Psychology Publications   Department of Psychology

2016

Acculturation and Enculturation: Ethnic Identity Socialisation Processes

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ACCULTURATION AND ENCULTURATION

Ethnic Identity Socialization Processes

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> As often happens in people's lives, as it happened to me, members of succeeding generations of immigrant families suddenly find themselves pondering the question of who they are and how they got here. They begin to search for a co-identity, one that connects with their ancestral roots and uniquely cohabits with their American identity.
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> *(Ellis, 2007, p.11)*

This chapter begins with a brief review of various approaches to the study of ethnic identity, because they form the foundation for the research studies on the acculturation and enculturation processes of Arab Americans. In particular, the seminal works of John W. Berry, Jean Phinney, and their colleagues (e.g. Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006) are discussed in light of research on the acculturation of Arab Americans to the U.S. Acculturation involves the variety of different ways that a person can adapt to a culture that is different from that of their family's culture(s) of origin. Enculturation, on the other hand, involves learning about one's culture of origin.

Becoming enculturated to Arab values, attitudes, and behaviors while residing in North America involves ethnic identity socialization, a process that is most likely to take place within the extended family life and local communities of Arab Americans (e.g. Ajrouch, 2000; French, Coleman, & DiLorenzo, 2013). This process includes direct and indirect teaching of Arab cultural values and practices through, for example, family stories, food, music, and holiday celebrations. As described further below, there are a variety of relevant theories and models of ethnic identity socialization among immigrants. These frameworks address how Arab immigrants within North America are affected by a number of background factors and global sociopolitical events. The acculturation, enculturation, and ethnic identity socialization processes are illustrated in the case example of the family immigration of an Arab American of Lebanese descent, Raff Ellis (2007). The chapter ends with a brief critique of the currently available literature on the acculturation, enculturation, and ethnic identity of Arab Americans.

Theoretical Approaches to Ethnic Identity Development

Although there have been many theoretical approaches to the study of ethnic identity, the view-point most often referenced is that of Jean Phinney, who has taken a developmental approach to the process of changes in ethnic self-understanding over time (e.g. Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Phinney, 2010; Trimble & Dickson, 2005). Phinney bases her approach on Erikson's (1968) classic lifespan

developmental theory of changes in ego identity and on Marcia's (1966) research on youth identity statuses, which represent the extent to which young people have explored options in their lives, and the extent to which they have made a commitment to any of the various options. Ethnic identity – the extent to which a person considers the subjective importance of his or her ethnic or cultural group – is multifaceted and includes multiple components as the person develops over time (Phinney & Ong, 2007). A person's national identity (where they reside) and ethnic identity (based on ethno-cultural family heritage) together comprise a person's overall cultural identity (Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2006).

As noted by Ong and colleagues (2010), early scholars who addressed ethnic identity tended to focus more on the content than the processes. This content included the adoption of behaviors and attitudes consistent with that of the ethnic group under consideration. To attain a more comprehensive process-oriented understanding, research on ego identity development using the theories of Erikson and Marcia's identity statuses has concentrated on how identity resolution occurs through the processes of exploration followed by commitment. Similarly, Phinney and her colleagues emphasized the processes of self-exploration leading to changes and consolidation in ethnic identity over time (Ong et al., 2010).

Self-exploration has the potential to lead to a committed ethnic identity in Arab immigrants. Depending on the social context and the specific immediate needs within that context, multiple identities may be renegotiated repeatedly both in the public (e.g. school or work) and private spheres (e.g. family) of the everyday life of Arab youth (Abu-Laban & Abu-Laban, 1999). Arab immigrants, for instance, may engage in code-switching by speaking Arabic and following cultural norms while at a family gathering with community elders. In some cases, they may then switch to the English language and Western norms with select peers at the same family gathering and/or in other outside settings such as at work.

It is not merely overt cultural norms and activities in these various social contexts that influence ethnic identity development. Rather, there are many implicit and automatic patterns of ethnocultural activities (such as visual symbols, metaphors, and values) that influence immigrants' inner psychological experiences (Adams & Markus, 2001). For Arab immigrants, these more subtle processes of ethnic identity influences might be especially important to understand given that there are multiple social forces in operation simultaneously. In the Arab world, for instance, there are both Christian and Islamic religious influences; Christians endorse some values that stem from the Middle East's predominant Islamic history, while Muslim Arabs have incorporated some traditions and values stemming from the Abrahamic ancestry (Old Testament of the Bible) that they share in common with Judaism and Christianity (Esposito, 2003). Interestingly, immigrants to North America are exposed to the predominant Protestant work ethic and focus on individual autonomy and independence, and thus may incorporate Western values into their identities (Adams & Markus, 2001). A comprehensive understanding of Arab immigrant ethnic identity will therefore need to take into account these complex identity issues.

The complexity of Arab immigrant ethnic identity may be understood further in terms of whether or not the immigrant has a self-perception that is primarily interdependent or relatively independent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Independent self-construals involve a tendency to believe in the inherent separateness of self from others and thus there is an orientation toward social goals that emphasize individual achievements. In contrast, interdependent self-construals include an orientation toward the self as it exists in relation to others, and thus relationship oriented goals are paramount. Barry (2005) found that some Arab American male immigrants had relatively higher independent self-construal, while others had relatively higher interdependent self-construal, with implications for their acculturation and ethnic identity. He noted that this research points to the importance of not merely studying global categories of cultures (e.g. individualistic, collectivistic) in trying to understand ethnic identity. Rather, it is important to

consider the multiplicity of dimensions involved in acculturation, enculturation, ethnic identity, and self-construals at the psychological level of understanding. For example, Barry found that Arab males in the U.S. with a separated acculturation status (more value placed on heritage than on host culture) were more likely to have an interdependent self-construal, perhaps preferring the company of like-minded peers of the same ethnicity. In contrast, Arab males with an integrated acculturation status (value placed on both heritage and host culture) were found to have an independent self-construal, perhaps preferring to socialize with those with a similar independent self-construal from among their cross-ethnicity or mainstream peers.

In addition to psychological variables such as self-construal, there are contextual factors that need to be taken into consideration in theorizing about Arab ethnic identity. Of importance is the role of how Arabs are perceived and treated in North America, especially given the post-9/11 backlash in societal attitudes (Nassar-McMillan, Lambert, & Hakim-Larson, 2011). It has become apparent to many researchers that any comprehensive consideration of the ethnic identity of immigrant groups will need to take into account their history of experiencing discrimination and ongoing prejudicial attitudes that linger in their host cultures. While both Christian and Muslim Arabs have experienced discrimination and prejudicial attitudes in the U.S., Muslim Arabs are particularly vulnerable as a visible minority given their traditional clothing and appearance (e.g. the hijab among some women and beards among some men), and their observance of cultural or religious practices that are unfamiliar to the mainstream (Awad, 2010). Rumbaut (2008) noted that when there are real or perceived insults to aspects of one's ethnic identity, there may be heightened attention given to it and a reactive ethnic identity process may emerge resulting in an increased sensitivity and self-consciousness about one's ethnicity. Negative stereotypes about Arabs were in existence before the tragic events of 9/11 and abounded throughout the early history of the U.S., as evidenced in written records and Hollywood films (e.g. Shaheen, 2001); so the fact that discriminatory attitudes continue to prevail is not surprising. However, recent events in the Arab region and the near instantaneous transmission of images and world news via the Internet have put Arabs even more in the international spotlight.

Previous authors (Britto, 2008; Britto & Amer, 2007) emphasized that Muslim Arab American youth in particular have had to negotiate a relatively complex ethnic identity that does not necessarily fit into currently available models. Because Muslim Arab American youth are part of a cultural group that is at times in conflict with the Western world at a sociopolitical level, they are sometimes viewed with skepticism by mainstream American culture, and the consequences may spill over into their everyday interactions, complicating their adjustment at school and at home. Similarly, Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai (2011) found a link between sociocultural adversity (such as perceived racial discrimination) and psychological distress among Arab American youth. Having a strong ethnic identity was found to be negatively related to psychological distress. Thus, the healthy adaptation and acculturation of Arab immigrants is at least partially related to the extent to which ethnic identity formation is occurring in a supportive rather than a discriminatory environment.

Acculturation and Arab Ethnic Identity

Acculturation refers to the process of adapting to a host culture that is different from one's ethnic or heritage culture (e.g. Berry, 1997; Miller, 2007). The ease or difficulty of integrating one's host culture and ethnic culture is partly determined by the similarities and differences between the two cultures (e.g. Rudmin, 2003a). Also, immigrants or ethnic minorities who share a common heritage culture may not adapt to acculturation in the same way. This is because there are individual differences — such as psychosocial factors, religion, values, and attitudes — across individuals who share a common background culture of origin (Berry, 2009). The process of acculturation may be the source of significant difficulties for some and represent what has been called acculturative stress (Berry, 1997).

Arab Americans are from diverse geographic, religious, and political backgrounds. In comparison to other ethnic groups, there are very few studies that have examined the acculturation process among Arab Americans. From these few studies, a number of psychosocial factors that influence Arab Americans' acculturation, ethnic and American identities, and subsequent mental and physical health have been identified. Among these are: country of origin, religion, age at immigration, reason for immigration, gender, length of time in the U.S., generational status, educational background, and English language skills.

For Arab Americans, country of origin and religion are associated with acculturation and adaptation to American mainstream culture. For example, Ajrouch and Jamal (2007) found that Lebanese and Syrian Christian Arab Americans with a long history of immigration to the U.S. were more likely to identify themselves as White, compared to more recent Muslim immigrants from Yemen or Iraq. Faragallah, Schuman, and Webb (1997) found that Christian Arabs who immigrated to the U.S. reported higher levels of acculturation and life satisfaction as compared to Muslim Arabs. Overall, Christian Arabs have found it easier to adapt to American mainstream culture due to similar religious values. More recently, Awad (2010) found that higher levels of discrimination were reported by both Christian and Muslim Arab Americans with low levels of immersion in dominant society culture. However, among those with higher levels of immersion in the mainstream culture, Muslim participants reported higher levels of discrimination than Christian participants.

Age at immigration has also been linked to adaptation to American culture. Arabs who immigrated to the U.S. at a younger age and spent longer periods of time between visits to their home cultures reported higher levels of adaptation and life satisfaction, while Arab immigrants who were older upon entry to the U.S. reported poorer adjustment and life satisfaction (Faragallah et al., 1997). When acculturation begins at an early age, the process may be smoother and less stressful for individuals than when it starts later because young children have more personal flexibility and adaptability to adjust (Berry, 1997). However, older youth may experience difficulty adapting to the American mainstream as they need to resolve conflicts with their parents who may want them to maintain the values, beliefs, and traditions of their heritage culture (Hakim-Larson, Kamoo, Nassar-McMillan, & Porcerelli, 2007). Ajrouch (2000) interviewed Arab American adolescents in an attempt to learn about ethnic identity formation. Those whose parents tried to instill the traditions of the heritage culture and separate them from American mainstream culture reported feeling controlled and restricted by their parents.

Like age at immigration, the various economic and sociopolitical reasons for immigration have been linked to acculturative stress. When immigration is voluntary, for those who choose to assimilate, the acculturation process will be smoother with less stress and fewer psychological problems (Berry, 1997). However, when immigration is involuntary and acculturating individuals are rejected or marginalized by the mainstream culture, acculturation may be highly stressful and may lead to significant psychological difficulties (Berry, 1997). Jamil, Nassar-McMillan, and Lambert (2007) found that Iraqi refugees whose move was involuntary (due to political instability and war) experienced significant acculturative stress and mental health problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, immigrants from Iraq whose move was voluntary and primarily due to economic reasons experienced few if any psychological problems and acculturated more easily to the host culture. Immigrants who voluntarily immigrate may be more willing to learn about the host culture (Berry, 1997).

The different levels of acculturative stress resulting from the involuntary nature or otherwise of immigration may also vary according to the immigrant's gender. The gender roles of Arab Americans may be described as patriarchal and hierarchical. Men are primarily responsible for the family finances and represent the household in matters that are public and external to the household, while women are generally responsible for parenting, homemaking, and maintaining cultural traditions within the family (Hakim-Larson, Nassar-McMillan, & Paterson, 2012). Naff (1985) reported that first and second generation Arab American immigrant women in the twentieth century often adjusted to the American mainstream culture with minor acculturative

stress. Many but not all of these women abandoned the traditions and customs of their heritage culture because of the economic goals of their families. Like many early immigrants, they wanted to assimilate into American life. These women were employed outside the home, participated in family businesses, adapted their clothing to Western culture, and in turn were empowered by these changes. Similarly, Amer and Hovey (2007) found no differences between second generation male and female Arab Americans on measures of acculturation and acculturative stress; however, second generation females did report more Arab ethnic practices as compared to second generation males. These outcomes may be quite different for more recent involuntary immigrants and refugees.

Length of residence in the U.S. and generational status are important considerations in understanding Arab American acculturation. Faragallah and colleagues (1997) found that longer length of residence in the U.S. was linked with greater identification with American culture. In contrast to earlier immigrants, recent female Arab immigrants who are uneducated, socially isolated, and do not speak English have been found to be at an increased risk for acculturative stress and interpersonal problems such as domestic violence (Kulwicki & Miller, 1999).

For Arab Americans, generational status has been found to be associated with the adoption of American culture and maintenance of the heritage culture; that is, those who are second generation report lower levels of engagement in Arab customs and language and higher levels of adoption of American mainstream culture (Amer, 2014). According to Kim (2007), maintaining one's heritage culture may not apply to individuals who are several generations removed from migration because they may have never been fully socialized into their heritage group's cultural norms. As described later in this chapter, for such individuals the process of enculturation and learning about one's family ethnic history either within the family or through deliberate genealogical research can be instrumental in ethnic identity resolution. These later generation Arab Americans may have a family history that extends back as far as four or even five generations in the U.S. to the American Industrial Revolution at the turn of the twentieth century. Thus, even for later generation Arab Americans, both acculturation and ethnic identity may be fostered by the family, especially parents, grandparents, and extended family members who continue to socialize children to identify with their Arab culture (Amer, 2014).

The level of education and degree of fluency in the English language are also related to the acculturation process. Arab Americans with higher levels of education are less likely to participate in ethnic practices (Amer & Hovey, 2007), and English language proficiency was found to be instrumental in adapting to American mainstream culture (Ajrouch, 2007).

Models of Acculturation: Relevance for Research on Arab Americans

While there is currently no dominant model of acculturation that incorporates the relevant psychosocial factors for Arab Americans as reviewed above, there are several models that are currently in use that guide contemporary research. In the past, acculturation was conceptualized as a unilinear process in that immigrants were viewed as gradually adapting to the host culture by acquiring the practices and values of the host culture while discarding those from their cultural heritage (Yoon et al., 2013). However, researchers and theorists began to recognize that it was possible for an individual to both adapt to the host culture and maintain the heritage culture, thus acquiring competence in more than one culture (Rumbaut, 1997).

In his seminal work on acculturation, Berry (1997) proposed a bidimensional model of acculturation that included two independent dimensions: cultural adaptation (the gradual process of adopting the practices and values of the new or host culture) and cultural maintenance (retention of the practices and values of the heritage culture). In Berry's model, these independent dimensions intersect, resulting in four alternative strategies that describe the process of acculturation: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. In the assimilation strategy, a person adapts to the host culture, but no longer identifies with the heritage culture. In separation, a person rejects the host culture and

maintains the heritage culture. In the integration strategy (also referred to as biculturalism), a person adapts to the practices and values of the host culture and also maintains the practices and values of the heritage culture. In the marginalization strategy, a person rejects both the host culture and the heritage culture. An individual utilizing the marginalization strategy may be at increased risk of experiencing more psychological distress due to a lack of community and contextual resources (Berry, 1997).

Berry's (1997) four-classification model has been instrumental in generating much research and it has spurred theorizing on the topics of acculturation and enculturation. Early versions of this model were critiqued with claims that the model was too structural and static rather than process-oriented (Rudmin, 2003a). However, it was later acknowledged that Berry had addressed many of the limitations of his early model in his updated publications (Rudmin, 2003b). Thus, Berry's approach to the classification and measurement of acculturation strategies has continued to remain an important contemporary contribution to the field. For example, Yoon and colleagues (2013) conducted a statistical meta-analysis on 325 studies of acculturation/enculturation strategies and mental health outcomes such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, depression, and anxiety. The participants in some studies included a small proportion of Arab Americans. They found that the integration acculturation strategy had the most favorable mental health outcomes, followed by assimilation and separation. Marginalization had the least favorable association to mental health outcomes.

Some researchers have proposed an expanded, multidimensional acculturation model that is influenced by demographic and contextual factors (Miller, 2007; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010; Yoon, Langrehr, & Ong, 2011). This expanded model includes cultural behaviors, values, practices, knowledge, and identity. It considers the differential rates and patterns of acculturation across the dimensions and the contextual influences across family, school, neighborhood, and community systems (Yoon et al., 2013). It suggests that acculturation for Arab Americans is a complex process.

Future research with Arab Americans would benefit from employing a multidimensional model of acculturation to better understand the development of ethnic and American identities, overall wellbeing, and various mental health outcomes. One negative outcome of the acculturation process is that some Arab Americans have chosen to hide or minimize their ethnic identities to protect against discrimination. On the positive side, others have instead increased their overt displays of ethnic pride and focused their attention on enculturation. One way that this is accomplished is through learning about Arab cultural practices (e.g. food, music; Hakim-Larson et al., 2012). Yoon and his colleagues (2013) highlighted the importance of considering enculturation as a complement to acculturation. As described next, enculturation involves activities that allow immigrants and their descendants in later generations to create or maintain ties to their family's culture of origin.

Enculturation and Arab Ethnic Identity

While acculturation focuses on the processes involved in adaptation when members of two cultural groups interact – as occurs when immigrants settle into a new life within their host culture (e.g. Berry, 1997) – enculturation includes being socialized into the language, behaviors, identity, sociopolitical historical knowledge, and values of one's ethnic group (e.g. Kim, Ahn, & Lam, 2009; Yoon et al., 2011; Yoon et al., 2013). While many aspects of Arab culture are similar across countries of origin and religions, there are also differences between them – for example, in dialect and certain traditions. The extent to which a person is immersed in learning about these specific aspects of their heritage culture may vary by the age of immigration. Those who have immigrated at an earlier age or who are second generation will have had less direct exposure to the heritage culture and thus less experience with the most direct form of the enculturation process in the country of origin (Berry, 1997). Rather, their enculturation process takes place in the host culture in which their families currently reside.

For some contemporary researchers, the process of enculturation is viewed as being more fundamental than that of acculturation because immigrants are typically embedded within families that provide the first and most immediate social context for the socialization of language, behavior, and cultural values. That context is often rich in the heritage or ethnic group culture(s) (Weinreich, 2009). Thus, even though a child is born to immigrant parents in the U.S., the child's first language might be Arabic rather than English. In this view, even before children of immigrants have entered school (where they may become relatively more acculturated), enculturation processes have already begun to lay down a foundation in their identity within the family context. According to Weinreich, immigrants are repeatedly challenged to reformulate their ethnic identities under a diversity of everyday social contexts and circumstances. At any given time, there may be a tension between acculturation and enculturation processes. For example, sometimes the values of the mainstream culture (e.g. freedom in America to choose one's partner by dating) will conflict with those of the ethnic group culture (e.g. arranged or family-sanctioned marriages).

As reviewed by Awad (2010), the goals of the Arab American family take priority over the goals of the individual, and high value is placed on respect for elders and their traditions. Thus, children must attend to what they are being taught by their elders during the enculturation process, whether this involves language (e.g. greeting elders) or other customs and traditions (such as food, music, traditional dress). Parents and extended family remain involved in the ethnic socialization processes of the children even into their adult years, many of whom continue to speak their heritage language at home.

The Arabic language itself provides a window into an understanding of Arab societies and cultures (Nydell, 2006). Thus, for many Arab Americans, a major component of socialization into their Arab ethnic identity through the enculturation process includes learning and utilizing the Arabic language. In contrast to the acculturation problems of immigrants in acquiring the language of the host culture, the enculturation process involves the retention and refining of one's Arabic language skills as a first generation immigrant or learning how to read, write, and speak Arabic as a second or later generation person residing in North America. Kim and colleagues (2009) suggested that it may be more accurate to use the term "cultural maintenance" as described by Berry (e.g. Berry, 2001, 2011) in referring to the enculturation of the first generation because they already have stored memories and a history of immersion in the heritage culture. This is not the case for second and later generation Arab Americans, who then must learn the Arabic language in other formal or informal but quite limited ways. Arab community centers, churches, and mosques may offer Arabic language classes to foster Arab ethnic identity in Arab Americans. Thus, bilingualism or multilingualism is of interest in the enculturation process and there are diverse manifestations of the linguistic outcomes.

Such diversity in Arabic language use stems primarily from geographical origins. According to Nydell (2006), there are five regions in which variations of the Arabic dialect are spoken: North African (Western dialect), Egyptian/Sudanese, Levantine, Arabian Peninsular, and Iraqi. Only the speakers of the Egyptian/Sudanese and the Levantine dialects have some ability to understand each other; otherwise, there are wide variations in the spoken vocabulary and grammatical structures. Written Arabic and technical advanced language is more likely to make use of classical/standard Arabic, and thus be more widely understood throughout the Arab region (Nydell, 2006). Such standard Arabic is used when a person wants to convey a sense of seriousness and sophistication. The regional dialect might be used more informally in emotional or intimate settings or for the purpose of joking, giving examples, or to denote the relative unimportance of a topic to the speaker (Albirini, 2011). Because the Arabic language itself is diglossic (i.e. consists of two forms: the classical/standard form (high form) and the more local regional dialect (low form), code-switching between the two forms may occur in a variety of both formal and informal settings depending on the specific practical purpose (Albirini, 2011). This is further complicated by code-switching between other languages (such as English or French) that may be part of an immigrant's linguistic background. The education of bilingual English- and Arabic-speaking immigrant children

who are learning to read and write is complicated by these considerations (e.g. Farran, Bingham, & Matthews, 2012).

Many individuals who immigrate to other countries, such as the U.S., not only bring their specific native Arabic dialect and perhaps standard Arabic, but also other languages that they may have learned before arriving in their host countries. For example, because of the French and British occupation in the Levant region (e.g. Lebanon, Syria, Palestine) early in the twentieth century (Garraty & Gay, 1985; Najem, 2012) and the contemporary influence of universities in the Middle East where English or French is emphasized academically, many Lebanese learn English and/or French as a second language and thus some may speak two or even three languages (Arabic, English, and French). Code-switching can occur between the two forms of Arabic (high, low) as well as with additional languages, and these sometimes occur as a co-mixture within the same statement made by the individual. Another example here would be Catholic Christian Iraqi immigrants called Chaldeans who may speak both Arabic and a variation of the ancient language called Aramaic (Kamoo, 1999).

The enculturation process for Arab immigrants involves learning how to effectively and strategically alternate between the use of the English and Arabic (or other) languages in social settings such as within the home. Interestingly, Al-Khatib (2003) found that second generation Lebanese youth in London switched to using English during family conversations taking place in Arabic when they were clearly being defiant, thus signaling their feelings of Western autonomy and separation from family at that moment during the interaction. Some research points to the notion that similar conflicts occur in Asian immigrant families due to a gap in the values of parents and children – parents may attempt to enculturate their children into traditional ethnic values at the same time that children are attempting to acculturate to the values of the mainstream American society in which they live (Kim et al., 2009). In addition, being enculturated into Arabic traditions includes other socialization processes involving verbal communication such as learning polite conversational transitions (e.g. Ferguson, 1976).

In addition to learning the Arabic language directly through their families and local communities, various forms of media are instrumental in fostering enculturation. For example, Arab Americans have access to Arabic language radio programs and satellite television, which means that communications directly from the Middle East have become another informal means of enculturation into the Arabic language and culture. Some social scientists have now begun to research the use of Web-surfing and the Internet as alternative means of information gathering among Arab Americans (Muhtaseb & Frey, 2008; Nagel & Staeheli, 2004). They have suggested that, like many other Americans, Arab Americans are motivated to use the Internet for a multiplicity of reasons that may include learning about the values, behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes of others outside the U.S. Web-surfing and social communication over the Internet via chat rooms and LISTSERVS may be an especially important means of enculturation for contemporary Arab Americans. A good proportion of their Internet information gathering may come from sources outside the U.S., though it is not clear how this use compares to that of other ethnic groups or to mainstream Americans in the U.S. (Muhtaseb & Frey, 2008). It is also not clear whether the motivation among Arab Americans to use the Internet for such information gathering varies by psychosocial factors. One possibility in need of further research is that younger or more educated Arab Americans may be more likely than those who are older or less educated to use the Internet and computer-mediated communication as a means of socialization into their ethnic identities.

Processes Involved in the Socializing of Ethnic Identity

As noted by Phinney and Ong (2007), there are many opportunities for ethnic identity socialization as the individual encounters various relevant social contexts over time. These agents of socialization operate dynamically at the macro-level by transmitting broader cultural symbols, language, and media, and at the micro-level such as within families and communities through music, food, clothing, and psychological attitudes and beliefs (Hakim-Larson, 2014). While the content of such

socialization includes being directly taught about various Arab cultural values, behaviors, and events, a process of exploration is necessary before a person can have a mature commitment to an ethnic identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). This process of exploration involves a person actively seeking out specific information about his or her ethnicity by reading about it, communicating with others to learn more, and participating in cultural events sponsored by community organizations and religious institutions.

Organizations such as the Arab American Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, the Arab American Institute in Washington, D.C., and religious institutions have websites that are regularly updated. They frequently hold cultural events that promote cultural sensitivity, awareness, and acceptance of Arab ethnic traditions, and provide opportunities for the enculturation of Arab American immigrants and their second, third, and later generation descendants who are engaging in a process of exploration.

The case example presented below illustrates the process of exploration and commitment engaged in by second generation author Raff Ellis. His Maronite Christian Lebanese parents immigrated in the early part of the twentieth century. The culmination of this process resulted in Ellis (2007) writing a book about several generations of his family history.

Case Example: The Family Story of Raff Ellis

"Kidnapped!!" was the word that stuck in the mind of Ellis (2007) when he was a boy listening to his mother tell the story of how his maternal grandmother, who was a novice in training to become a Catholic nun, was "kidnapped" from her convent. She was taken by surprise and reluctance – but with family and community endorsement – by a wealthy Christian "sheikh" in Lebanon looking for a bride. The term "sheikh" is a pre-Islamic honorific title given to men of privileged status in Arabic-speaking countries (Esposito, 2003); the term "sheikha" refers to women from families of privileged wealth and status (Ellis, 2007). While growing up in Carthage, New York, Ellis was intrigued by this story and motivated many years later to trace his family's history after his mother's death in 1994. Thus, it was not until Ellis was in his 60s that he began his ethnic identity exploration by reading his mother's letters, writing down family stories, and travelling to Lebanon.

Ellis' mother, Angele, was the daughter of the "kidnapped" woman and the sheikh. She was considered a "sheikha" and was a well-respected teacher in Lebanon before she married Ellis' father, Toufic. Ellis learned that his mother repeatedly rejected the wealthy suitors arranged by one of his uncles. Toufic came from a lower social class and was the son of a stonemason; marrying him was considered to be beneath a sheikha. Nonetheless, Angele married him, partially because of his good looks and partially because of her anticipatory excitement about the idea of going to America with him. Toufic had recently started a business in Carthage, New York, and thus her future with him seemed promising.

Once married, however, there were problems with Angele getting a U.S. visa. She and her sister-in-law were held up in Marseilles, France. Meanwhile, Toufic returned to the U.S. in the hopes of getting their visas and arranging their passage to North America. Upon his arrival back in Carthage, New York, Toufic found out that his business partner (a cousin) had managed their dry goods store so poorly during his absence that he was now bankrupt and the store had closed. Toufic had thus lost his life savings and was quite devastated. Ellis reports that these events and the difficulties his father had in securing his mother's passage to the U.S. (it took 11 weeks) were very depressing for his father. His mother too became quite depressed after learning of her new husband's failures. She expressed regrets about giving up marriage to one of her wealthy suitors, and at times her family encouraged her to separate from her husband and return to Lebanon. Furthermore, she only spoke French and Arabic. She wrote to her family often with criticisms regarding her plight. A further insult was the fact that Toufic now had to make a living by selling tobacco and shining shoes, a state that Angele

felt was quite beneath her. The news of Toufic's business setback travelled quickly in gossip networks in Lebanon.

Years later when asked about these early events, Toufic still had deep scars and feelings of resentment over the losses he suffered (Ellis, 2007), even though he did manage to once again have his own business. Angele remained generally unhappy but continued nonetheless to do her duties as a Christian (i.e. Maronite Catholic) wife and mother. She retained a stubborn independence, took private English language lessons, and learned to drive. Overall, she valued being an American and wanted to assimilate.

As part of his enculturation, Raff Ellis (2007) spent eight years exploring his family's history in the search for more information about his ancestors. He attempted wherever possible to find records that verified the family stories and legends he had heard or read about in his mother's letters. He notes that as a child in Carthage, he longed to assimilate and just be part of the celebrated American melting pot. However, this goal was more myth than reality in everyday life, because "those who came earlier or from more 'respectable' origins, didn't want us cast into that fabled pot with them, and we were not allowed to melt and fuse with them" (p. 301). He described being the victim of racial slurs. Though he felt ambivalence about his ethnic identity throughout his earlier life, he noted that "my ethnicity kept drawing me back, even though I had loudly protested that I wanted out" (p. 303). In exploring and writing about his family history, Raff Ellis was able to finally accept and commit to his Lebanese Arab American ethnic identity.

In his book Ellis (2007) now provides a means of helping to teach Arab Americans across generations about the early immigrant experiences. The Ellis family history demonstrates the nature of the acculturative stressors encountered by first generation immigrants and the impact of these stressors on later generations. It is noteworthy that Ellis' own journey toward self-exploration and eventual identity commitment was not a smooth one. Due to American pressures to assimilate while co-existing simultaneously with societal prejudice and discrimination against Arabs as he was growing up, Ellis struggled and resisted fully exploring his ethnic identity until a later point in his life. This book, and others that trace the life stories of Arab American immigrants, uses narratives as an interesting informal method of attempting to answer questions about ethnic identity development.

Critique

In general, sound methodological practices in conducting formal research begin with asking questions in such a way that further research will be able to give some tentative answers (Kazdin, 1998). Theoretical models are often helpful in structuring what is already known and pointing to gaps in what needs to be addressed further. Berry and colleagues (2006) identified three primary questions to be addressed in conducting research on acculturation, enculturation, and ethnic identity with immigrant youth. These questions are also applicable to the study of immigrants of all ages, as well as their descendants in second and later generations, and are therefore reflected here in a more generalized adapted form. The first, "intercultural," question asks: "Just how do immigrants and their descendants live in between two or more cultures?" The second, "adaptation," question asks: "Just how well do immigrants and their descendants do in terms of the academic, social, and personal arenas of their lives as they live in between cultures?" Finally, the third, "cross-cultural," question asks what differences there are across cultures in the patterns of intercultural functioning and adaptation at a broader level of analysis. In attempting to answer these questions, many studies have been conducted, including the seminal work of Berry and colleagues (2006); however, relatively few until recently have focused on Arab Americans.

Amer's (2014) review of the research on Arab American acculturation identified gaps in the literature. First, in taking a developmental psychopathology approach to address the immigrants' adaptation, Amer suggested that there is a need for research on risk and protective factors. Second, there is

a need to account for the heterogeneity of Arab Americans, who have various countries of origin, religious backgrounds, beliefs, values, and traditions that defy easy generalization, especially given the typically small sample sizes of many studies. Amer reviewed literature demonstrating the complexities of how Arab Americans self-identify, which can vary by context, background, future plans for where they would like to reside, or by how they are perceived and labeled in the dominant American society. Finally, the literature on Arab Americans has focused more on mental health symptoms, such as depression and anxiety, in an effort to establish the need for culturally competent care; yet, how resilience is fostered and utilized as part of the acculturation process has received far less attention.

With respect to enculturation, in addition to the role of the family, global communication and visual media (such as news, television, and movies) from the Arab world likely impact which cultural values from the heritage society are incorporated into an individual's ethnic identity and which are not. While the digital age is upon us and there are studies beginning to address its impact, it is unclear to what extent immigrant youth in the U.S. text, Skype, email, browse the Web, and so on across cultural and social contexts, although as discussed above, some social scientists have begun to address this issue. One future direction will be to ascertain how to best go about identifying and assessing the outcomes of these influences on ethnic identity.

Another direction is to focus on socialization within families. Based on a clash of values and cultural practices, conflicts within families may occur between generations (grandparents, parents, and children) or within generations (sibling disputes). Longitudinal and multigenerational studies of families would help to tease out what is common and what is different from one generation to the next. Because there is such a high value placed on family life and cohesion among Arab Americans, resolution of family feuds and intrafamilial conflicts via the process of forgiveness has been described as an important issue in need of further research (Ajrouch & Antonucci, 2014). Given the complexity of ethnic identity structure and the fact that there are likely to be identity conflicts experienced when there are discrepancies in values and behaviors during the acculturation/enculturation process, it will be important to better understand how conflicts are resolved and how ethnic identity may become integrated so that a person experiences some continuity over the life course.

Conclusion

While good progress has been made in understanding some of the factors worthy of further study with Arab Americans, the question of just what constitutes healthy, adaptive, normative ethnic identity development for Arab Americans remains. The answers to this question are likely to vary by context, generation, and historical time. Describing the multifaceted and changing nature of ethnic identity development of Arab Americans will be a challenge for future research. In general developmental frameworks, such development would consist of an integrated and coherent sense of self and others over time, with the ramifications of ethnic identity crossing over from one generation to the next. Thus, there is a need for longitudinal studies of Arab American families across multiple generations to account for birth cohort and intergenerational transmission effects. Another promising area of future study involves the role of computer-mediated communication (via the Internet and social media websites) in the acculturation, enculturation, and ethnic identity of Arab Americans. Technological advances should make such studies increasingly feasible over time.

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