabic and in English such as Ramzi, Anas, Nadia, [J]Yasmine, Salem, or Dean. The second decision that the family has to make is the home language of the family. Some parents decide to speak English with their young children to help them acclimate better at school. Other parents, especially those who came as adults and lack the ability to speak English fluently, prefer to speak Arabic at home. However, children, those who go to school and those who stay home, tend to speak English with their siblings and with their parents. The type of communication created at home is: Parent speaks Arabic, child answers in English, and: Child speaks English, parent answers in Arabic. This mixture between languages becomes so familiar that the family stops being aware that they speak two languages.

Another language style developed by Arabs, first and second generation, is the mixed language or the "pidgin language"¹⁶: When the person goes back and forth between the two languages. The speaker uses the most handy words in each language according to the subject discussed. In some subjects, the Arabic expressions dominate the language while in others the English does. Children learn from their parents this pattern and imitate them, believing that this is the Arabic language.¹⁷

Language becomes a barrier which influences the type of communication and subsequently, the type of relationship between parents and children. For immigrant children, and American born children, the first language becomes English, where the "mother language" becomes the second or the foreign language. As long as the children are little and their needs are limited, parents, who are not proficient in English, feel that they are able to communicate with them. However, when children become older and their needs expand they find difficulty communicating with their parents. This situation leads to limiting the subjects that parents and children may communicate about. Rima, 10 years old, immigrated with her parents to America when she was 6 years old. She speaks English and understands some Arabic. She finds difficulty understanding everything her

¹⁶

"Pidgin language is a communication system with a small vocabulary and a few basic rules for combining words that enabled residents from different linguistic communities to communicate well enough to get by. . . . In the course of generation, pidgin language transformed into a creole, a true language that evolves from a pidgin" (Shaffir, 1996, p. 387).

A copy of transcribed excerpt of such language is in Appendix no. 4

parents tell her in Arabic. She gives an example how communication between generations becomes a real effort:

I can't understand hard words, but easy words, yeah. Sometimes my mom or dad says something that I am not able to understand. I ask them to say it again. If I can't understand, I ask them to say it in English. Sometimes they can't, so I call my oldest sister, Muna, who tries to understand and to translate it for me.

When parents are not proficient in English they will not be able to help their children with their homework or school projects. Because education is very important for immigrants, Arab parents often hire tutors to help their children catch up with their peers.

Some parents draw decisive borders between home and the outside world. In such families, children are raised to abstain from speaking English the moment they enter their homes. Second and third generation families who followed this plan preserved their "pure" Arabic language. Other parents, such as Abu Nidal who worked in the past as a teacher in Lebanon, spends several hours a week with his two school age children to teach them to read and write Arabic. These children develop their Arabic vocabulary hand in hand with their English. They are able to converse with their parents on all subjects of their concern.

Support System

The Community

Community life functions as the most important support system accessible to Arab immigrants. Relatives, Arab neighbors, and Arab friends replace the traditional extended family in its psychological and social functions. Arab women create a social net

from a group of five to seven women who reside in the same area. Because of the traditional social connotation, they call another woman who resides in a circle of about 10 miles “a neighbor”. Women often meet each morning, rotating the meetings between households. They share with each other their daily events, discuss children’s affairs, and deliberate on their relationships with their husbands. These meetings function as daily support groups. The groups usually assemble women from various generations, a fact that helps them discuss each matter from diverse points of view. Also it helps newlywed women and new mothers learn their personal and social duties. Nahla said:

When I married I was very young. I did not know many social rules. I listened to experienced women and learned. If I were in the “Alblad” I would learn more, because people socialize in a wider circle than here in America.

In addition to their discussions, women’s net helps each other to acclimate and adjust to their new residence. They teach each other where to find services they need, such as the nearest supermarket, doctors, dentists, immigration office, driving licence office, and so forth. Women also teach each other about local or federal programs for children that may fit their needs, such as free lunches and free medications. During their morning gathering, women help each other preparing their Arabic dishes.

Women’s net helps babysit each other’s children for periods that vary from two hours (a visit to the dentist) to two months (a visit to the home country). They like to have each other’s children since they keep good company with their own children regardless of the age differences among the children. They often keep each other’s phone numbers at school for emergency calls.

Some couples, where husbands work from 8 a.m. to 5 p. m., meet almost each night with another couple or couples. When they want to lessen their social contacts, they may meet on a weekly or bi-weekly schedule. In these meetings, husbands discuss their work conditions, their financial plans and learn about investment possibilities. They also discuss alternatives for their children's upbringing.

When a couple fights they often call another couple, who are older or more educated, to share the problem with them and let them resolve the dispute. Sharing a problem with someone makes him or her a mediator who becomes responsible to suggest a solution. It is not acceptable to listen to others' problems passively. The listener will be blamed for disrespecting the person(s) who shared the problem with the listener. This behavior is not interpreted as active listening, rather as indifference.

Three strategies traditionally are used in such cases by wise community members:

(a) They always ask to listen to the other person's story before judging, (b) they try to find out how the complainant hurt the partner and by virtue complicated the case, and (c) they tell other stories they believe are similar or worse than the complainant's. The role of mediators is to soften the situation and not to take sides. In cases where mediators believe that one side, such as the wife, may be hurt from the husband's violent behavior, they offer her shelter in their house until the husband calms down. Before the wife returns back home, the husband has to promise the mediators, giving his word of honor, stating that he is not going to hurt his wife. A failure to fulfill the promise may cause disconnecting the relationship between the two families and hurting the social reputation of the disrespectful husband. In cases of continuous disputes, an elder community

member, male or female, may have a heart to heart talk with the spouse he or she believes is the problematic partner. In severe cases, the couple or the mediators may consult with a religious authority to share with him their mediation mission.

When women are absolutely sure that they are right and their husbands are wrong, the ultimate threat they hold is to call males in their extended family, especially their father and brothers. If that threat does not move the husband, they threaten to return “back home” to their family of origin. In such cases, the wife’s male relatives open negotiation with the troublesome husband, stating their conditions to convince their daughter to return back to her husband or else to help her get a divorce. In other cases, when men believe that their wives behaved improperly, their ultimate threat is to marry another woman or to divorce the wife.

The Islamic Center

The Islamic Center is a complex which includes a mosque, a building that contains the activities of the school, and a hall that accommodate the community’s activities. Sheikh Nitham who directs the Islamic Center often mediates troubled relationships. Over the years, he became aware of the impact of immigration on the Arab couples’ problems:

We learned that when someone comes complaining on the partner, we have to listen to the other side. Always there is a reason for the behavior of the other side. We have to give a chance to both of them before we make any judgment. If the woman was sure that her husband is deviant and she came and shared that with us, we try to meet with him and to teach him the correct direction in life. We tell

him that he should not do such a sin. If he insists to go on in his way, naturally it is legitimate for the wife to divorce him. The other day a woman came asking to divorce her husband because he drinks alcohol. I said to her "From the religious point of view, you are right. Had you tried to forbid him to drink?" She said "I tried but there is no use." She said that she called a Sheikh in Saudi Arabia who told her that she is able to divorce her husband immediately. I said that both were right. However, if we want to apply this rule in America, oh my daughter, we will give divorce to a million Muslims in one day. Women, do you want to destroy your home and cause harm to your children? This is a disaster. When we face a big problem, we have to choose a solution which is less harmful. I gave her some advice which may let her husband abandon the group of bad friends and to become closer to her.

One of the pillars of Islam is the "Zakat" which is a tax Muslims are obliged to pay on their cash money and properties for the benefit of the Muslim community. Besides, all Muslims have to pay alms, especially during the month of Ramadan. All mosques gather these funds which are used to support poor people, orphans, widowed, and passerby (or temporarily homeless). The Islamic Center constantly receives requests from people who are in need.

Another service the Islamic Center provides for the local and national Arab community is helping single men to find suitable brides among the single women in the community. Often, single men send letters to the Sheikh asking about brides. They send some description about themselves and the type of bride they want. The Sheikh spreads a

word of mouth among community members. Because there are more men than women among Muslims in America, often young women are engaged to be married before they finish high school.

The weekend school in the Islamic Center provides besides religious education and Arabic education an opportunity to learn about customs and values. It functions also as a social club for Arab women who come to socialize with each other and to learn religion. During the month of Ramadan many families donate food and gather in the Islamic center to have the breaking fast dinner together. The attendance at such dinners varies between 200 to 400 persons. During holidays, the number of community members who come to pray and to be with other Muslims is about 2000. After the prayer usually the Islamic Center arranges a picnic in a public park. On such occasions, single people and other members who immigrated without their families may feel less lonely and less depressed.

Many children prefer what they call the "Jame'e" (mosque) school over the American schools because they are allowed to spend good times with other children. In this regard, the Islamic center becomes a cultural ghetto and a microcosm for the Arab community.

Several leaders within the Muslim community suggested to Arab Muslims to buy houses in the area surrounding the Islamic Center. They believe that gathering in one area will help them to be a real visible community. Further, it will help them establish a school for the community that may solve the problems children and families face when sending their children to the American schools system.

Clinical Population

When analyzing the social conditions of people who sought family therapy, I found out that they belong to the following categories:

1. Families who had no social roots in the area, such as families who reside in the area during the winter and move to their permanent home the rest of the year. These families do not develop permanent and strong social networks with their surroundings and lack a sense of community.
2. Individuals whose families of origin, theirs or their husbands is the reason for their problems. In this case, they usually lack the “inner” social support system of the “Ahl.”
3. Families whose problems became a chronic situation, either from actual chronic disease of one of the family members, or as a result of ongoing problems between the couple and the children. In these cases, relatives and friends feel that they exhaust all advice without a recognizable improvement.
4. Sometimes the community boycotts a member as a result of his or her gossip or trouble making. Besides the original problems, the social boycott becomes a distress discussed in therapy.
5. Coupled with some of the above reasons, some individuals or families believe that searching for solutions with a professional mental health worker is a confession that the problem is serious enough, extending the ability of the social network to find a solution to it.

Arab individuals and families who come to therapy expect that from the first session they will feel a change. They often compare the “advice” or “solution” the therapist offers with those of the social network.

Following is an illustration of two cases from the clinical work with the Arab community. These two cases were chosen mainly because they both reflect clearly all aspects of Arab immigrants’ problems. Also, both encompass other complaints which appeared in the other cases. In each illustration, the excerpts chosen attempt to highlight: (a) the presenting problems, (b) the value system, culture, and traditions of Arabs, (c) the immigration-related problems, (d) acceptable solutions by clients, and subsequently (e) the therapeutic intervention.

Case no. 1: Basima Needed a Green Light

Basima was 34 years old when she came to therapy. On the intake interview she mentioned that her husband kidnaped her two daughters to the West Bank. Despite her supplications, he refused to bring them back. She was very upset and needed to talk to somebody since she did not have any family members in America. Some members of her husband’s extended family, who resided in South Florida, neglected her and caused her more troubles than support.

The following are excerpts from the first session. The underlined titles are the main content of the excerpt¹⁸.

¹⁸

This method is a combination of principles of content analysis (Patton, 1990) and principles and techniques of RFA (Chenail, 1993).

Home Country Context

Khawla: You told me on the phone that you feel bad.

Basima: How may one say this? You know we grew up in the villages. My parents deprived me of my right to finish high school. When I finished middle school they said that it was forbidden to go to high school because it was mixed.

Boys and girls learned together.

Khawla: What is the name of your village?

Basima: . . . it is in the district of Nablus. My father was very violent with my mother and with my brothers and with everyone.

Khawla: Does “violent” mean that he used to beat?

Basima: Yeah. How may one say this? His brain is made of rocks. He is old-fashioned. He believes that girls must stay at home to cook, clean, and sweep. Do you see that? I was engaged for two years. During that time, Adeeb (the fiancé) never asked about me, never sent me letters on my birthdays or a present or anything at all. I said to myself, “probably because he was married.”

Problematic Marriage

Khawla: Did you know then that he was married?

Basima: Yeah. But, how may one say that? It was for the papers, for the green card.

Khawla: What made you agree to be engaged to a married man?

Basima: It was my destiny. Of course it was a mistake.

Khawla: How about your parents? What was their opinion?

Basima: Frankly, at the beginning my father agreed. But later, when he knew that Adeeb never asked about me and never sent me money, my father wanted me to leave him. He wanted to cancel the marriage. Adeeb was in Chicago. He came from Chicago to Amman (Jordan) and said that he cannot enter the West Bank because he had problems with his passport.

Khawla: Which kind of problems?

Basima: I don't know. But that was his only excuse. So I went to Amman and we got married there. We stayed 20 days together. He never bought me jewelry or furniture or gave me a marriage certificate or anything.

Khawla: How did your family agree with this?

Basima: How may one say this? That happened. That means that all my brothers did not want to come to the wedding except one. Also, no one showed up from his "Ahl".

Khawla: So you got married without the participation of either your "Ahl" or his "Ahl".

Basima: How may one say this? My mother came to Amman with me and my brother came from Kuwait. After the wedding, I stayed with Adeeb for 20 days then he returned to Chicago and I returned to live in his mother's home. I stayed there for two years. She complained all the time that I didn't know housework. I stayed for three months then left to my "Ahl's" home. I was angry with her so I went to live with my parents. The neighbors came to my parents. You know how the customs are. Then they said that I have to go back to my mother-in-law's. I

went back and the situation remained the same. I was not able to suffer anymore. I said to myself “Even if it means that I will never travel to America, I can’t live with her.” I went back to my “Ahl”.

The American Context

Khawla: Was your goal to immigrate to America?

Basima: As I told you I wanted to leave my “Ahl’s” house. Because of how my father was, I mean, not just Adeeb, but if any man asked for my hand in marriage I would agree. . . . When his mother returned from Kuwait she said that Adeeb will arrive soon in Amman. At that time he had twins. He had them after he married me. He wanted me to call him. When I called he said that he will not be able to come to the West Bank. However, he wanted to try to take me there, with his brother. . . . At the end, he succeeded in letting me enter America illegally. He behaved with me as a respectful person. He said that he wanted to have children with me and that he was going to arrange my papers. He stayed in that mood for a month. The second month his sister called from Kuwait. She wanted to visit us. She had problems with my parents before I was born.

Home Country Context

Khawla: What was the background to those problems?

Basima: It was very old problems.

Khawla: Do they share lands together or is it something else?

Basima: No it is not the land. I told you that Adeeb and my father are cousins. His father worked in Kuwait. My mom said that my grandfather said that people

talked about the reputation of my mother-in-law, who is herself my grandfather's cousin. My grandfather was upset. My mother-in-law claimed that my grandfather had to defend her reputation. After this story they cut off their relationship for 25 years . . . Then, before she went on the "Hajj" (pilgrimage) she made peace with my "Ahl." When his sister arrived from Kuwait, Adeeb was turned over. I swear to God. He became like a crazy person. She bewitched him. She wanted him to leave me. She wanted to take revenge for her mother.

American Context

When Adeeb kidnaped my daughters he told our families in the village that he did that because the girls didn't speak Arabic. He said that I became Americanized. I speak Arabic with my daughters and I teach my oldest one Arabic. But you know, they watch American TV and go to American schools. They speak with other kids in English. There are no opportunities to learn Arabic. We don't have Arab neighbors. I live in a poor neighborhood in a one bedroom apartment. My American neighbor helped me find a job as a cleaning lady. She also helped me to receive food stamps and welfare for my daughters.

At the first ten minutes of the session, my goal as a therapist was to know:

1. The declared complaint of the client that brought her to therapy.
2. Circumstances that brought her to America.
3. Her cultural background in her home village.
4. Social relationships she has in America.

These bases helped me understand the marital problems Basima had with her husband, but more important I was able to put them in the two contexts that influenced Basima's life: Her American context as an illegal immigrant, and her traditional Arab culture and the consequences that she had to face since she decided to marry without her father's consent and blessing.

Throughout the rest of the session, Basima narrated Adeeb's abuse to her during her ten years in America, his polygamy and her struggles to survive with two daughters. She expressed willingness to divorce Adeeb, however she was afraid of her "Ahl's" refusal. At the end of the session I gave Basima homework:

Future Decisions

Khawla: After all the stories that you told me today I still have many questions.

The main ones are: What do you expect from a relationship with Adeeb? I don't expect you to reply immediately. Because you have been in this relationship for 14 years. I want you to step aside and to be able to look from that position to the relationship. To think about it. Think about it for a week. Think about all the small details of the events you lived during this period. Think about all the changes you made in your life. Think about all the strength you discovered within yourself since the moment you left your village until the moment you decided to come here to solve your problems. Think about your relationship with his family, with his siblings, with himself, and with all people you knew here. What do you know about yourself in all these relationships? What have you learned about yourself? What do you like about your life with Adeeb and what you do hate?

What makes you fear leaving this relationship? What is in your advantage if you stayed in it? I don't expect you to answer now. I want you to think.

At the second session I continued examining the different contexts Basima lived in, the Arabic community in South Florida, the community in her home country, and her American contexts as illegal immigrant. Also I wanted to expand more on her marital relationship and "Ahl" relationship in an attempt to make sense of her problems, and subsequently, her decisions. I tried to learn about Basima's belief system, to respect it, and to use it to clarify Basima's future decision

Sharing the Extended Family with the Divorce Decision

Khawla: Anything new happened during the last week?

Basima: I talked to Adeeb's brother who is visiting from Amman. I told him that Adeeb called me and asked me to return back home. Under which conditions have I to return back home? Where should I stay? He told me that his mother traveled to Kuwait, therefore Adeeb wants me to return back so I can take care of my daughters. I asked him who can take care of me financially? He said that he can't. He has family in Amman and neither of his brothers back home can finance my living. So under which conditions I will return back home? He said that Adeeb plans to let me return home to stay with my daughters and then he will come back to America to marry or live with an American woman. . . . I told his brother "If you want to help me. I don't want to return home. I just want my daughters." His brother talked to him. He told him "She doesn't want you. She wants her daughters." . . . Then my brother called me . . . I told him about my decision. I

said “You are far away and don’t know how I do live. My brother asked “What do you want us to do? Do you want us to kill him?” I said “No. But if you respect my wishes don’t welcome him in your home and don’t show him respect.”

Khawla: Are you interested in your brothers making decisions for you?

Home Country Context

Basima: They had to show support from the very beginning. If they threatened him and put limits to his misconduct, he might not have done what he did. But, I told you that I got married without their consent, therefore they abandoned me.

Testing the Divorce Decision

Khawla: Then how do you see your future, whether Adeeb divorced you or returned to you?

Basima: It is clear for me that I will not give up my daughters. They are my life. I want to have a fresh start. He wanted to bring my daughters back, but his sister influenced him.

Home Country Context

Khawla: So you do believe that it is due to his sister’s influence, not due to his own decisions.

Basima: He listens to his “Ahl.” They have a great influence on him. He is the only one among his siblings who listens to his “Ahl.”

Utilizing the Client’s Value System

Khawla: Suppose that you also have a power that can influence the magic spell his sister used against you. do you think that you will live happily with Adeeb?

Basima: It could be. You may say so.

Khawla: How might Adeeb be if he does change?

Basima: You see, he doesn't take responsibilities. He is not like other men who bring things home to their wives and kids. He likes to stick to people who can spend money on him.

Khawla: If you succeeded in removing his sister's spell, do you think you are capable of convincing him to find a decent job?

Basima: Well, how may one say this? I don't believe so. Our life together became impossible. As long as his sister was between us from the very beginning. That is it. How may one say this? I paid a price for my mistake: 14 years of my life.

Testing the Divorce Decision

Khawla: Then, I want to go back to a previous question. Suppose that next week something happens and Adeeb becomes convinced to give you a divorce and brings back your daughters, how will your life from this point on change?

Basima: I want him to get out of my life, and stay just as my cousin and the father of my daughters. I believe that I am young. I am 34 years old. I will not spend the rest of my life bewailing and lamenting my husband whom I loved and whom I lost.

The Future Decision

Khawla: What you want to do instead?

Basima: I want to find someone decent. Just that.

Khawla: Are you in a relationship with someone right now?

Basima: No.

The Arab American Context

Khawla: Do you think that you will be able to meet someone in the near future who is suitable for you?

Basima: Why not? If he is a Muslim Arab. Why not?

Khawla: Where do you have the opportunity to meet a Muslim Arab man? Do you have any idea?

Basima: As one may say, last time when Adeeb left me, a Palestinian religious man was interested in me. There are many men who want Arab women. The other day an Egyptian woman told me about an Egyptian man who was married to an American woman. He is Muslim and is rich. I told her that first of all I am not divorced and second of all I will not choose a man for his money. I need someone who is able to respect my feelings. Someone who treats me as a human being, not as a maid in his house. Do you see that? . . .

Khawla: How many Arab people you do know in this city?

Basima: I know many of them. However I don't talk with them. The other day I had another problem. One Arab man who was willing to help me by signing on my papers told Adeeb's brother about this. The brother called me and we had a fight over the phone.

Khawla: Has that man withdrawn from his offer?

Basima: Yeah. He is not willing to help me anymore. He said "They are her cousins and brothers-in-law. They should help her, not me." . . . Now I cut off all my relationships with Arabs. I had just headaches from them.

Khawla: On the other hand you are interested to remarry among them and it seems that if you disconnect all your relationships with them it may hinder your meeting someone suitable for you.

Basima: Yeah. But the Arab community does not have mercy. If they want to speak about me they may claim that I want to become like an American woman.

Khawla: Are you afraid that they may gossip against you?

Basima: They may. This is what bothers me. It put me a lot down. I constantly fear people. If someone talks to me in the street I say to myself "Suppose an Arab person sees me now!"

Khawla: What do you think may help you to climb up instead of being put down?

The Home Country Context

Basima: The first thing is if my "Ahl" stands beside me. This is a problem. If they did stand beside me and give me the green light I could have divorced Adeeb when I was pregnant with my second daughter. But my "Ahl" said "'A'yb' he is our cousin." My mother says that a divorce never took place in our family. I know that according to our religion divorce is legitimate. God relates to it as abominable, however, made it possible. So why do I have to stay in my miserable situation and mourn my luck? Frankly, sometimes I think that the best thing is to

kill myself. When a person can't have her "Ahl" with her, neither the man that she loved, nor her daughters, that is what she thinks.

Distress Thought

Khawla: How much you do believe that killing yourself is the best solution for you?

Basima: Frankly, too much. Too much, too much.

Khawla: Had you ever tried?

Basima: No. I Just always think about it. I want to put an end to my life. Always I think to drink an overdose of medication.

Khawla: What kept you away from fulfilling the decision?

Basima: I think about my daughters. I ask myself how they would live without a mother?

Utilizing the Client's Value System

Khawla: Are you religious?

Basima: Yes, thanks be to God. You see, I wear the veil and the Islamic dress. I fast, I pray, I read the Qura'n. Praises upon the creator of this world. I never made any sin. . . .

Khawla: You do suffer a lot in an attempt to be a religious woman and keep on the track that you had chosen. Right? On the other hand, you do think sometimes that you want to put an end to your life. This is very difficult. You know!

Basima: You may say that sometimes I ask God to help me put up with my situation. Then I tell myself "I suffered for ten years in America. That is enough."

. . . If I will go to the “Alblad” (home country) I will live on the charity of my brothers and my sisters-in-law. My father is an old man and so is my mother. My father never talked to me since I got married. . . . That was my mistake from the very beginning.

Future Decisions/American Context/Arab American Context

Khawla: In case Adeeb refuses to give you back your daughters, what then you will do?

Basima: At the end he has to send them back to me.

Khawla: So you are confident enough of this outcome. Then, what about your papers? What do you have to do in order to arrange your stay in America and become a legal citizen?

Basima: I asked a Lebanese lawyer who said that I had to have annual income of at least \$20,000, or to find someone who agrees to pledge me.

Khawla: Is it easy to find someone?

Basima: I am searching. I asked Zakria, Nahla’s husband. I don’t know what his response will be.

Khawla: Is there an office where you can apply directly without a lawyers’ help?

Basima: There is, but then there is a risk of deportation. If I had filed for citizenship during the “Intifada” (Palestinian uprising) I might be accepted as a political refugee. I don’t think that I have any chance now.

Khawla: Do you have work now?

Basima: I clean two houses and a laundry.

Khawla: Is that enough for your living?

Basima: Surely not. But I have to manage.

Khawla: Is there anything that you may do to increase your income?

Basima: I keep asking about work. Everybody asks about my papers.

Khawla: Even for cleaning jobs?

Basima: Some wealthy families do ask. They also ask you to have a car.

Khawla: What about the food stamps?

Basima: I haven't received any food stamps or welfare since last September

because my daughters are not registered in the school this year.

Khawla: I think that it is worth it to consult with your American friend. Probably she will be able to find some support money for you or to tell you if you are able to reclaim the welfare money.

At the end of the session I asked Basima:

Khawla: Would you like to continue coming to therapy?

Basima: I am very content with the therapy.

Khawla: How then do you think that we may proceed in the future? What would you like to focus on? Which subjects would you like to bring?

Basima: I want to focus on "That is enough. There is no benefit from my marital relationship. It is better to disconnect it."

Khawla: What you would like me to talk to you about?

Basima: In overall, about my future and in specific, about those who live in the “Alblad” (home county). There is no further chance for my marriage. Even if Adeeb came back, I don’t want this relationship.

Khawla: So you want to come here and work on being consistent with your decision. How do you expect me to help here? What do you expect me to do? What was helpful for you until now in the previous session and this one?

Basima: I feel that I am much different. At the beginning, I was scared. I gave too much importance to the people (Arab community). I was afraid they are going to gossip against me. But now I say “That is it.” I have decided that “That is it.”

From this day on I am not going to pay attention to people’s talk.

Khawla: Is this decision an evolvement of our sessions?

Basima: Yeah. I have decided that “That is enough.”

At the end of the session I gave my home number to Basima. I encouraged her to call when she feels in deep distress and has suicidal thoughts.

At the third session Basima came to therapy complaining of pain in her neck and headache. She said:

American Context/ Home Country Context/Arab American Context

Probably it is from the coffee. Or, because I don’t sleep much. Or, because I sleep on the floor. I threw the mattress away. All the springs were broken. I don’t have any beds. I don’t have any furniture except for a table and four chairs.

Khawla: You have a headache and pain in your neck and you assume that it is from sleeping on the floor. Could it be from something else?

Basima: Maybe because I haven't talked to my daughters for a long time. More than a month by now. Each time I call they tell me "They are not here." So I don't know.

Khawla: Any thing new happened during the last week?

Basima: No one is calling me from "Alblad" (home country). They had told me that they will call on Saturday but no one called. Also Adeeb's brother said he will call and never did. That person from Nablus whose home I clean, he has been in this country for a long time. He knows the laws. He told me that I have to find someone, Arab or American, who agrees to sign a fictive marriage with me.

Yesterday, the Egyptian woman called and told me that there is a Black American Muslim who is willing to help me in my legal papers. He wants me to pay the fees for lawyers. But you know, he is Black. He is Muslim though. But, I told her "No. I don't want to."

Khawla: But you are not divorced to be able to remarry.

Basima: How may one say this? I can ask for divorce from the mosque (Islamic Center). But this step may influence Adeeb's decision whether to bring my daughters back or not. He will blame me and turn my "Ahl" against me. . . .

Khawla: Would you like to work on your pain?

Basima: OK

I then used hypnosis techniques to help Basima relax and work on her pain. I talked about the "pain in decision making," especially when there is a great "social headache" one experiences after a huge life decision. I suggested that one

may feel as if she “breaks her neck” if she takes the wrong move. The hypnosis session lasted about forty minutes. When Basima came back from trance she was in tears. She wept and sobbed. Then finally she said:

Everyone says that it is my fault because I allowed him to take the girls with him. I think all the time. I think. I think. Until I feel that my head aches too much (she sobs). Sometimes I feel that my head will explode.

Khawla: Which kind of thoughts do you have?

Home Country Context

Basima: One may say that my daughters are the most important thing in my life. I think to myself “Are they asleep? Are they awake? Now they are on their way to school. Had they eaten? Had they slept? Are they cold?” Then I tell myself “Adeeb’s mother takes care of them. Or my mother does.” Then I tell myself “No one will take care of them like myself.” Then I tell myself that Adeeb took the girls because he wanted to take revenge. He wants me to say “Take the girls and go away.” He told me once that he wants me to become homeless in America. He told me so many things. I then tell myself “Probably this man will regret and tell himself ‘I oppressed this innocent woman.’” I did everything in my power to change the situation. I told you that I spent two years being engaged to him. Then I lived two years at his mother’s home. And I have been ten years in America. Everything I did, right or wrong, his mother and he said that I was to blame. Why? I never did anything like other women who say “I want a car, I want a dress.” Never in my life. I never said such things. I don’t have clothes. I buy these

cheap pants which I go to work with. I am not like those women who say I want jewelry and want this and want that.

Divorce Decision

However, that is it. I was asleep and I am awake now. Even if he returned back to America, I will take my daughters from him and finish with him. I don't want him to stay in my home. Our life together is impossible. Do you see that? Then I say to myself "What if what happens is not from him? Maybe it is from his sister's bewitching. Or, because of his children from the American woman? Or, because of his Mexican wife? Or because of his "Ahl"? Or because of old disputes that happened between my "Ahl" and his "Ahl." Then I tell myself "And why do I have to suffer? Why do I have to pay for all of that?" Then I say "It was my own fault. I made my father my enemy." Then I say to myself "I am a human being. I have the right to live like all other people. Why do I have to live with such problems for the rest of my life? . . . My mother put up with her situation for 25 years when my father worked in Kuwait. He visited her for one month each year. Then I say "My mother had a different life than me." . . . Many things revolve in my head. Many many, many things.

At this point I felt how much Basima was torn between many points of view and various kinds of possible decisions she was able to make. I suggested that she make some effort to let her "Ahl" be supportive of her situation, to have their own social back up for her decisions:

Home Country Context

Basima: As I told you, last time I told my brother my decision. He said “Everyone who encourages you to divorce your husband causes you harm.” I told him, “Yes, but I am a human being. I want to live my life.” He said “Come back and live in the village.” How will I be able to live there? With whom? Where?

Khawla: The first step that I see is for you to try to talk to your brothers and your father and your mother. . . . This was the first time that your brother has heard your problem from you. If he keeps listening to your stories with Adeeb he may understand. It took you 12 years of marriage until you finally were ready to think about leaving Adeeb. You can’t expect a person who you have talked to for 5 minutes to be as convinced as you are now.

Basima: Community’s opinion is very important for my “Ahl.”

Khawla: That is right.

Basima: They tell me that people in the village keep asking “Why is Basima in America alone? I answered that those people never lived the type of life I had for 10 years of agony and loneliness in America.

Khawla: That is right. Do you think that you are able to explain to your “Ahl” why you want to stay in America in a way that they would be able to use that explanation when they want to defend your decision?

Basima: Yeah. The other day I asked my brother “Do you want me to return back and live with someone who refused to put my first child in his name?” My brother did not know that. I never told him about that problem.

Khawla: Do you think that you are able to promise your “Ahl” to think about their suggestions after you arrange your papers in America? This way they may have the impression that you do respect their opinion. They may understand your motives to stay a little bit longer and start respecting your opinion. . . .

The American Context

Basima: My American friends made the comment that I have changed.

Khawla: Is the change helpful for you? Is it good for you?

Basima: Yeah.

During the session, I wanted to help Basima test her decision, yet, be aware of its impact on her relationship with her “Ahl” and on her future life. I was simultaneously empowering her, by leading her to make changes in her life, and constraining her, by helping her test and retest all future consequences of her decision before taking any actual step.

During the fourth and fifth session, Basima wanted to crystalize her decision of divorcing Adeeb. The network of friends she had, helped her move fast in this decision. This group contained some American friends and other Latin American friends, some of whom were married to Arab men. Basima was focusing--with the help of her non-Arab friends--on her American context without taking into consideration the Arab immigrant context or her Middle Eastern context. I spent the fifth session clarifying to her the importance of including all contexts into consideration:

American Context

Basima: My friend saw how Adeeb had beaten my youngest daughter. He wanted to force her to speak Arabic with him. She couldn't. He put her head in the toilet. He wanted to suffocate her. My friend called the "child abuse"¹⁹ [agency]. I was terrified. She said that she will come with me to the judge to testify against him. When he knew that I talked to the "child abuse" he threatened to take revenge. My friends did not like him. They often told me to divorce him. . . .

Khawla: In our sessions, I have heard two stances from you: One that is determined to get out of this marriage, and the other one still hopes to let him change and return back to you.

Basima: My friends say that I was married to him for 12 years. He had spent 16 years in this country. They said "If he was capable of changing he would have done that a long time ago." He is not the person who can take responsibility for a wife or children.

Khawla: What is your next step then?

Basima: I will call the "Sheikh" and file for divorce.

Arab American Context

Khawla: Had you told any of your Arab friends about this decision?

Basima: I told Nahla that I will wait until the end of this month. If he will not return with my daughters, I will call the "Sheikh." Nahla said that I have to make

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Members of the Arab community in this study related to the concept "child abuse" as a name of an agency.

up my mind. She said that if my brothers-in-law refuse to help me, then I have the right to talk about them and ruin their reputation within the Arab community.

Because they lie to people when they say that they help me financially. That they pay my bills. They are liars. They are wealthy but pay nothing to me. I earn \$165 a week, keep aside \$25 for food and pay my bills with the rest.

Home Country Context

Khawla: Twelve years ago, when you wanted to marry Adeeb, your “Ahl” gave you advice not to marry him, especially not in the same manner that that marriage took place. They asked you to let them negotiate their conditions with Adeeb’s “Ahl”. You then said “No. Let me decide according to my way.” You tried that way. Today, you still pay for that decision. Since the marriage was between two persons not between two “Ahl” then both your families did not support you. How much might you be hurt in case you decide to divorce Adeeb without ensuring the social support of your “Ahl?”

Basima: I will pay a higher price than what I paid until now. However, do I have the chance? From my phone calls with my brothers, two of them agree now to help me divorce him. But they want me to return to “Alblad” and get a divorce there and live with them. They don’t want me to remarry.

The American Context

They don’t want me to stay in this country. . . . My brother was killed in Chicago so they think that it is too dangerous to live here. Also when my brother first arrived, he was too young, he used drugs and started drinking and things like that.

My other brother immigrated to America for a few months. When our brother was shot, he returned back to Kuwait. They don't think that a woman can live on her own, neither in the "Alblad" and definitely not in America.

Home Country Context

My mother told me that if I decide to remarry they will kill her.

Khawla: Kill her? Why?

Basima: Because they will blame her for the kind of upbringing and education she gave me.

Khawla: Is this threat a real one? Would they really kill her?

Basima: They say so just to frighten me. . . . My "Ahl" live in a small village.

They spend their lives observing each other's conduct. Then they criticize each other. People say, "Their daughter is in America alone." My "Ahl's" reputation is the most precious thing for them. Of course I agree with them. I think that if I am able to do anything that will not hurt my "Ahl" I will do it. But also I have to think about my life. . . . Before my brother was killed, he called Adeeb and threatened him, "Either you divorce your American wife or you divorce my sister." They fought over the phone. Then my father came to visit my brother. I did not say anything about my life with Adeeb. I was terrified that my father would explode, saying that it was my fault. I did not want him to know that I made a mistake.

Had I told him then, many changes might have occurred in my life. . . . First, I would not have gone back to live with Adeeb. I would have stayed with my

brother and got a divorce then. . . . What may one say? Frankly, I don't like to return to "Alblad." To be honest with you, I don't want to keep things from you. First of all, there is all the dispute between his "Ahl" and my "Ahl." I don't want to go live there. Sometimes I think of going somewhere without letting my "Ahl" know where I am. . . .

The American Context

Khawla: I have the impression that you do feel very strong right now because you are surrounded with your friends. You have people here whom you can trust. Everyone of them knows that you were maltreated. You derive your strength from your friends. They like you and your daughters. Suppose that you moved to another place where you don't know anyone. What happens then if you need any kind of help? Suppose that you will have your daughters back, what happens to you or to them in cases of emergency if you don't have any support system?

Basima: That is right. What was I thinking? I don't want to add more troubles to my life. I have enough.

Future Decisions

Khawla: Then you may need to think about your future steps. Until now your reactions were out of anger. When you were angry with Adeeb you reacted. When you were angry with one of his wives, you reacted. Now you have to study your reactions very carefully if you want to end your relationship with Adeeb. You may think about a person who can be a link or mediator between you and your "Ahl." That person may be open to understand your needs and experience in

America and also may have the ability to convince your "Ahl" that it is acceptable by the Arab community in America for a woman to live alone without her "Ahl."

Between the sessions I asked some women from the Arab community to find out whether there are job opportunities for a housekeeper. Also I asked an active woman in the Islamic Center to ask other members to donate some long traditional cloth and some veils. I never revealed the identity of the needed person. When Basima arrived for the sixth session we discussed three work opportunities which were offered to her. Basima was assured that she may find a job that would guarantee her a steady income and perhaps provide her with legal immigratory status. Later in the session, Basima said that she informed Adeeb and his brothers and all her brothers that she decided to file for divorce. Also, she told them that she would not return to the "Alblad." One of her brothers threatened to "come and get her." She answered him, "I would like you to come and see for yourself the kind of life I have here. You call me 'The American woman'. Come see for yourself that I became more religious and more traditional since I came to America. I do all my prayers, wear the veil and don't go here or there."

Basima said that she wished to meet a good man she could marry and start with him a new life. She said that part of her "Ahl" were more ready to talk with her about her demand for divorce. She wished that they would be ready one day to listen to her dream to remarry.

Since Basima was now very clear about her decisions and their consequences, we both decided to end our meetings at that point. I encouraged Basima to call me whenever she wanted to share something with me or whenever she felt without any support. A

weekly phone conversation became a habit between Basima and me. A few weeks after terminating therapy, she had a call from an old lady who came to visit her daughters in South Florida. The lady spends her time between her home in the West Bank, which is next to Basima's village, and between her children who live in different states in America. The old lady empathized with Basima's story since she had a similar experience with her ex-husband who had immigrated in the fifties. The old lady encouraged Basima to divorce and remarry as long as she was still young. The old lady shared Basima's story with her children who said they would "adopt" Basima as their sister-- an act ensuring her social safety. She moved to live with them in another state. The adopted family promised Basima to help her file for divorce in one of the local Islamic Centers. They also promised to mediate between her and a good Muslim man for marriage. The old lady planned, upon visiting her home village the following summer, to visit Basima's "Ahl." Her goal from the visit was to convince Basima's family to give her their consent to divorce and to remarry. Also, she wanted to encourage them to continue "parenting" Basima socially with her family. Basima needed to rebuild the relationship with her parents to reassure their help to regain custody of her daughters.

In therapy, Basima, who was a clever and strong woman, was able to work on her decision making process. She moved from the position of being scared, hesitant, servile, or angry, to a new position. She was able to link between the assertiveness she adopted from her acculturation process--not an encouraged quality among women in the Middle East--and between the traditional mediation ways accepted and respected in the Middle

East. Basima was then able to behave according to her two simultaneous realities, the American and the Middle Eastern.

As a therapist, I showed interest and concern in all aspects of Basima's life: Her financial situation, her legal status, her friends in America, her extended family in her home country, her activities, as well as her relationship with her estranged husband and parents. Besides information gathered from the presenting problem, this completed the background of Basima's multi ecological contexts. In regard to therapy theories, I used hypnosis, solution focused, narrative, Bowenian, and Milan theories according to Basima's needs in each session. The donation collected from the Arab community helped her regain her trust of them. Later, she visited the Islamic Center on Saturdays several times before she moved away.

Case no. 2. Zeynab Got on the Highway.

When I gave the clinic address to Zeynab, she asked me to explain the directions to her friend. Then I learned from the friend that Zeynab fears highways. Zeynab's friend used to suggest alternative routes, a solution that caused doubling or tripling the driving time. I asked Zeynab about the closest location to the highway that she was able to drive to. Then, I suggested that I meet her there.

When we met in a mall parking lot, I asked Zeynab about her driving skills. She learned to drive about six months after her arrival in America. But, it took her a year and a half to be able to drive from her home to the parallel street. During the last three years, she gathered some confidence while driving between familiar locations: The Islamic Center, the shopping centers, and her friends' homes. However, she panicked when she

had to drive on unfamiliar roads. Because of her poor English, she was afraid to drive on the highway since she was not sure whether she would be able to read all signs fast enough. I asked her how she would feel if she followed my car on our way to the clinic. Zeynab thought that it would be OK if I drove slowly. She followed me, driving 20 miles per hour.

At the end of the session, I accompanied Zeynab back to the meeting location. We met there again before the second session. By the end of that session, I asked Zeynab if she wanted me to “lead her on her way back.” Zeynab said that she “learned how to find her way.” The following session we met at the clinic. Zeynab said “This a miracle. Me driving in America on a highway! Who could believe it?”

Zeynab brought her son Shadi (9 years) to therapy because he “misbehaved” according to his teacher’s notes, and his mother’s, father’s, and their friends’ observations. Zeynab said that he was not obedient enough as an Arab child his age should be. Also, she complained that he did not listen and was very slow in preparing his homework. Shadi also became interested in wearing wide pants. The most recent complaint was that Shadi started swearing and using “dirty” words. The session was held in Arabic (when I talked with Zeynab) and English (when I talked with Shadi.) During the session I tried to assess whether Shadi had learning difficulties. He seemed to be a smart, yet shy child. I planned with him “working agreements” that made him responsible for his homework. Since Zeynab complained several times during the session that he did not listen, I asked her to take him to a physician to check his hearing. Because I spent

most of the first session talking to Shadi. I wanted to have a better chance to talk to his mother. Therefore, I asked Zeynab to come to the next session by herself.

Next session, Zeynab complained that she became very “nervous²⁰” since she moved to America four years ago. She had deep worries concerning her children’s upbringing in America. The following are excerpts from the second session:

The American Context

Zeynab: I have no one to guide me. I don’t know what to do. All women that I know claim that they take good care of their children. When I tell them that I am scared about my children being in America, they claim that their children are older and nothing bad happened to them. But I see their children. Their pants are down to their hips. My Arab neighbor’s son was caught smoking cigarettes. He is just 12 years old. What will he do when he will be 18 years old? Neither of them knows how to control her children. I don’t like what I see. However, I can’t tell them that. I keep it to myself. . . .

The Home Country Context

When Mustafa immigrated by himself, I had four small children. The youngest was a few months old and the oldest was about four years. It was very difficult. Mustafa visited each 6 months. When I moved to America I thought that I would have no more difficulties. Alas! It was much better in Amman. My sister was my

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Arabs often use this expression when they describe a complex of mental, emotional, psychological, and social behavior such as difficulties in concentrating, occasional fighting, shouting or screaming, verbal violence, and physical violence towards others.

neighbor. She helped me a lot. We could let the children go out to play with the neighbors. It was safe. You can't do that here. You have to keep an eye on them all the time. The children are bored at home. They fight constantly. I scream at them. They make me nervous. Mustafa doesn't help.

The American Context

We came to America to be happy. We are not. We have things that should make us happy. Mustafa doesn't work like other Arabs in the groceries. He is a mechanic. He works from eight to five. He spends the weekends with us. He is a good provider. A year ago we had paid our debts. We can save some money now. We are supposed to be happier.

I want to be closer to the kids. I want to help them in their homework. I do what I can. I can't help them in everything. I learned English in Amman. But I found difficulties in understanding everything Americans say to me. I can't understand their accent. I pay someone to help Muna in her reading. I want my children to succeed in school. Why else did I immigrate in the first place?

Arab American Context

Sometime ago I told myself that I have to organize my children's life at home differently. Then my in-laws interfered. They came to visit us about three months ago. They will leave for Amman in a few weeks before the holiday. When they interfere, I can't tell them anything. My father-in-law is also my uncle. You know how it is in "Alblad?" We don't argue with elders. . . .

The American Context

Do you think that Shadi learned to misbehave from the child who sits next to him? I saw that child wearing wide pants! I am concerned that the next thing Shadi will ask is to have an earring and then do other American things. Oh my God. God forbid. Can I ask the teacher to move Shadi away from that kid? How can I know which child comes from a good home? I don't know the parents of the children here. . . .

What the children watch on TV is opposed to what I teach them at home. I forbid them to watch American channels. Maybe just children's channel. I have satellite. They watch the Emirates TV and an Arab TV channel broadcasting from Washington DC. I am more relaxed when they watch these stations. . . .

I don't want to lose my children in America . . . If they were your children, would you allow them to have sex education at school?

Home Country Context

If people in "Alblad" know that I give my children sex education they will think that I have lost my mind.

The American Context

But one has to give them sex education in this country for what they see around them. In "Alblad" it is not necessary. Oh, my God. Sometimes I think that the best solution is to take the children back to Amman. If Mustafa wants to stay here it is OK. What do you think?

Arab American Context

Khawla: I cannot tell you what is better for your future. However, let's examine together what you have accomplished since you have immigrated. If we talk about the language, if this is zero, and this is ten, where do you locate your English proficiency when you first immigrated?

Zeynab: 3 out of 10. But since I arrived, I stayed home. When I go buy something I don't dare talk to the salesperson. However, I am able to understand her.

Khawla: How about comprehension. How much do you give yourself when you first arrived, versus today?

Zeynab: I was 3 and today I am 5. I give myself zero in conversation. I thought that during the first six months of my arrival I had to finish English courses and to be proficient. Upon arriving, I went to school with Mustafa. We took the four children with us. They had a babysitting program for children. But Mustafa found difficulty in learning. The first day at school we started learning grammar. I asked them to put me with the lowest level group. At the first meeting they moved me to a higher level. The next week I moved again to a higher level and again in the third week. Mustafa can speak better than I, but he finds difficulty in reading and writing. In "Alblad" he left school after the fifth grade. He became bored at the English school. Then it was difficult with the children. It was too late for them. We went each night from 6 to 10. Then Mustafa failed in the writing exam and quit. I quit too. It was a mistake. Now, Mustafa has to learn to write before the citizenship test. I teach him at home. He must learn fast or we will fail the test.

Now he is more serious. I have to go back to school. I must learn how to speak English. . . .

Khawla: Since Mustafa immigrated and left you with four small kids you have been doing so much each day. One step after the next. How did you do that alone? How did you succeed in so many challenges?

Zeynab: By God, I never gave myself credit for this. I never appreciated myself. I thought that I never did any important thing.

Khawla: Is it possible that instead of doing more things right now, you give some time to realize all the things you have been doing and all the changes you experienced for the last four years? It needs a person with special abilities to go through everything you have told me about.

I asked Zeynab to reflect on that more on her way back home. That was when I asked her if she wanted me to accompany her. She said that she was able to find her own way. During that session I attempted to help Zeynab realize that the difficulties she faces as an immigrant were real and a heavy burden to carry. That helped her (a) to stop pathologizing her family and (b) to recognize her family members' accomplishments after their immigration. Also, during that session she talked about punishment styles Mustafa follows with their children. I then explained to her the "HRS" laws. I emphasized the consequences if she or Mustafa would be accused of child abuse. I asked her to explain the laws to Mustafa. I told her that he was welcomed to call me if he needed any clarification.

Arab American Context

When Zeynab came to the third session she told me that she registered at a morning school where she wanted to complete her English courses. She wanted to start soon after her in-laws leave for their home country within a few days. Also, she told me that a school medical test diagnosed her two sons with hearing problems. Both needed operations. I asked her if that was the reason why they “did not listen and obey” their parents. Zeynab believed that it might be the reason. She also said that they understand English more than Arabic, and this causes them not to comprehend her talk. Then she asked:

Zeynab: Do you think that they will forget the Arabic? What is better for me, to speak English with them so they can express themselves better with me, or to speak Arabic to preserve the language?

Khawla: Do you think that you have to choose between the two languages?

Zeynab: I don't speak English with them because I can't express myself well in it. Also, I want them to learn Arabic. . . . I spend an hour a week with each of them teaching them to read and write Arabic. I try to do things for them. To organize them. But I have guests all the time. That makes me neglect my plans and not pay much attention to my kids. To be honest with you, I put my guests' and my neighbors' needs before mine and my children. You know, it is “A'yb” to say to guests that I don't have time for them. I know that this is not for my children's best interest. . . .

My friends blame me for coming to therapy. They think that they have all the answers for my needs. I don't think so. They need to come to therapy too before they "lose their children in America." I will relate to what you say as a medication that I have to take. . . . I fear the future in this country. If my children will succeed, Mustafa will say that it happened as a result of his hard work. But if they fail--God forbid--he will blame me for that. You know how Arab men behave. I don't want him to thank me for my hard work. All I want is not to be blamed. If he helps me a little bit in this responsibility! Pity Mustafa. He is good; he is not bad. He can't take time off from his job whenever he wants. Also, he knows that I have my car. He relies on me. So, all responsibilities are on me. Schools, doctors, everything. All the time I am busy with school conferences and doctors' appointments and driving my friends who don't have cars. By God, I don't have time for myself. It is very difficult here. It is different in "Alblad." Here, everything is very far away. I have to drive back and forth from one place to the next. . . . Then, when Mustafa comes home he says that he is tired. I say that I am tired too. He says, "You sat on your butt for twenty hours drinking coffee with your friends! . . . I am not just tired from my home responsibilities, my mind is tired also. I think constantly how am I going to take care of four children in this country? How they will have a good future? Muna is very weak in reading. Shadi brings notes from his teacher each day. I can't live like this any more. I need solutions. . . . Can I put my goals and you help me learn how to reach them?"

Khawla: I think that since you decided to come to therapy you started searching for your own solutions. You will not learn about the solutions just during our sessions in the clinic. You will be able to find them mainly during the week between our sessions.

Zeynab: Right. I think about our conversation during the week. Then I feel calmer.

For the rest of the session Zeynab clarified her goals for her children. I suggested to talk about her goals regarding her relationship with her husband in the following session.

By the end of the third session my assessment was, that part of Zeynab's difficulties were the intensity of her social relationships with her extended family members and her Arab friends network. I believed that the relationship she described was a pleasurable one in its essence, however, she needed to rearrange its frame. I did not believe that it was a problematic relationship which needed to be "cured." Therefore, I gave Zeynab some hints that enabled her to make changes in her "real life context" rather than "the clinical context."

Zeynab arrived at the fourth session very tense from an event which took place that morning with a school teacher. She wanted to accompany her oldest daughter on a school trip, but the teacher said that she already had a full list of parents interested in accompanying their children. Zeynab said that the same teacher refused to cooperate with her in the past when Zeynab asked her to pay a special attention to Muna as a foreign student. Zeynab felt helpless with the school system. She cried that morning at the

school. She was concerned by what her Arab friend, who came with her to the school that morning, had told her, "Your daughter will have low self-esteem in the future, especially since she saw her mother cry at the school." "Things happen not the way I plan them to be. I have to disconnect my relationship with these people." Zeynab cried again.

Arab American Value System

Zeynab then talked about her socialization goals she had put in writing during the week:

Zeynab: I thought what each one of my children needs for their future. That's how I came up with this list. The items are: To love education, to avoid Western customs, to implement the Arab traditions, to implement religious education in their minds, to choose positive values from Westerners, to love each other as siblings, to love and respect relatives and to appreciate the relationship with them, to be self-confident, and last, to keep the home neat and clean.

I suggested to work with Zeynab on relaxation techniques that she may use when she feels so tense. We also talked about her parents' style of child rearing in comparison to hers. That encouraged her to talk about specific changes she wanted to adopt in her behavior with her children. Later in the session, I wanted to help her realize the usefulness of her relationship with her Arab friends. I said:

Arab American Context

Khawla: This is one of your powerful qualities. When you think about something you give yourself a chance to try it. Then, if you are convinced, you adopt it. I

think that you are lucky to be able to do just that when you are surrounded with other Arab friends who see things from a different perspective.

Zeynab: Oh. Yeah. Yeah.

Khawla: You support your friends and they support you. You may always see this relationship as a benefit. You listen to what they have to say and examine it. The discussion may clarify what your take on the same matter is. Let your voice lead you at the end. . . . You are smart. Remember this always. . . .

Zeynab: I had a lot of self-confidence before I immigrated. Now I don't have. Because I can't express myself well in English. That made me cry today at the school. I was not sure that I could tell the teacher what I planned to. I thank God that I was able to say something. I talked to the principal and told him that I don't want this teacher to teach my other children. . . . I don't know what he thought about me! Probably he thought that what is important for me is to go on the trip, not to be with my daughter.

Khawla: It is what you think is the important aspect, not what he thinks. You have to find the highway for yourself in this regard. The more you drive the more you gain confidence in your self.

Zeynab: Yeah. Just a month ago I trembled fearfully when I had to drive on the highway. (She laughed).

Khawla: And the same may happen with the children. If you find new roads that you never tried before, that may change things around. The new roads may be close to those you were accustomed to, or far from them, small roads or big

highways. For example, today you mentioned that when you have a good relationship with Mustafa then your relationship with the children becomes calmer. How then can you keep that kind of relationship? How you can come closer? How together can you work on parenting plans? How can you make him a partner in your life, not a guest? How can you discuss things together without one of you behaving “nervous” on the other? Is there a possibility that you invite your children to dinner as if they were your “guests” once a week where you can discuss family matters with them? You know better than I about that. Think, and let me know.

In the last intervention I intended to use cultural elements that both Zeynab and I understood to draw distinctions between roles and expectations. An Arab person has to welcome his or her guests and appreciate their company. Hosts have to put the time and effort to make the company enjoyable for all. Therefore, I used the metaphor to change Zeynab’s attitude toward activities she did with her children: She perceived them as hard responsibilities which her American context forced on her. In regard to her relationship with her husband, I wanted to help her realize that a relationship with a guest is limited, even if that person stays for months. However, a relationship with a spouse should contain the partnership element, even if he was not present always. Zeynab understood the metaphors.

Home Country Context

The next session Zeynab talked about her relationship with Mustafa. She revealed a history of verbal and physical abuse. She claimed that he was a very “nervous” person

because he was not educated. According to her, he felt that she was trying to take over his authority because she had an academic education. She was forced to marry him because he was her first cousin, however, she never met him before their official engagement. Their sexual relationship was very tense. Mustafa accused her of being frigid. For the first four years of their marriage, she never experienced orgasm until she dared to talk about the subject with her sister-in-law who advised her to pretend “as if” she were having one. Then, after nine years, a friend told her to “imagine that you are somewhere else that you like.” Then, she started having distant orgasms. She continued faking orgasms to avoid Mustafa’s accusations against her: “You are not a real woman.”

She said that he hurt her most when he acted violently against her in front of their children or guests. Recently, he threatened to marry another woman that may have more time for him and sexually may treat him better. The last violent incident between them happened when a distant relative called her from Amman, Jordan, asking her to help pledge her husband who was put in jail a few weeks after his arrival in America. As a newcomer, he was ignorant about federal laws. He was caught selling non-original audio cassettes. He was also accused of working without obtaining a legal permission. The wife asked Zeynab to pay a fine of \$6000 to enable her husband to be released from jail. She promised to pay Zeynab back on her summer visit to Jordan. Zeynab’s parents assured her that the woman would put the money with them. Zeynab promised to help. Mustafa was furious that his wife promised to take such a step without talking to him first. She said that she felt “A`yb” to refuse. He declared that she had to find ways to collect the

money on her own and that he was not going to help. She was very upset, yet she already had given her word to her relatives.

Arab American Context

Zeynab argued with Mustafa for the first time about their finances. She asked whether his money was not also hers. She talked about her status in the marital relationship. Mustafa became more verbally violent with her. Zeynab talked to her social net friends who helped in raising the money. She paid the fine and the illegal immigrant was released. He called Mustafa thanking him. Mustafa then accused Zeynab of having a secret affair with the man. Zeynab swore to God that she never met the person, who was in another state. She asked some male relatives and friends to reconcile Mustafa and herself. The mediators thought that Zeynab acted as she was obliged by the traditions and the customs. Mustafa called her “adulteress” and “prostitute.” The mediators, who felt offended, left. They told the couple that they will never mediate again in their disputes if they will not be respected. Zeynab thought to call her father and let him and her brothers know what was going on to “put limits to Mustafa’s behavior.” She added “I have to know for sure, either I rebuild this home or I destroy it.” The following is an excerpt from the last ten minutes of the session:

Khawla: So you feel that your mission now is to remodel the building that you built when you married 12 years ago.

Zeynab: Should I rebuild the basics?

Khawla: There is no need always for that. When you remodel it doesn't mean that you have to start from the basics. The building worked well for you for a while. Today, your needs changed--your personal and your social needs. Likewise, your children's needs had changed. Therefore one thinks how she may move this wall from here, and open a new door there, making changes that fit her needs and the ages of the children. You will use all your skills you gathered for the last 12 years for this mission.

Zeynab: Where can I start now?

Khawla: What do you think?

Zeynab: I want you to tell me. Give me a suggestion. I want to stop being so sad. When Mustafa swears, how may I not be angry? How may I make these changes so fast?

Khawla: You may decide regarding your speed. It may be as fast as you can drive on your way back from here to your home. You said before that you like to plan things in your head. You may surprise Mustafa by calling him at his work and telling him "I want to make sure that you are OK. I like to sit and talk to you."

Zeynab: If I did that, he will be really surprised and he may tell all the world about it. . . .

Khawla: You may surprise him in new ways you adopt, and also in the different ways that you may surprise him with. . . . He may feel a renovation in your marital relationship, as if he had married a new woman, instead of marrying a new woman. You may let him discover your other abilities as a woman, your

abilities to be each day a new woman. The more you put energy in being a new woman with him, you help him to become a new man with you. That will help your marriage. You may also be very content and calm with yourself about this thing and you may not tell yourself that it is “A’yb” or “Haram” because you are dealing with your husband. So let’s discover new aspects of you and enjoy. . . .

One may design a nice change in one week but it needs months to be renovated. The more one spends time working on the new redecorating, the better the results will be. One may feel tired, however, may live at ease inside. You may live at ease inside.

Zeynab: With the help of God.

Zeynab, like many other Arab clients, related to me as a specialist who offers concrete advice. When she asked directly for one, she was desperate for an answer. Turning around the question to her helped in other situations, but not this time. She was tired, desperate, and helpless. She hoped that the therapist would give her the opening for changing her situation. In that conversation, Zeynab offered the metaphor that was used as a therapeutic suggestion that I built on with minimal leads.

Because Zeynab, as other Arab women, talked hesitantly about her sexual life, I decided to relate to the subject isomorphically, using cover hints. I did not want her to feel offended either from the subject or from my directness.

Since Zeynab was feeling progress with her children, we agreed that the sixth session, which took place three weeks later, was going to be our last meeting. At the beginning of the session, Zeynab asked me about my daughters’ schools and their

summer plans. I answered her. She invited all of us to visit her. I promised to take the invitation into consideration. Then I asked:

Khawla: Since this is our last session, what would you like us to talk about today?

Zeynab: To summarize our meetings. What had happened. Everything.

Khawla: If you need to examine things today, when you look backwards, what do you see different?

Zeynab: I never was aware of my abilities. . . . For instance, I never knew that I could treat my children without shouting at them. I was imitating “ignorant people who belong to the old generation.” I have learned from you that when I am not ready to give an answer, I have to give myself some time to think about it. . . . I bought books about sex education. I feel shy from the pictures. However, I have to get used to it. I want to ask the teacher if I may attend the class on sex education with my daughter. This way, I can guide my other children. . . . Do you know that I am so shy that I never took a bath with Mustafa. Everything (I do) is from our way of upbringing. You have to be chaste. You don’t know anything (about sexual relationships). The next thing happens, you see yourself in your husband’s hands. You are ignorant of everything and there is no one to guide you. . . . Just recently I understood what happens with me. . . . I don’t want my children to gather information about sex from the street. I talked about this with Kareem, my brother-in-law. He agreed. He thought that we have to teach children sex education before they become teenagers. I consulted with Kareem. He is an educated person. . . . I can’t do that with Mustafa. If he can just sit with the kids

and talk to them! Sometimes, I cry from the heavy burden. I want Mustafa to talk to them and warn them about dangerous in this country. To talk about Arab traditions and customs. For these things he doesn't need to know how to read and write. . . . I talked to Mustafa about the laws of the "child abuse" that you told me about. I told him that you wanted him to know them, or to meet you. He was scared when he learned about the laws. Then he was convinced not to beat the children anymore. I am changing. I hope he will change too. . . .

Arab American Context

Khawla: I saw also that you and your friends talk regularly about things that happen to you all. I believe that this may help you. Not because you need them to tell you how to behave, rather to crystalize your new ideas with them.

Zeynab: Now, after being in therapy. I don't see their ideas as helpful.

Khawla: If I were you, I would use these meetings to talk about my ideas. Let them tell you what they think. At the end, use your sense. Test what may work better for your family. But don't disconnect your relationship with them just because their ideas are different now from yours.

Zeynab: Yeah. I talked to them about sex education until I convinced them about its importance. Even in the "Alblad" now there are programs for sex education. I do love my friends, however. I have to rearrange my meetings with them in a way that doesn't interfere with my children's needs. I doubt sometimes whether I will be able to say to people what suits me. I tell myself that this is "A'yb." I don't want others to feel offended by me. According to our customs, we keep the door

open for everyone. You know. However, if I tell my friends when is the best time for their visits I don't think that they would mind. In the past, I never thought about the hours I spend with the children as an important contribution. Now, I appreciate it and plan it. I have to be clear with what I want and to be ready always with my own plans. . . . Mustafa commented the other day about the change he felt with the children. Shadi never said the "F" word again. Now I have to develop my self-confidence that I lost since I came to this country.

Khawla: . . . It is important to know that your self-confidence is like a tree that grows and may have fruits that people can benefit from. It is your own responsibility to take care of the tree's environment. If someone puts poison on the tree's root to kill it, you have to be aware and to protect it. When you protect your tree, no one will be able to ruin it.

Zeynab: Yeah. I see that. I don't want to be late. I have to go back home now before the children return from their summer school. I can arrive fast enough today. I think that I can drive fast and safely on the highway.

Discussion

Zeynab, who sought therapy for a problematic behavior of her child, was able to work on other matters which were created by her reality as an immigrant. Some of these issues are: Helping with her street agoraphobia, encouraging her relationship with the larger systems, restoring her self-confidence and self-esteem, regaining her trust with her social group, accepting some changes in her value systems, and starting work on her

marital relationship. Theories I used in this case were psychoeducational, hypnosis, narrative, solution focused, and ecosystemic theories.

In both cases, Basima and Zeynab came to therapy complaining about distress created from their reality as immigrants in America. They had to explain their daily life to highlight the problematic aspects in comparison to the home country. The value system that they judged their lives with was the Middle Eastern one, regardless of the number of years they spent as immigrants.

While conversing about their lives, they made constant comparisons between the circumstances they live under in America and the situation they had or supposed they had in their homeland. They mainly compared between customs, value systems, social relationships, and relationship with the larger systems. Lacking the language or the cultural background, Zeynab was phobic of changes occurring in her family's life, while Basima was phobic to return back to her home country and culture. In both cases the social network contributed to the women's welfare and mental health.

In her desperation to find a suitable solution to her agony, Basima wanted to make fast moves, to make decisions without taking her home country context into consideration. A move that may result, in the best case, with a family boycott, and in the worst case, to kill her for "claiming and protecting family honor." Therapy goals were to find the delicate dance between empowering her decisions and regulating her moves. By the end of the therapy, Basima found a way to bridge her different contexts in a way that enabled her to carry out her decisions, and rebuild her estranged relationship with her family of origin.

For Zeynab, who learned to be a “single” independent woman, her immigratory experience caused her to constrain herself, lose her self-confidence, and lower her self-esteem. The goal of therapy was to empower Zeynab by helping her discover her strength. Some cultural aspects also, such as sex education were retested in congruence with Zeynab’s new context.

In both cases, I conducted family therapy with one client. However, all family members, those who lived in America and those who lived in the client’s home country, had their own presence and influence in the therapy room. In each session we had an invisible Trans-Atlantic family gathering. This tendency was isomorphic to the clients reality. Later, it helped them find systemic solutions to their problems using brief term therapy.

My role in these therapies was as an “anthrotherapist.” Despite the fact that I came from the same culture of the clients, I was not from their home country. I assumed that each had her own sub-culture within her community and her value system which directs her in her life. My knowledge about the Arab culture helped me relate to the clients in a culturally accepted manner. For example, they called me “my sister Khawla” and I encouraged them, knowing the cultural connotation of the term. Also, my knowledge of the culture helped me open therapeutic conversations with very wide questions. On the other hand, my ignorance of the clients’ sub-culture made me curious to ask very detailed questions. These were the narrowing down questions. As an anthropologist, one should not assume that there is a good question or bad question, acceptable question or threatening question. The type of relationship built between client

and therapist determined what could be said in therapy, regardless of the type of questions or their techniques. However, the more curious I was while learning about very specific details in the clients' lives, the more I was able to plan my interventions. The clients felt that I really cared for their stories. That helped them later trust me in their more personal stories or matters such as the sexual relationship, which Arab women have reservations to talk about, as a result of their chaste socialization.

Chapter Five

Khawla: Why did you write your address in your hometown on the Arabic consent form and your address in America on the English consent form?

Basima: My body is here but my soul is there. I live in the two places at the same time.

General Findings

At the beginning it is important to note that this study was about Arab immigrants in South Florida. The actual researcher-researchee encounters took place with about fifty families. It included also some public encounters in which hundreds of people have been observed. In the following, I will summarize the main findings of this study, using interchangeably the terms "Arab immigrants," "Arabs in America," and "immigrants to South Florida." Despite the generalization inherent in these terms, these findings reflect the immigration experience of this population. The uniqueness of these findings, especially in regard to acculturation and preservation of the culture, is that Florida is a young immigration state. In other immigration states, one may find Arab interviewees whose families arrived at the beginning of this century. One may assume that their experience with the impact of immigration will be different than those in the current study. To test the generalization and consistency of this study with the experience of other Arab immigrant communities in America a comparison research should be done. This is a suggestion for further research.

The grand tour question of this study was, "How does immigration influence family relationships among Arab immigrants?" In light of the data analysis, immigration

influences all aspects of Arab life, including the structure of the family, its members' traditional roles, relationships among them, lifestyle, social status, and mental health.

For the immigrated family, immigration becomes one of the most significant developmental markers and stages in each of the family member's lives. From the moment of arrival in the host country, immigrants start to live their lives in dichotomies: "Before immigration/After immigration," and "Here/There." The dichotomy becomes an existential escort that immigrants cannot detach from; it becomes a state of mind and a state of emotion. Shazia, a Pakistani student described the influence of this dichotomy state on herself:

Since I arrived here, I feel as if my mind is split into two: One part lives what is happening here, and the other part compares it with what its equivalent would be there, in my culture. It is like watching two TV screens simultaneously. Believe me, it is not the most enjoyable thing to do.

Baptiste (1990) observes that although we tend to talk about the immigrated family as one unit, the impact of immigration may vary on its members. Analyzing the data in this study of immigrant family members who described the host country, it appeared as though they were describing various countries, not the same one. Due to the different types of contacts each family member has with the host country, he or she develops significant types of relationships which provides a different lens through which the country is seen. This is another way to describe the acculturation process which immigrated families experience.

Comparing results of data analysis of this study with family therapy literature which discusses the impact of immigration on families (Baptiste, 1990; Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Falicov & Karrer, 1984; Gold, 1993; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989; Landau-Stanton, 1990; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989; Sluzki, 1979) one may assume that families' psychosocial reaction to immigration is universal. The main characteristics in diverse cultures are similar pertaining to (a) families' tension resulting from the immigration decision, (b) confusion generated following first encounters with the host country's systems, (c) changes in families' rules and roles and (d) intergenerational tension. Despite the similarity in the problems, diverse families search for stability congruent with their own cultures and according to the acculturation process they experience.

The results of this study are congruent with Paniagua's (1994) notion regarding the impact of country of origin on the level of acculturation. This study shows that the acculturation process of groups from diverse cultures appears to be influenced by inter-cultural and global factors such as cultural family linkage, family's religiosity, economic opportunities of the sending society, its political tension and stability, relationships within minorities, and international politics between the sending country and the host country. These factors vary between countries and subsequently influence the acculturation process of groups and individuals differently.

Acculturation Against Cultural Preservation

To test the acculturation level of immigrants, Lonner and Ibrahim (1996) suggested to assess variables such as "educational level, employment, use of the media,

extend of political participation, language proficiency, social relations and support groups” of the clients (p. 298). More specifically, Ibrahim and Owen (1994) developed a worldview scale to assess clients’ cultural and gender identity.

Gushue and Sciarra (1995) pinpointed that when “acculturation” was first coined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits in 1936, it meant the mutual influence that occurred when two cultures come into contact. However, over the years it referred to the influence of the dominant culture over the immigrant culture. Acculturation assessment tools test to what extent the host culture influences the immigrant culture. When testing acculturation process according to its original meaning, one may have an ecosystemic perspective for the change that occurs. Therefore, adopting Lonner and Ibrahim’s (1996) assessment tool, may provide a partial assessment of the acculturation process of Arab immigrants in South Florida. However, to understand how Arab immigrants try to influence the American culture and limit its influence on Arab immigrants’ culture, one has to listen to immigrants’ narratives. Therefore, besides examining the acculturation process of immigrants, this study found that it is important to examine coping mechanisms the Arab community adopts to preserve its culture in America.

Coping Mechanisms

This study shows that preservation of the culture functions as a fundamental mechanism. All the following mechanisms help immigrated families to cope with their loss caused by immigration.

Pride of the origins: A Muslim national religious leader stated in a fund raising event:

We are part of this nation. We are not alien to the American culture because we are equal citizens. However, that does not mean that we have to absorb the American culture. We have a mission in this country. We have to introduce the glory of Arabism and Islam to this culture.

The notion of being able to influence the host culture empowers Arab immigrants and often is used by community leaders. For community members, who face daily difficulties in preserving their culture and keeping it vivid, such a premise induces them to be more active in saving their culture, feeling its power as equivalent to the host culture, and making actual steps to spread it around. Moreover, it provides parents and children with proud and assertive cultural answers to the questions posed by Americans regarding Arabs' values and norms. This dynamic is considered among the most important in preventing total assimilation of Arab immigrants into the American culture.

Power of the socioreligious values: The importance of family ties, the psychological structure of the interdependent self, the socioreligious values of the concepts of "A'yb" (shame) and "Haram" (sacred or taboo) all are deeply ingrained in the value systems of the Arab family and culture. The case may be different when individuals immigrate as singles, without carrying the responsibilities of children's upbringing. The first encounter with the American culture generates astonishment due to the gap between values, norms, and daily lifestyles of the two cultures. The ignorance of the language contributes to the estrangement feeling. This, accompanied with guidance of

the previous generations' immigrants, influences Arab immigrants to create forms to preserve and to be able to live within their own immigrant culture.

Arab immigrants in America are the tenth largest immigrant group in the country and among the fastest growing (Zogby, 1997). Political changes in the Middle East caused whole communities to immigrate in the last fifty years. According to Zogby, the growth of the Arab population nationwide, between the 1980 census and the 1990 census population is 40.9%. Because Arab immigrants tend to live in communities, each new group of immigrants brings a refreshment of the "original taste" of the culture of the home country. Despite the physical distance, Arabs in America do not live in cultural isolation from their homelands. This isolation is considered to be the main cause of the loss of cultural identity among all immigrant groups.

Mechanisms of social control: Gossip and stories about Arab families who allowed some of their family members to live an American life style become another tool to preserve traditional values and norms. Several stories--such as stories of teenage Arab girls who had Black or Mexican boyfriends, or about rich teenage boys who became heroin addicted, or about a young teenage girl who became pregnant and, as a result, has been killed by her father--become a part of the community's folklore. Although no one has met those families, all community members know about their stories and tell them to their children and to new immigrants.

Language: Preserving the original language is among the most important aspects of preserving the Arab cultural identity. For religious Muslim Arabs, they have to learn the Qura'n, which is written in Arabic, to be able to carry out and comprehend the daily

prayers. Therefore, the relationship between Arabs and their language is very sacred and they can be fanatical in their defense of it. When new immigrants hear older generation immigrants communicate in English they will be deeply criticized and blamed by them. To save face from the social reaction, many Arab families make an effort to keep the language alive at home and also to send their children to private programs held by the community to learn Arabic. In some cases, children's ignorance of Arabic is perceived as an indication of parents' neglect.

Learning about the language proficiency of the immigrant is important in assessing his or her ability to master their environment. People who find difficulty learning English tend to isolate themselves from public life to the extent that they may become agoraphobic. Language ignorance may cause distrust of all surroundings or fear of the "other." Mastering the language enables Arab immigrants to get a driving license and to manage the street system which helps in building their independent life. Lonely men, and especially women above the age of fifty, who never learned English in their home countries, become prisoners of their houses as a result of these challenges.

Arab immigrants relate to English in a very pragmatic way: If they need it to fulfil their goals, such as going to school, finding jobs, getting a driving license or passing the immigration test, they will make the effort to learn it. Otherwise, living within their communities may lessen the need to master the language. Language proficiency is never conceived as a tool to assimilate or to integrate, rather as a tool to help oneself fulfill one's pragmatic goals in America.

Despite all parents' and community endeavors to preserve the culture and to lessen the impact of assimilation, according to Zogby (1990), among Arabs who belong to the age group interval 5-17, 70.2% of Arab Americans, 10% of Arab-born, and 84.5% of U.S.-born Arabs speak only English at home. These figures change among the age group 18 and older. Among this group 53.5% of Arab Americans, 8.2% of Arab-born, and 86% of U.S.-born people speak only English. These figures show that for children of Arab immigrants, Arabic becomes a secondary language. They may hear it at home or may hear their parents communicate with them in Arabic. However, when they speak with their parents or siblings or other Arab children, they prefer to speak English. Some of the parents and their children develop a kind of pidgin language, a mix of Arabic and English. After a few years in America, even those who declare that they do not know the language, start embroidering their Arabic with some English words. According to the above figures, it is clear that the struggle to preserve the language lessens with the third generation. The emphasis then becomes on preserving the value system, the folklore, and the customs.

Islam: Among the mechanisms Arab immigrants embrace to keep their culture alive and to keep the assimilation process minimal is to adopt a religious lifestyle. Besides the spiritual element, religion provides answers for the individuals, families, and on social matters. Many Arabs, who did not hold to a religious life style in their home countries, decide to abstain from sinful behaviors according to Islam, such as drinking alcohol or gambling, as an attempt to emphasize not just the Arab culture, but also the Islamic one, and to become role models for the new generation. Walsh (1985) interprets

such conservative tendencies as the immigrants' attempt to maintain cohesion and continuity within their families and group. Some Arab parents are aware that they do adopt the religious life style as a tool to protect their children from a total assimilation within the American culture. In other cases, when Arab families live within some religious American communities who practice an active religious life in the school system and within their community, Arabs react by becoming active in their own religious group. A non-religious father brought his three children to the mosque one day. The Imam who was from his hometown was astonished at the change in the father's behavior. Then the father explained himself:

Each weekend my children ask me where is our "church" because all other children in their private school go to the church. Last Sunday, my oldest son told me that if I don't take him to our "church," then he will go with his friends to theirs. Here I am today.

Some Arab parents confess that if they go back to live in the Middle East they will not be as religious as they practice in America since the social and the cultural environment would support their efforts in their children's socialization.

It is not possible for children to differentiate between what is religiously sacred and not among all the forbidden behaviors. They depend in this matter on their parents and their Arab teachers and other adults in their social net. These socializers tend to forbid children from some behavior--which may bring them closer to the American life style--by claiming that it is religiously prohibited. Examples of these tendencies are

throwing birthday parties, celebrating Halloween, or forbidding girls from swimming or warning them not to talk to strange men during the month of Ramadan.

In Fort Lauderdale and its suburbs there are about 15 mosques which serve 20,000 Muslims. When any community considers building a cultural club, they decide to build a mosque since it may gather Muslims from all cultural and national background. Besides its religious designation, mosques become locations for cultural and national gatherings.

Idealizing the home country: Another tool parents use with their children is to idealize and glorify their home countries. This mechanism resembles families' reaction to death of family member. In this sense parents' behavior may be explained by their feeling of loss of their relationship with their home land. Children are brought up believing that in comparison with any aspect of the American life, the "Alblad" is superior. Parents refrain from mentioning disadvantages in their home countries, even those which made them immigrate in the first place. This type of socialization leads immigrants' offspring to dream of returning to their parents' home country upon maturation. Even if they do change their minds in the future, these stories about the gloried homeland psychologically prevent children from putting down roots in the American culture.

Homeland vacations: Visits to the home country are another tool used by immigrants to preserve the Arabic culture. A yearly or bi-yearly summer visit which lasts up to three months brings children of immigrants in intensive contact with the culture and the extended family back home. This is used also by parents to brush up their children's Arabic language, since they have to communicate with other children and with their

grandparents in Arabic. Children love these vacations because it is the only opportunity they are allowed to play outside unsupervised. Also, they play with great numbers of other children their age from their cousins and neighbors--an experience that they lack in America. Therefore they are thirsty for such childhood experiences. Although these visits drain the family's annual savings, parents are willing to pay for the expensive tickets (some families number six to eight members) and for the gifts they have to carry for each member of the extended family of both sides (that may be more than fifty people from each side) parents make these expenditures (from \$8000 for a lower middle class family to about \$30,000 for an upper class family) as a necessary part of their life in America.

Homeland vacations are used also as a remedy for women's loneliness. Women who do not have a rich social net desire to spend three to four months yearly with their extended families and friends in their home country. Homeland vacations also function as cooling periods for marital disputes where the wife may consult with her "Ahl" on her marital situation and listen to their advice. Meanwhile, the husband will have enough time to reflect on their disputes.

The myth of returning: A myth which is used by many immigrants to keep them from losing their identity and prevent them from integrating in the American lifestyle, is that they have convinced themselves that their stay in America is temporary; one day they want to go back home. A businessman who immigrated to America as a young student 27 years ago said, to defend his notion of temporariness:

If I want to stay in America for all my life, then I have to buy a house in a neighborhood in which my children and their children will grow up. I have to

invest financially more in this country. Also, I have to invest in developing a social life with Americans and be active in the political life. I don't do any of these here, but I do it there, in the "Alblad". I feel like a nomad who may carry his tent and move away at any moment.

Arab immigrants who hesitate to decide to stay in America for the rest of their life try to establish an economic base or residency in their home country. Wealthy Arab immigrants tend to invest in real estate and have a summer home in their home country for any future decision to return back there. Some of them plan upon retirement to move to their home country or to another developed Arab country. Children who are reared on the notion of the temporariness of their life in America and the myth of returning connect less to the American culture and more to their parents' homeland.

Exile sentences: Conservative parents find that sending their children, all or part of them, to the custody of their extended family is a way of correcting their children's misconduct when they derail. Children may stay in "Alblad" for months or years in an attempt to keep them away from what their parents believe to be negative influences on them in America. Parents prefer to lose the daily relationship with their children rather than "losing the children in America." Parents may send children back to their home country if they become involved in gangs or if girls want to have boyfriends. This is similar to the Adam and Eve story when they were allowed to live in paradise as long as they kept away from what was forbidden; otherwise, they were sentenced to exile. The exile solution creates a new problem within the family structure and stability. It will be addressed later in detail.

Consuming Arab media: Adhering to the Arabic media, Arab immigrants in South Florida tend to fight the influence of the American media as much as possible. By satellite, Arab consumers are connected to daily cultural and political events in the Middle East. Also, it connects them to Arab broadcasting stations in America, which ties them to immigrants' affairs in the host country. In addition, grocery stores which sell Middle Eastern food have updated audio and video cassette materials. The young, as well as the older generation, are acquainted with all Arab actors and singers and all current soap operas in the Arab World. This keeps them exposed to the same media components as those who live in the Middle East. Children are permitted to watch American children's channels and discovery channel since parents believe that they are educational.

Education: the educational level is among the assessment tools Lonner and Ibrahim (1996) use to learn about the acculturation process of their clients. According to Zogby (1990), Arabs, native-born and immigrants, reach educational achievements higher than all other cultural groups, including Asian Pacific and Americans. In some Arab countries universities and some departments are still in their infancy. Arab immigrants appreciate the academic level of the American universities. Arab students who arrive each year in the country are among the most important elements in keeping the relationship with the Middle East alive. A great number of immigrant men and women decide to attend undergraduate or graduate school because they have the opportunity to do so in an American school. The Arab community as a whole encourages such activity more than Arab societies do back home.

Some single students, especially male students, who immigrate by themselves and live in isolation from Arab communities, may marry American women and start to assimilate. However, Muslim Arab immigrants who send their sons or daughters to colleges, prefer to convince them to marry before starting school, in an attempt to prevent any cultural assimilation. Arab female students become visible when they wear the veil on campuses. Arab and Muslim students tend to establish and become active in local and national associations and organizations to preserve their identity. They also tend to socialize among these groups.

From the above, one may conclude that knowing the educational level of clients may guide therapists to know part of the school activities their clients participated in; however, it does not provide a profile about the students' social and cultural life among their own groups. Clients' narratives may differentiate between assimilation and preservation tendencies on campuses.

Limiting teenage activities: The reaction of Arab American-born children varies between being in agreement with their parents' socialization premises on the one hand, and being frustrated by their parents' long list of prohibited behaviors. Most children, especially during the teenage years, try to rebel by challenging their parents' authority. Usually, the community supports one another by taking care of these children by reemphasizing the importance of the Arabic life style. Some teenagers succeed in socializing with their American peers covertly. Early marriage of young Arabs limits the rebellious phase. However, young mothers, who are themselves second generation immigrants, bring their American-born children to mesosystems such as the Islamic

Center or the Greek Orthodox Lebanese church to preserve their original culture and to prevent their further assimilation with the American culture.

Young children, teenagers, and young adults who immigrated from their home countries or were born in America, identify themselves as Arab people who live in America. Even when these young people ignore the language and never lived in an Arab country, they assert that they made their identity choice according to their belief system. By adopting this identity, they fulfil their parents goals: To preserve their original identity and prevent it from being erased in the acculturation process.

It is important to mention, that despite the fact that many Arab community members who participated in this study have common coping mechanisms against assimilation, the process is not similar for all Arabs within the community. Other factors may influence some immigrants speedy integration or assimilation in the American culture, such as: the pre-migration attitude about the sending country and the host country, circumstances of the immigration, quality of relationship with family of origin and extended family, and an intercultural marriage to an American woman.

In conclusion, this study believes that: (a) Immigrants' narratives, more than acculturation questionnaires, open for therapists a profound, comprehensive, and ecological picture of their experience as immigrants who come in contact with another culture. Immigrants' narratives enable therapists to learn about the type of mutual or one-way influence their clients experience with the host culture. Some tools used to assess acculturation process or stages or cultural identity may be used successfully as a guiding tool for therapists, or as a check list to encourage clients to talk about all aspects of their

immigratory experience, and (b) it is crucial for therapists to relate to immigrants' preservation mechanisms as coping systems in their new environments rather than relating to it as resistance to the acculturation process. Therefore, learning about culture preservation should be accepted and respected in therapy rather than challenged. Families have to be helped finding solutions to their problems within their preservation mechanisms, which are considered their natural settings.

Relationship with the Larger Systems

This study shows that Arabs prefer to have minimal relationships with the American micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems. Whenever they are able to substitute Arabic American systems for American ones, they carry out the change enthusiastically.

Microsystem: Most Arab immigrants refrain from developing social relationships on the microlevel with other American families who reside in their neighborhood or they meet at the work place (with the exception of needy elderly neighbors and American Muslim colleagues. Instead, they intensify the microsystem relationships with other Arab immigrants. They encourage relationships with other relatives and other nuclear families to create a pseudo-extended family in an attempt to restructure traditional social and cultural life similar to that they left behind in their home countries.

Mesosystem: Most Arab children attend American schools--an aggravating relationship between Arab parents and the American mesosystem. Parents monitor their children's behavior and filter all unwanted cultural influence. They forbid their children to have social relationships with their American peers. In addition, they do not let their children attend cultural or religious events at school. Parents send their male children to

sports clubs to keep them from deviant behavior, not to encourage them to socialize with other American children. Some communities create an Arab alternative mesosystem by establishing private schools or weekend schools to teach Arab Muslim children in a whole-Arab environment.

Exosystem: Arabs criticize the American mass media for two reasons. The first criticism pertains to the family structure: The American media uses indecent messages to reach the younger generation. The second criticism pertains to the whole Arab culture: The American media is prejudiced and encourages dehumanizing Arab national and cultural character. As a result of these reasons, in addition to the cultural ones, Arabs prefer to patronize their own exosystems. A chemist who graduated from an American school and spent about 17 years in the country forbade his newly immigrated wife to watch American talk shows. He claimed that these programs reflect the most problematic family and social relationships within the dysfunctional American society. According to his judgment, watching these programs regularly desensitizes the viewers to the effects of violence which contributes to anti-social behavior and delinquency.

Macrosystem: The relationship with the American macrosystem is forced on immigrants by virtue of their immigration status. Each legal immigrant has to respect and accept the laws of the country. Illegal Arab immigrants try to do everything in their power to make their stay legal, sometimes at the cost of family unity (such as in case of splitting the family between the sending and the host country) or family well-being (such as in cases of polygamy by fictive or actual marriage with an American spouse).

Some American laws, imposed by the macrosystem on Arab families, change the Arab microsystem from within, such as laws concerning equal rights for women in their family and in society, and the Department of Children and Family's (DCF) laws against abuse in families. These laws succeeded in gradually changing the traditional cultural family structure, causing second order change for immigrated families--a change in the frame of the family structure and in its components. For example, many immigrated women started their first career in America, causing a profound change in their relationship with their husbands, children, community members, and their social class.

Although they have their reservations from some aspects of the American culture, Arab immigrants respect America as a democratic country which has laws for the welfare of its citizens. When comparing the democratic regime with some Arab regimes, immigrants who came from those regimes appreciate their relationship with America as a macrosystem. Some Arabs feel grateful to be able to hold the American passport equally with all other American citizens, especially Palestinian refugees who had no previous passport. Also Arabs appreciate that their American-born children enjoy equal rights with other American children.

Arabs refuse to celebrate any of the American national or religious holidays (except Christians, who celebrate religious holidays in their own parishes). However, many Arabs, Christians and Muslims, do celebrate Thanksgiving which is considered the most important American national holiday. Arabs identify with the message of the holiday: The importance of the unity of the family. In addition, they identify with the message of thanking God for the family's ability to cope and prosper in America.

Arab immigrants, who try very hard to preserve their own Arab culture, are influenced by the American culture. That does not mean that they are “Americanized.” They continue to live in the myth of being “non changeable” until they visit their home country after a few years of absence. Then, by comparing themselves to other relatives, old friends, and people in their home town, they become able to identify differences in attitudes, norms and value systems between them and their original culture. Arab immigrants are not able to build hermetic walls against cultural influences. Therefore, after a while they establish and develop their own sub-culture, which shares some cultural aspects with Arabs in the Middle East, while it shares some new norms and value systems with the host country and some other values with all other immigrant groups.

Figure no. iv illustrates the closeness and distance of the Arab immigrant families from the Arab ecological systems versus the American one. It is clear that, unlike the relationship with the Arab ecological systems, Arab immigrants are closest to the American macrosystem (the state) and most distant from the microsystem (the American family). The sub-culture of Arab immigrants becomes another system which influences the life of families who live within Arab communities.

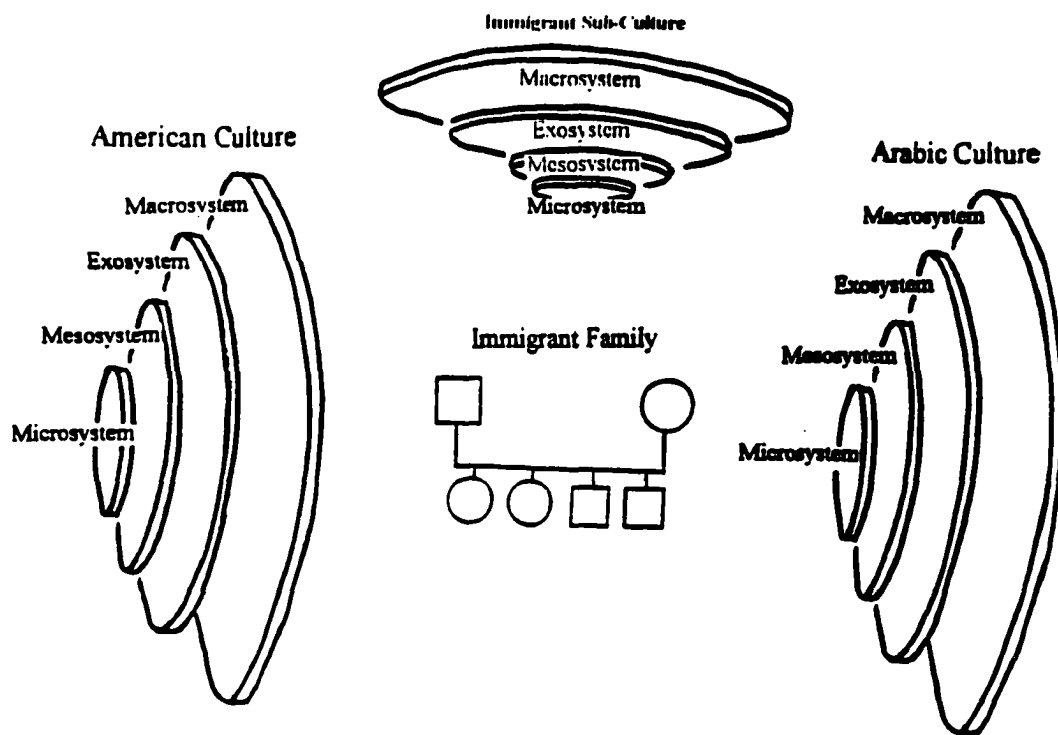


Figure no. iv: Developed relationship between Arab immigrant family and its ecological systems.

Impact of Immigration on Family's Developmental Stages

Carter and McGoldrick (1989) hypothesize that immigration may block normal family development. Together with McGoldrick (1982) and McGoldrick and Giordano (1996), they consider immigration itself as a developmental stage in the family's life cycle. Some immigratory experiences are traumatic to some or all family members and leave their impact on family relationships for many years to come. Falicov (1988b) observes that rough transitions in a family's life, such as in the case of immigration, may

inconsistency, derails some families from their normal stability during diverse developmental stages.

Upon immigration, an Arab family, like other immigrants from non-Western cultures, has to adjust to the new life in America. The immigration of all or some members of the family influences each one's life. Some Arab parents, who strive to smooth the move of their children, immigrate alone, creating psychosocial problems for themselves and for the rest of the family. Until reunification, wives, who are left behind, develop independence and closer relationships with the children. When the family reunites, that may cause another interruption in their life cycle. They experience another developmental stage when they have to relearn how to live as a two-parent family. Some of these reunifications are traumatic, especially when parents do not take into consideration all the changes that have taken place in family members' lives.

Some Arab parents who immigrate to America are not proficient in English. This hinders them in their parental responsibilities, especially in regard to the relationship with the larger systems, such as schools, immigration offices, and hospitals. This situation may put an older child, or the fastest to learn the language, in the position of child-parent. In other cases, relatives or Arab neighbors become surrogate parents. Although this is acceptable and highly practiced in the Arab culture, these new surrogate parents often are new neighbors or distant relatives new to the children who interfere in the normal family rules, roles, and structure. Immigration may cause another changes in the family development when children, with or without their mothers, are sent back to the Middle East as a result of the first indication of unwanted assimilation into the American culture.

In cases where one or both parents are accused of child abuse, mostly as a result of the different cultural disciplinary methods, Arab families experience a kind of second order problem--a problem that is caused by the immigration experience. Immigrant families lack the coping mechanisms they need to solve such kind of problems. If children are taken from their parents, that creates a new developmental stage in parents' lives as well as the children's. Fear of this development causes many Arab families to change their traditional socialization process, trying to relearn some 'American' or 'Western' parenthood principles. In most cases, when parents become convinced to adopt the new socialization methods, this may be considered as second order change.

Some mechanisms help immigrant families to cope with the migratory developmental stage in a smooth way. For example, a massive immigration of all members of the extended family, or living within a cultural ghetto where the immigrated family enjoys the benefits of the cultural support system, may act as smoothing mechanisms.

As a result of cross-cultural influences, the family may experience other second order problems related to developmental stages, such as when children reach teenage or when they marry and move away from their parents. Families rely on their cultural support systems to learn how to face such problems.

In therapy with immigrated families, it is crucial to learn about the developmental stage that each family member was in upon arriving in America and the developmental stage when seeking therapy. Also, it is important to learn from the family about the cultural ways of living these developmental stages in the home country in comparison to

the ways the family lives the developmental stages in America. This may reveal the extent of the family's preservation of its culture or its assimilation into the host culture.

Family Therapy Theories Suitable for Arab Immigrant Clients

This study clarifies that Arab families seek therapy when they need immediate answers for their distress. However, when they seek support, they approach their social network(s) within their communities. When clients come to therapy because they are not able to find the needed support within their communities, then the therapeutic plan has to help them rebuild that relationship in ways suitable to them. Learning about the cultural background of clients helps in understanding their realities, their meanings of their problems, and the type of solutions they believe may help them. Arab clients sought therapy to help them find solutions to disciplinary problems with children, abuse against women and children, family grief and distress as a result of child's chronic disease, sexual problems, or social distress.

Therapists are able to help clients in various cultures in different ways by modifying their goals and techniques to fit clients' needs in each culture (Baptiste, 1990; Sluzki, 1979; Sue & Sue, 1990; Tseng & Hsu, 1990). The key to cultural competence is therapeutic empathy. Rogers (1980) claims that empathy, as a process developed between clients and therapist, is the cornerstone of successful therapeutic relationships. He defines empathy as "Entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it" (p. 142). This also may fit the work of anthropologists who may learn about people's lives in their natural settings by gaining access to their private world. Rogers goes on with his definition, stating the conditions for empathetic relationships:

“[not] making judgments [while] sensing meanings of which he or she is scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover totally unconscious feelings, since this would be too threatening (Rogers, 1980, p. 142). This may suit a definition for a sensitive and respectful therapy. In his definition, Rogers combines the premises of anthropology work with those of the therapy work. In this study, I used the term “anthrotherapist”--which combines the premises of anthropological training with those of therapy training--to suggest an approach to therapeutic work when the therapist or the clients or both do not live and work in their original cultures.

Most family therapists, as other professionals in the mental health field, were educated on Western theories which are one way of explaining individual, family, and social developments and relationships. One may think of each theory as a Western cultural perspective to individual's and family's life. It is just natural to expect to utilize other perspectives/theories while working with non-Western cultures. Since no such theories in family therapy are known, Lau (1984) evokes an important question by asking “How can therapeutic interventions, arising from a Western cultural perspective, be ‘repackaged’ to make them congruent for ethnic minority families?” (p. 91).

Toledano (1996) expresses the therapist's dilemma when working with clients who share with the therapist their cultural background while both sides live in an alien dominant culture. Toledano raises the question of a therapeutic consideration in such cases: should it fit the dominant culture, the type of acculturation of the clients, or the therapists'? Further, Toledano states that the intracultural therapist, who knows his or her clients' culture very well, may become confused whether to choose the “expert” stance or

the “non knowing stance” or the “both/and” stance with these clients. Toledano asserts that each choice has its advantages and disadvantages. Curiosity, sensitivity, and respect for clients’ cultures besides being tuned to cultural influence on the therapists, are the solutions Toledano suggests to enhance therapeutic relationships in such cases.

In this study, I was a foreigner therapist who worked with Arab clients who immigrated under different circumstances to America from various Arab countries. Although I share with these clients the Arab and Islamic cultures, I know very little about the sub-cultures within the Arab World and the nature of the social texture of its citizens. In addition, when I started working with this population, I was uninformed regarding Arab immigrants’ sub-culture(s) which they created and developed in America.

Observing the community from an anthropological stance offers a background which enhances the understanding of the natural ecological environment community members live in. It highlights their relationship with the larger systems, their support system, and their value system. This background helped to put clients’ complaints into its psychosocial and econopolitical natural perspective. By embracing the anthrotherapist stance, I was able to use anthropological curiosity--which gives permission to ask unlimited questions for the sake of knowledge--to explore in detail clients’ lives and value systems, while the therapist stance helped to process the information and to prepare further questions and suitable interventions in the clinical setting.

Many therapists who work outside their original cultures, or work with clients who do not live within their culture, ask the question: “Which theory in family therapy is the most suitable for these clients?” Literature in family therapy tries to answer this

question by suggesting theories which worked well with one or another cultural group (e.g., Baptiste, 1990; Berg & Jaya, 1993; Falicov, 1988a; Kahn, 1993; Landau-Stanton, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990; Turner, 1991; Veer, 1992; Vontress, 1985). The bottom line is that all family therapy theories known in the field seem to work with diverse types of cultural groups. If the goal of family theories is to "structure how we think about families, what we observe, how we interpret this knowledge, and how we use the information in programs and policies that affect family life" (Smith, 1995, p. 8) then it is very systemic to learn all family therapy theories also from cultural perspectives. This enables theoretician and clinician to learn and test each theoretical premise with various cultures, which may add another dimension to some Western-based theories, such as the communication theories and feminist theories.

Several studies (Baptiste, 1990; Ho, 1987; Saba, Karrer, & Hardy, 1989; Sluzki, 1979; Sue & Sue, 1990) recommend matching the treatment model(s) and the intervention techniques in accordance with the cultural structure of the families. Ho (1987) emphasizes that it is more appropriate to choose intervention techniques and skills based on the family's natural problem solving and emic abilities. Coale (1994) calls therapists to "be anthropologists, sociologists, and social historians in their work with clients, exploring the meaning that both clients and therapists bring to the therapy from their social and cultural contexts" (p. 20).

By analyzing 15 fully transcribed therapy sessions and 4 non-taped therapy sessions of Arab clients in South Florida, it became clear to me that I utilized several theories known in the field of family therapy such as (a) ecosystemic theory (I searched

for stability and change), (b) Milan approach (I asked circular questions about opinions of other family members including those who stayed in the home country), (c) solution focused (I used scaling questions and exception questions), (d) Ericksonian hypnosis (by teaching relaxation techniques and by helping clients touch problematic intrapsychic aspects) and Ericksonian utilization of the client's abilities (literally and metaphorically, to meet the client where she is and to lead her from there), (e) Narrative (I encouraged clients to tell stories about their relationships in the host country and those in their home country and about their immigration experience. Neither story was irrelevant. Also I utilized their usage of language to create new meanings in their experiences), (f) Bowenian theory (I utilized drawing genograms to include family members on both trans-Atlantic sides, and also to assess the degree of differentiation of self in comparison to cutoff relationship, and (g) psychoeducational theories (especially in cases where parents needed immediate answers for their children's misconduct.)

My choice of theory (or theories), and subsequently, the intervention utilized in each session was determined by the sessions' content and the clients' needs during the session. A combination of a group of theories prohibited any situation of "stuckness" in therapy and enhanced terminating all cases in a short term (between one to six sessions each). With each new case, I searched for ways to reach the empathy process with clients. Usually, stories about the immigration process helped to connect with the clients' experience. From that point on, I was able to use any theory or intervention I judged to be suitable for the clients' needs. I never posed the question whether Arabs would react positively to a theory. Theories were a tool to serve the clients' needs, not goals to be

reached. The only exception I was aware of and cautious about, is that with Arab clients, passive listening may be interpreted as the therapist being bored or indifferent. Therefore, I tried to be more active than I usually may be, especially in the first session. Also, it was important for me to let each client feel, from the first session, that he or she got “something” before leaving the session to encourage their faith in therapy. Since Arab clients relate to mental health therapy similarly to medical professions, they like to feel a change immediately after seeing professionals.

Ho (1987) encourages therapists to work with one family member who may transmit the change to other family members. Ho believed that the most suitable family member would be the most acculturated. In this study, while working with Arab families, in the two cases presented in Chapter Four I worked mainly with the women (a mother came with her son for one session, then I worked with her alone for the other five sessions). These women were the most motivated among their family members to change the family situation. In the other three cases, I worked with the various combinations of family members. In these cases, also the most motivated person, rather than the most acculturated, showed a change, and as a result, enhanced change among other family members.

Several studies (Dechesnay, 1986; Lau, 1984; Watts-Jones, 1992) raise the important question: To what extent are therapists--who do not work within their own cultures, or work with people from their culture but reside in a foreigner country--allowed to intervene in their clients' cultural realities? In order to be able to work as culturally competent, a therapist has to be well informed about cultural-bonded

symptoms and cultural emic solutions (Hardy, 1989; Ho, 1987). On the other hand, he or she has to be very well aware of transcultural issues and be aware of their cultural self (Lau, 1984).

Basima and Zeynab (from Chapter Four) were two Arab clients who both had their own experience with the American dominant culture. Yet, each reacted to the acculturation process and used her preservation mechanisms differently, and subsequently, her therapeutic needs were different. While Basima wanted to find solutions to her distress using some "Western" and "non-cultural" solutions, Zeynab's distress was caused by her attachment to her cultural context in her home country. She did not allow herself to have enough flexibility or to modify her Arab cultural context to leave room for new cultural contexts as an Arab immigrant. Basima and Zeynab were influenced simultaneously by the three cultural contexts they lived in: The sending Arabic culture, the receiving American culture, and the Arab immigrants sub-culture. My relationship with them exposed them also to the family therapy culture.

In order to be able to help them deal with confusions in their lives created by the cultural contradictions among their multiple contexts, I had to learn about each one of those contexts. This knowledge helped me "to be there with the client in her experience." In both cases, it was very helpful for me to be acquainted--as a result of the ethnographic data--with the cultural reasons and consequences of each behavior.

Working with this population, I was aware of the limitations I put on my own personal set of values. I was anxious to enter each client's reality without causing harm. Yet, I needed to test each client's needs and her suggestions to helpful solutions. I ended

encouraging Basima to come closer to her home country cultural contexts, while I encouraged Zeynab to explore more of her new American cultural context. Both clients were encouraged to reconnect and utilize the genuine support system of their natural social net. A follow-up after six months (in Basima's case) and a year (in Zeynab's case) shows that both clients benefited from the changes they made in their lives.

The Therapist Self and the "Anthrotherapist"

"Clinicians cannot not use self in therapy" (Ben David & Erickson, 1990, p. 211).

Therapists' awareness of usage of cultural self in therapy helps to utilize the understanding of the ethnic components of the family. When therapists acknowledge the relativity of their own cultural values, it helps them to respect more cultural differences. "Appropriate use of the therapist's [cultural] self opens up potential within the family by challenging the members with new ideas and new ways of doing things they had not previously considered" (Ben David & Erickson, 1990, p. 215).

In addition, therapists' awareness that their own cultural history comprises a lens which will influence their perceptions of clients outside of their culture is essential to enhance empathic relationship in therapy. Tseng and Hsu (1991) note that "interpersonal relationships are always subconsciously influenced and shaped by cultural factors, and the relationship between therapist and family is no exception" (p. 194). The effects of these preexisting cultural views will govern the therapist's work and function as "cultural filters" in conspicuous ways; however, they will also influence this work in ways that are outside the therapist's awareness (McGoldrick, Garcia-Preto, Hines, & Lee, 1991).

How can therapists be able to become aware of their cultural self? One method to expand the therapist's sensitivity involves an in-depth self-examination of the therapist's own background in terms of culture, race, gender, social and economic class. Boyd-Franklin (1989) refers to this approach as "soul-searching" (p. 98) and deems it an essential prerequisite to the engagement of therapeutic work with minorities, especially women. Aponte (1992, 1994), Falicov (1988), Falicov and Karrer (1984), Ho (1987), Huang and Gibbs (1989), Kahn (1993), Prosky (1996), and Saba, Karrer, and Hardy (1989) all believe that training therapists to cultural sensitivity and cultural competency spontaneously prepares them to become self aware culturally.

Falicov and Karrer (1984) state that

Clinicians are increasingly aware of the effects of culture on attitudes and behavior relevant to the treatment. Social, cultural, and medical anthropology are disciplines which contribute valuable knowledge about culture, family and mental health. However, it would be an exceedingly difficult and lengthy undertaking to extract from these disciplines cross-cultural knowledge relevant to the therapeutic context. The task of building theoretical model of family therapy that takes into account cultural variation can be facilitated by sharing the experience of practitioners who have worked with families of various ethnic backgrounds (p. 18)

Falicov (1988a) goes on to suggest a training program which may enhance trainees cultural sensitivity. Ho (1987) and Hardy (1989) criticize training programs that believe they reach the laborious training goals by offering one or two diversity classes.

This study suggests adopting the practice of training therapists to become “anthrotherapists.” When therapists are trained to combine in their work the anthropologist’s goal to discover people’s diverse ways of living their lives, with the therapist’s goal to help people solve problems which keep them from enjoying their lives, then therapists work as “anthrotherapists.” In multi-cultural societies, it is impossible to learn about and be an expert in all sub-cultures. However, adopting the “anthrotherapist” approach enables therapists to work with all cultures, including their own, lead by the anthropologist’s modesty, sensitivity, naiveté, and curiosity and by the therapist’s empathy, and familiarity with the human soul.

By training therapists to be “anthrotherapists” they will be able to adopt and use all theories they feel comfortable with in their professional work. Each family therapy theory may be tested from the anthropological perspective, or from the emic perspective, and may be modified to fit, in a respectful way, the clients’ cultural reality. Individuals and families are the creature of their own environments and cultures. Since no family therapy theory is humanly able to encompass all individual’s and families’ realities, the “anthrotherapist” approach may help utilize all family theories existing in the field to work with clients from other cultures.

All publications in the field about family therapists’ work with clients from other cultures contribute to learning about ways therapists may adopt the “anthrotherapist” approach. It also highlights some difficulties and challenges for therapists who are “expert” in the culture they work with and those who are completely ignorant of it. However, this literature may be conceived as a tourist’s guide which directs to unknown

territory by providing general and eye capturing information. Upon arriving in the territory, information and experiences tourists will have may be different from each other. These are influenced by the tourists' interests (theoretical lenses) as well as the territory ecology (clients' reaction).

In therapy training programs, when students learn family therapy, they learn first the theoretical background then they learn from case studies. Diversity courses in these programs teach about a few ethnic groups (equivalent to case studies) in a very short time. It is difficult to learn anthropological sensitivity from learning about a very few case studies. Instead, if training programs teach philosophical premises of anthropological work, they help create the anthropological lens needed for their trainees. Besides these courses, students in family therapy constantly have to be reminded to test each theoretical premise they learn from the perspective of diverse cultures. In addition, trainees should be guided to develop a cultural sensitivity when their clients are not from the same culture as the therapists, and in cases of immigrant clients. This may help trainees to draw a wider map for the ways they have to reach their clients. The more they use the map to reach the territory, the more both will be more familiar.

The Researcher/Therapist Role and the "Anthrotherapist"

Therapists need to believe that they understand their clients. Research is one way to reach this goal. Keeney and Morris (1985) state that "as a therapist who follows the ideas of cybernetics and systems theory, I know that I never have immediate access to raw data. As an observer, I actively participate in the construction of my observations" (p. 99). Rogers (1980) believes that professions in mental health should not be thought of

by professionals in the field as a job which can be externalized or detached from one's self. Rather, it should become a lifestyle, a way of being. Therefore, it is necessary for therapists who believe in these axioms not to separate therapeutic work and research work.

Several studies highlight the importance and contribution of research in the clinical setting to help therapists be aware of clients' feedback of the therapeutic encounter (Chenail, 1993; Miller & Crabtree, 1994; Chenail & Morris, 1995; Morris, Gawinski, & Joanning, 1994; Sells, Smith, & Moon, 1996; Shilts & Knapik-Espósito, 1993). On the other hand, it is believed that research in itself, may have a therapeutic impact on researchees. Therefore, research in the family therapy field may be conceived as an intervention tool (Bussel, Matsey, Reiss, & Hetherington, 1995; Steinglass, 1995; Wright, 1990).

In this study, my role as a therapist went hand in hand with my role as a researcher. I adopt in both roles what Chenail and Morris (1995) called "the researching therapist" stance which fits with the philosophical essence of the "anthrotherapist" stance. The ethnography data helped to learn about the social reality of the clients, including their cultural background, ecology, and relationship with the larger systems. This helped me as a therapist to relate empathically to clients' distress and to comprehend it according to its suitable context. The ethnography research provided a vivid picture to people's complaints. Keeping the ethnography data in mind, it enabled me in therapy to ask clients questions in regard to some themes which I learned have special importance in the client's social setting. And most importantly, the ethnography research helped me to

assess culturally-bonded behavior as “normal and acceptable” in the client’s natural setting. It prevented me from pathologizing the client’s reality.

When I conducted the ethnography, I also kept my therapist lens on. I observed the community’s mental health including families’ relationships. When I initiated conversation with people, ideas I talked about were crystallized from many backgrounds in my life, including my profession as family therapist. When people asked for my opinion regarding personal matters I was not able to back up and act indifferently. I shared my therapeutic ideas when I have been asked for two reasons: I was sure that I was not causing harm to the interviewees, and I wanted to show respect for their need of gaining an accurate answer. Yet, I restrained myself from having any arguments about the interviewees value systems. For example, when I heard ideas such as, “women, by nature, are less smart than men.” I was curious to know how that influenced the interviewee’s life, rather than convincing him or her that there are other opinions on this matter. Sometimes, I experienced existential and ethical dilemmas when I witnessed psychological or physical abuse against children and women. Being aware of my research ethical premises, I either drove myself away from the scene or tried to be silent and to observe. If this happened in the clinical setting, then my reaction would be different, since the context of the relationship between me and the interviewees/clients would be different.

I was not sure if and how I influenced the research setting therapeutically until I posed this question publicly. I then got positive answers. One female interviewee said:

You asked me questions about my relationship with each of my children and with my husband in a way that kept me thinking a long time after the interview was over. I made many changes since then due to those questions. Also, when I complained about my husband not being in synch with my socialization methods, your comment was "so your children are exposed to two interesting socialization methods." That let me think, for the first time in my life, about my husband's right to have his own ideas in regard to upbringing our children. You helped me see his struggles with my control over his voice. I went and apologized to him. That brought us closer.

Another comment was from Mustafa, Zeynab's husband who said:

You asked me about ways I chose to discipline my children. Then you asked me about sacrifices Arab parents do to make their families' stay in America a smoother one. After the interview was over, I kept thinking about my beating Shadi. Suddenly, I was terrified. I sacrificed so much for my family's well-being in America. What would happen if I would be put in jail for beating him? What would happen if the "child abuse" authorities took the four kids from us? What will people in "Alblad" think about me as a parent? What will they think that I did wrong? Then, I swore to God that I will never lift a hand on him again. Zeynab witnessed me swearing.

Zeynab, who accompanied me as research assistant in the ethnography work commented upon finishing the project:

My assisting in this research was the best thing that happened to me in America. I learned that my problems are not unique to me. Many families we visited together had my own concerns and struggles. Before that, I thought that I was a failure. Also, I learned to seek alternative ways to solve my problems, including the highway (laughter).

Limitations of the Study

This research has been conducted with a population of Arab immigrants who are comparatively new immigrants and belong mainly to middle and lower classes of society. It is expected that psychosocial reaction to immigration, especially mechanisms of cultural preservation, will be different among other communities formed by rich Arab immigrants and old communities of immigrants who settled in the country a century ago. Differences among Arab communities also may be observed as a result of variances between religious value systems of Islam and Christianity and as a result of cultural diversity among Arab countries. With awareness of these limitations, all generalization in this study have been made to help in understanding the culturally-bond relations in the immigration process.

Trustworthiness Review

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that researchers should test their confidence of the 'truth' of their findings. In this study I examined internal validity by the following:

1. I compared analysis notes which have been written immediately after each interview, after listening to the tape, after transcription, after second, third, and fourth reading of the interview. Some of these notes were taken one year apart from each other while others

were a few weeks apart. All along the study there has been a congruency among these notes.

2. I found resemblance among stories about immigration challenges and coping collected by the ethnography work and the clinical work.

3. I noticed from the 16 months' encounter that community members shared the same attitudes in regard of their reaction to the immigration process such as preservation mechanisms of the Arab culture.

4. I had numerous opportunities over a period of 16 months to examine the 'truth' behind all stories told by people who participated in this study. Reexamination was done by going back to the same people and expanding on previous conversations with them. People held to their stories and to their 'truth' which became the 'truth' of the study.

Do these findings have any applicability in other contexts? According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the answer to this question helps examine the study's external validity. It is recommended that the main findings of this study be tested in other immigrant communities, including other groups as well as Arabs. It is interesting also to make a comparison in this regard among Western immigrants to America and non-Westerns.

All data will be open for researching therapists who would like to learn more about this population. It is possible also that I or other researchers may reconstruct the current study in other immigrant communities which have similar characteristics to the community in this research. This will help to test the reliability of this study. However, one should be aware of the influence of the type of relationship created between

researcher and researchees on the development of the research process. This tendency cannot be guaranteed to be reconstructed just by virtue of using the same research tools.

I kept four copies from each interview and transcription of clinical sessions. I tested my objectivity in two-month intervals by comparing the analysis I did for each copy. Also, I consulted with the main informant of this study and with other interviewees about results I generated from the interviews. One more resource for testing objectivity was to debrief with Arab mental health professionals who work with immigrant Arabs in diverse states in America.

Suggestions for Future Research

It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter to conduct a comparison research regarding all Arab immigrant communities in America. Also, it is suggested further testing of the preservation mechanisms of immigrant communities as part of the families capability rather than centering on their acculturation problems or their resistance to assimilate. Therefore, in light of these new findings, a reexamination of the acculturation theories is recommended.

Implications for Marriage and Family Education and Training

In light of this study, it is challenging to family therapy programs and to social work programs to prepare preventive projects which may prohibit the onset of immigrants' future problems and to help them acclimate according to their own decisions and choices.

In the treatment realm, family therapy took one step further than the fields of psychology and psychiatry by perceiving that the causes of individual problems are

rooted in their interrelationships with their families and their environments rather than perceiving them as intrapsychic mechanisms. Relatively few theoreticians in the field emphasize the importance of the cultural dimension in family therapy. More than twenty years after the introduction of cultural family therapy, clinicians and theoreticians are still struggling to find the proper encompassing cultural theory. If the field of family therapy adopts the “anthrotherapist” approach, then training programs will start emphasizing the importance of learning the clients’ authentic setting and their cultural background hand in hand with learning theories, models, and techniques in the field. Some family therapy theories, such as solution focused, narrow down the learning of the clients’ background to abstain from hearing the whole story of the family problem, believing that that will not contribute to the therapists’ understanding of the type of problem, and subsequently, to the type of solution. This study suggests that the more therapists inquire about the cultural background of clients in the session, and in ethnographic work between sessions, it will help to widen their understanding of problems and solutions for families from diverse backgrounds. It is believed that this focus hastens the therapy and shortens its term. Training programs will be challenged to find how to implement each theory, model, and technique for clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. This will widen our ecosystemic perspectives and lens from focusing on the local family to encompass the global family in its diversities.

A Final Note

Thinking systemically, the topic of this research, as well as the relationship that emerged with community members and clients, had its influence on me. I shared with the

interviewees and clients one more aspect, which was my being an immigrant student. As such, I learned first hand what it means to struggle to “fit” my whole being into my experience as an immigrant. Also, I experienced splitting my nuclear family for the last three years. Officially, I started my research 18 months after my arrival in America. During that time, I learned what it takes to be able to function effectively in a host country. Some of my challenges and my solutions were similar to those of the people I got to know in this research, and some were different. However, I was able to empathize totally with their experiences. Also, I was able to listen to their coping mechanisms and to test them against mine, to find out which may work better for me. I was open to learn and adopt the researchees perspective when that perspective was more convenient for me.

Being an immigrant student kept me busy in my school work (this document is the last among many others). Sometimes, especially on holidays and special occasions, I missed being in my Arab or Muslim cultural context. However, conducting this type of research allowed me to participate as a “native” in all community events of Arab immigrants, and to benefit, as a researcher, from my participation. I enjoyed the role of “active member researcher.” Likewise, contacting a family to interview them revived the pleasure of the hospitable Arab social meetings. In this regard, I related to each interview as a kind of “going back home.” This research allowed me to find refuge for the cultural loneliness some immigrants feel, including me. Whenever I felt isolated from my cultural background, I was able to reconnect by visiting the community.

In regard to my clinical work, working with clients from other cultures (American and Latin American and European) exposed me to a new type of value system, norms,

and nature of family problems. Approximately two years later, when I started working with Arab clients, I had to remind myself that Arabs do have a different set of value systems, norms, and nature of family problems. Later, with each clinical case, I learned to pose the following questions to myself: Where is this client from? What do I know about that background? How can I be helpful in this clinical/cultural context? This is a good reminder about the importance of the content and the contexts of our clients and about the multiplicity of reality they and I live and work in.

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Appendices

اتفاقية

أوافق على الإشتراك في البحث حول الأسر العربية في جنوب فلوريدا. إن إشتراكي هذا هو بمحض إرادتي من خلال فهمي أن هدف البحث هو لأغراض أكاديمية وعلمية. وبهذا أوافق على تسجيل المحادثات بيني وبين الباحثة سواء عند لقائنا شخصيا أو خلال المحادثات الهاتفية. أنا على علم بأن الباحثة سوف تفرغ التسجيلات وتحللها فيما بعد. تؤكد الباحثة على ضمان السرية التامة لهوية كل من يشترك في هذا البحث. لذا سوف تحذف جميع المعلومات الدالة على هوية المشترك بما فيها الأسماء الحقيقية من جميع المواد المطبوعة والمنشورة.

أعلم أنه بإمكانني الانسحاب من البحث في أي مرحلة.

أوافق _____ (إسم المشترك/ة)

_____ (العنوان)

_____ الباحثة

_____ التاريخ

جامعة نونسا ساوث إيسترن. مدرسة الدراسات الإجتماعية والمنهجية.

هاتف رقم ٣٠٠٠-٢٦٢ (٩٥٤)

Appendix no. 2. Consent Form in English.

Consent Form

I agree to participate with my family members, including my minor children, in the research study about Arab Families in South Florida. I agree to participate voluntarily, and I understand that the intention of the research is for academic needs. I give my permission to audiotape the interview, and any future phone conversations. I understand that all audiotapes will be, transcribed and studied. The researcher assures the interviewee rigorous protecting of confidentiality. All personally identifying data will be eliminated from transcripts and from any report or published material created from the information within them.

The interviewee can decide to withdraw from collaboration with the researcher at any stage.

Agreed: _____ Interviewee

Agreed: _____ Researcher

Date: _____

Nova Southeastern University, SSSS, phone # (954)262-3000



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*نعم نستطيع ان نساعدكم في العيادة التابعة للجامعة
*تتبع العيادة اسلوب العلاج الموجز والعملي
*طلبة في برامج الدكتوراة والماجستير يقومون بالعلاج
بإشراف اساتذة الجامعة

مركز علاج مشاكل الاسرة

*لدينا استعداد بتقديم العلاج في منازلكم في حالات خاصة
*لدينا من يتكلم اللغة العربية ليساعدكم بشكل افضل

Appendix no. 4. A transcription of pidgin language of second generation Arab immigrant.

■: بيبي وينك. هو بعرفش يعني a lot of thing I do

ابراهيم عن النوع الي he doesn't really care how I make

money whether from baby sitting or cleaning هو ما بدد

اياني اشتغل في المحلات If it was a you know like that.

respectable job, he would not mind بس أنا ما أعطيتش مجال

بخل لي آد أو لا بالنسبة للجامعة or إني اشتغل عشان because

I found and decided that that what I have to do. It is not enough.

بخلني أقل له I was not brought to this world to be just a

mother and a wife. That is not enough for me

خولة: كيف قررتي

■: باكينش مبسطة. إشي يخل ياكلني. كل ما حدا

أسع راح على الجامعة وتخرج يا بي شو أغار. يا الله بقي so

going on with their أشرف الناس hard for me, so hard for me

I wanted to go, I wanted to go to طول حياتي lives. because

school. زي ما قلت لك من ناحية ولادتي مش شاطرين من

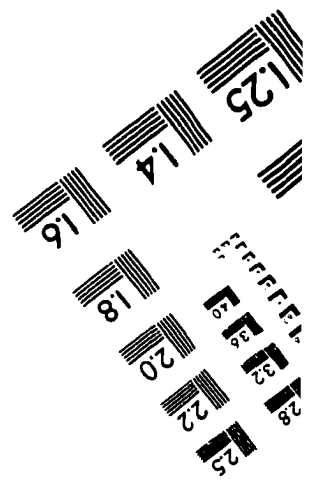
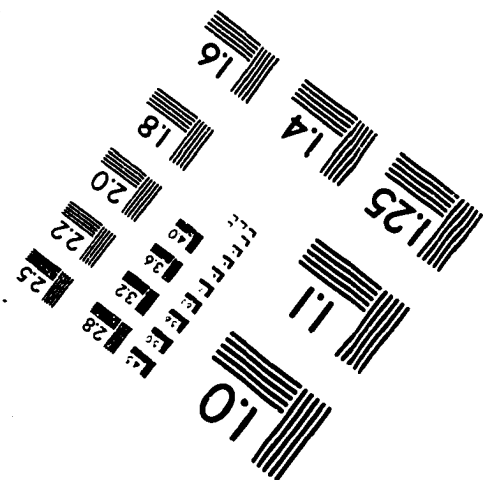
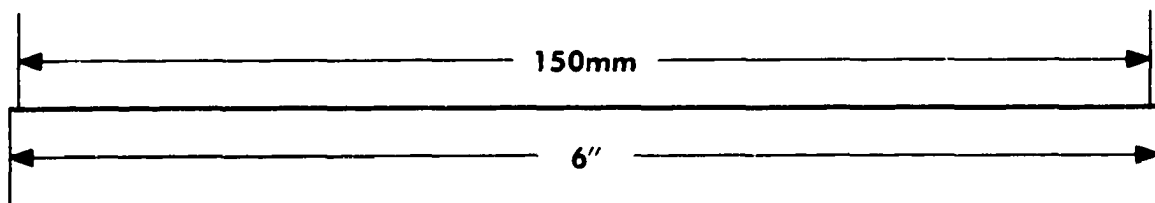
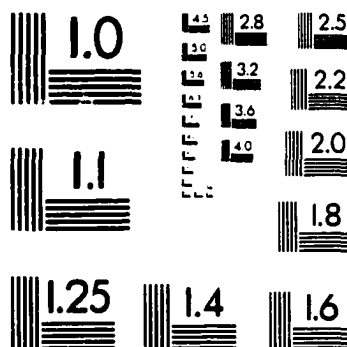
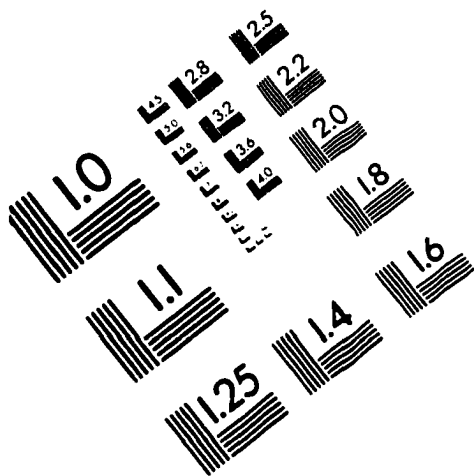
ناحية المدرسة. I knew that I have to do but they will be one day.

جوزي ما كانت له خاطر المهد احضر ايها بستر من

Biographical Sketch

Khawla Abu Baker is a Palestinian Arab woman who was born in Acre/Acca, Israel. She received a bachelor in African Studies from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel in 1980. Then in 1983 she received another bachelor in Sociology-Anthropology and Education from Haifa University, Israel. In 1990 she received her MA degree in Educational Counseling from the same university. Her Master's thesis written on "The political socialization of Arab children through Arab political children's literature" won the award of the Dean of graduate studies in Haifa University. She moved from Israel to Fort Lauderdale in 1994 to attend school. After graduating from Nova Southeastern University, School of Social and Systemic Studies, she went back to her hometown in Israel.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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