American Arabs and Political Participation

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American Arabs and Political Participation

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

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Surprisingly little has been written about the participation of American Arabs in this nation's political life. While immigrants from what was the area in the Middle East then known as "Greater Syria" began arriving in the United States at least as early as the 1880s, their initial perception of themselves as sojourners in a land they would soon leave inhibited their integration into American society and politics.

Arab Americans have nonetheless been active in the public square since those early days, creating numerous local and some national institutions of civil society and then becoming heavily involved in the U.S. labor movement. Many began to think of themselves as Americans in the second decade of the twentieth century, particularly with the outbreak of World War I. Since 1967, Arab Americans have created a number of vibrant national organizations, and their participation in the political process has increased to the point that the percentage of Arab Americans registered to vote in 2000 (88.5 percent) surpassed the national average that year of 70 percent.[1] As the essays by Ismael Ahmed, Helen Samhan and Michael Suleiman note, there have been and are a large number of Arab-American officeholders on the local level.

Arab-American scholars and activists, as well as non-Arab-American scholars who study the community, nevertheless regard Arab-American influence on the policymaking process to be disproportionately limited. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' Division of United States Studies therefore convened a gathering of such scholars and activists to examine questions such as the following and to organize their answers into a coherent body of information available to the public, scholars, and policymakers:

- How politically active are Arab Americans? What is the nature of their activism?
- What are the incentives and disincentives for Arab-American participation in the nation's political life?
- Do levels of political involvement vary by region? by gender?
- What steps would Arab Americans have to take to increase their political influence?

The answers, presented at a conference at the Wilson Center on May 5, 2006 and included in this volume, were varied. Ismael Ahmed and Ronald Stockton focused particularly upon Arab Americans in Michigan, and found high levels of participation. Helen Samhan detailed the growth of national organizations and some of the lessons they have learned. Kathy Christison examined the political disincentives experienced by Palestinian Americans, and Janice Terry recounted the particular disincentives of the post-9/11 era for many Arab Americans. Jen'nan Read analyzed the impact of gender, and Abdeen Jabara presented an activist's view of systemic disincentives. John

Sununu offered suggestions for increasing the community's political impact. Michael Suleiman and Gary Gerstle helped put the discussion into historical perspective by tracing both the history of Arab Americans and the history of the political participation of other immigrant groups.

It was a robust discussion, as these essays indicate. There were differences of opinion about issues such as whether or not the Arab-American community (or, perhaps one should say, the Arab-American communities – for as Michael Suleiman emphasizes, Arab Americans are a highly variegated group of people) has the financial resources to become a major force in American politics; whether the issue of Palestine/Israel or the issue of civil rights is now of greatest importance to the community; whether U.S. politicians are willing to engage with the community; whether the best tactic is coalition with other groups and involvement in their issues or a focus only on the issues of specific interest to Arab Americans.

The conference and the papers written for it, then, became a way of getting a conversation started and a means of suggesting the issues that bear further research and analysis. We at the Center hope this volume will add to the conversation and encourage future work in this field.

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NOTES

1. Amie Jamieson, Hyon B. Shin, and Jennifer Day, "Current Population Reports: Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, Feb. 2002, p. 2, available at http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p20-542.pdf; Zogby International poll, reported in Judy Aita, "Arab-Americans Claim Their Place at Republican Convention, Political Leaders Encourage Community to be Active in U.S. Politics," *Washington File*, Sept. 2, 2004, http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2004/Sep/02-89612.html.

A History of Arab-American Political Participation

MICHAEL W. SULEIMAN

INTRODUCTION

Arab Americans constitute a community of about 3.5 million. Because of the community's small size, the dearth of studies on its political participation, and the difficulties it has faced in exercising political influence, a study of its political participation must focus on a wide variety of political activities. What follows therefore includes coverage of political protest and interest group activities, the role of Arab Americans in elections and the electoral process, and a discussion of the Arab Americans elected to Congress. Finally, a number of tentative conclusions will be presented.

As this is an initial attempt to provide a history of Arab–American political participation, and as more studies have been done on the recent and contemporary scene than on the earlier historical period, that period will be the focus of this essay. This will also provide a sense of the continuity of activity from the 1880s, the earliest period of relatively large Arab immigration to the United States. It is nevertheless important to emphasize that this is *a* history, and not *the* history, of the community's political participation.

Surprisingly, no history of the participation of Arab Americans in politics has been written. This is in part because of the belief that, at least until the mid–1960s, Arab Americans were not involved in politics. Philip Hitti, writing in 1924, stated, "Syrians cut no figure in the political life of this nation. Very few of them interest themselves in politics or aspire to office."[1] Ibrahim Abu–Lughod reiterated the same view in 1969, and James Zogby expressed similar ideas as late as 1984.[2] Another reason for the lack of literature is that Muslim Americans (approximately one-fifth of them of Arab background) began serious involvement in the political process only recently.

Several reasons have been advanced for the lack of political participation among Arab Americans, the most common stating that there was no national group solidarity in the countries of origin.[3] Another is that Arab–American communal solidarity is weak, and the emphasis of community members has been on the family and the religious sect.[4] Personal characteristics, especially individualistic tendencies, might also be cited.

However, all of these explanations and others refer primarily to political participation on the national American scene and do not take into consideration political participation *within* the Arab–American community. Involvement in community politics, however, is the usual pattern of political participation for immigrant groups in the early years of their settlement, and certainly was the case in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when immigrants found security in their own group or nationality.[5] The pioneer Arab immigrants of that period, generally known at the time as "Syrians," behaved in essentially the same manner. As relative latecomers on the American scene, they learned from earlier immigrants and in fact began to establish churches, social clubs, benefit associations or cooperatives, and newspapers at a faster pace than other and earlier ethnic groups.[6]

THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I

Most if not all such activities related to and focused on the Syrian/Arab-American community. Until World War I, Arabs in the United States thought of themselves and acted as if they were in, but not part of, American society and its body politic. They were sojourners with the sojourners' mentality, thinking that they were temporary residents and would return home in the not too distant future. As their primary concern was the quick accumulation of wealth in order to assure a better life in the old homeland, they avoided much involvement in the social or political life of the United States. They referred to themselves as *al-Nizala*; that is, travelers or guests. Their newspapers continually informed them that, as guests in the United States, they needed to behave properly and show gratitude to their hosts. They were also constantly reminded that they were "Syrians" and/or Ottomans and needed to heed the concerns of their homeland and government. They were, in the main, subjects of the Ottoman empire, not U.S. citizens.[7] Indeed, when Antun Semaan, who appears to have been the first Syrian/Arab American to run for political office, ran unsuccessfully as the Republican candidate for the New York State legislature from Albany, the community was split about his political activity. While one newspaper, *Meraat-ul-Gharb*, expressed its great pride in this son of "Syria," another, *Al-Hoda*, attacked him.[8]

The situation changed dramatically after World War I, a watershed event in the fortunes of Syrians/Arabs in the United States. They found themselves isolated from their former homelands and unable to offer effective aid to their people, who were suffering under Ottoman cruelty. Their efforts at resistance were miniscule compared to the scale of the tragedy. While their leaders in the United States asked for financial donations, and the community's fairly large contributions were reported almost daily in the Arabic press, the effort was marred by accusations of inefficiency, absence of patriotism, miserliness and theft.

The community leaders called for "Syrians" to join the American armed forces to show gratitude for the United States in its fight against the Ottoman enemy and also to express the patriotism of the Arab community, now awakened to the fact that its members were, and/or wanted to be, truly American and not Ottoman.[9] The response to this call was extremely positive. U.S. military documents show that "no less than 13,965, or about 7 percent of the entire Syrian community, served in the United States army" in World War I.[10] Many, in fact, distinguished themselves in the service of their new country.[11] Furthermore, Arabs in the United States began the process of incorporation into American society and politics.

OVERVIEW

The term "Arab American" refers to Americans who trace their ancestry/heritage to one of the Arabic-speaking countries of the Middle East. In the 1880s, they referred to themselves and were known as Syrians, meaning that they came from geographic Syria, an area encompassing present-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. While "Syrian" was the most popular designation, they were also known as Syrian-Lebanese, Arabians, Turks and, especially since 1967, as Arab Americans. These different names reflect a fluid or changing identity and a response to demographic changes experienced by the community, especially after the 1965 U.S. immigration laws opened the gates to greater numbers of immigrants from countries/regions outside the Levant.[12]

Arab Americans are a diverse community. There are differences between the early arrivals/pioneers and those who came after World War II, especially after 1967.[13] There are also differences in the

country of origin;[14] religious affiliation, including sect;[15] length of residence in the United States;[16] the young and the old; men and women;[17] socioeconomic status;[18] and between those who interact regularly with non-Arab Americans and those who choose to live in their own ethnic enclaves.[19]

Despite this diversity, however, Arab Americans share significant characteristics, including the Arabic language, the Arabic culture, and pride in their heritage. Furthermore, all have been subjected to negative stereotyping, discrimination and political exclusion.[20] They have been greatly marginalized and many feel alienated. Evidence of the marginalization is found in almost every aspect of American life, including the way Arab Americans are presented in the media, school textbooks, television, movies, fiction, and the field of entertainment generally.[21] It is also reflected in the prejudice and discrimination directed against members of these groups and those who "look" like them, particularly whenever there is a crisis in the Middle East or when a domestic attack is perpetrated.[22]

Results of the 2000 U.S. Census show that Americans of Arab ancestry are in many ways better off than the general population. Their educational achievements are higher, they earn higher incomes, and relatively more of them are in managerial and professional trades. The picture, however, is much more complex than those facts would suggest. The poverty rate among Arab Americans is higher than that of the general population (16.7 percent among Arab Americans; 12.4 percent in the general population), and it is much higher among the youth (22.2 percent among Arab Americans; 16.6 percent in the general population). Home ownership rates are lower for Arab Americans (Arab Americans 55.4 percent; general population 66.2 percent).[23] Furthermore, there are differences based on country of origin. Iraqis and Palestinians, especially those under 18 years of age, experience the highest poverty rates. Egyptian Americans have the highest percentage of high school and university graduates. Iraqi Americans have the lowest educational scores, which perhaps reflects the lower educational level of large numbers of new Iraqi immigrants and refugees.[24]

While Arab Americans are found in all states of the union, about two-thirds live in 10 states, and almost one-third reside in the three states of California, Michigan and New York.[25]

Very little has been published about the social and political attitudes of early arrivals,[26] but there is some information about Arab-American attitudes over the past century. Arab Americans have tended to range from middle-of-the-road to conservative on social and political issues.[27] In 1924, for instance, William Catzeflis, writing in *Al-Sa'ih*, called on "Syrians" to vote Republican (and for Calvin Coolidge) and against the extremism, financial profligacy, and Bolshevism of the Democrats and LaFollette.[28] On the other hand, A.Y., writing in the same newspaper, denounced William Randolph Hearst for being against social justice, opposed Alf Landon for what A.Y. called non-policies, and supported FDR for his compassion toward workers and his support of social justice issues.[29] In 1935, in response to complaints about taxes, Iliya Abu-Madi argued that there was a need for taxes to create jobs and provide help for the needy.[30] By and large, however, the social and political orientation of the community before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war was closer to that of the Republican Party, especially on domestic issues. As early as 1917, Maloof wrote, "In politics Syrians are predominantly Republicans."[31] More recently, politically active Arab Americans have tended to identify with Democrats or to be independent. For example, in the 1990 Suleiman survey, 58 percent of Arab Americans polled favored the Democratic Party, compared to only 32 percent for the Republicans.[32] In 1995, a plurality of 48.3 percent favored Independent/Other/None; only 27.3 percent favored the Democrats and 21.9 percent favored the Republican Party.[33]

Most Arab Americans place great emphasis on good citizenship, and see themselves as law-abiding, respectful, and not given to "extremism" of any kind, social or political.[34] While they have greatly admired the freedom and democracy on which the United States is founded,[35] some have been critical of the excesses of the capitalist system and the way the political process has been manipulated to deny the underprivileged an opportunity to participate effectively and fairly. As early as 1913, Farid Ghosn heaped high praise on the American founding fathers and on the freedom and democracy Americans enjoyed, but followed that approbation with a scathing critique of corruption, prostitution, and labor exploitation in the big cities.[36] Another writer found it difficult to reconcile the great wealth and civilization of the United States with its neglect of poor people.[37] The absence of and need for a universal health care system has been a prevalent theme for several Arab-American activists since the early part of the twentieth century.[38]

Arab Americans polled in a 1989 American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) survey of its members in North America expressed concern about the large size of the national budget and favored higher taxes as a partial solution. They also supported women's rights through the enactment of an Equal Rights Amendment and the renewal of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.[39]

There is no question, however, that the issue that has generated the greatest interest and commitment for most Arab Americans since the early 1900s has been the fate of Palestine and the Palestinians. The Arabic press in the United States has carried news and opinion about Palestine at a fairly steady pace, especially whenever there has been a crisis there. Almost all of these reports have been sympathetic to the Palestinians and to Arab positions, reflecting the views of the community.[40]

Since the 1960s, a number of structured, if not always systematic, surveys of the Arab-American community have been administered. In almost all of them, opinions on different aspects of the Palestine question were solicited. Thus, in the very first of these surveys (1968), this writer found a belief that Israel was bent on expansion and was uninterested in a negotiated settlement. Those in the sample who were of Palestinian origin felt that the Arabs' best strategy was neither compromise nor economic boycott but preparation for Israel's eventual defeat.[41]

Another survey in January of 1990 found that Arab Americans believed there was a definite effort to exclude them from politics, especially by Zionist and pro-Israel groups.[42] In a separate survey of members of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, respondents favored the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.[43] In 1995, a Zogby poll showed strong preference for the creation of an independent Palestine.[44] In October, 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, Arab Americans felt that securing Palestinian rights was important to them, and that a U.S. commitment to settling the Palestinian-Israeli dispute would help President Bush's efforts in the war on terror.[45] While at the turn of the twenty-first century the Iraq war and concerns about civil liberties began to surpass the Arab-Israeli conflict in importance, Arab Americans continued to show strong support for a fair resolution of this conflict.[46]

PROTEST POLITICS

During the past century, Arab Americans engaged in a variety of protest tactics as they attempted to ameliorate their conditions. These included the formation of mutual aid societies, some of which

were later transformed into interest groups or political organizations; industrial labor strikes; and the defense of community members' civil rights.

As noted earlier, "Syrians" established churches and formed ethnic organizations rather early in their immigrant experience. These were the main sources of support for indigent Arab Americans, especially new arrivals. Perhaps the best known of these was the Syrian Ladies' Aid Society, which was organized to aid Arab-American women and which later established branches in various parts of the country.

The most important protest action, at least during the early period of Arab-American settlement in the United States, was the 1912 strike of textile mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Arab Americans played a significant role in that extended and at times violent strike, which was triggered by the reduction of work hours and, therefore, of wages. The strike committee met at times in the "Syrian" St. Anthony's Maronite Church. Several Arab Americans, including Farris Marad, James Brox, and Dr. Iskander Hajjar, were involved at a high level of organizing and mobilization.[47] At least three Arab Americans – Mikhail Saliba, Yusuf Shahin, and Dr. Iskander Hajjar – spoke at the meetings at St. Anthony's. "Farris Marad and the Syrian Drum Corps" were in the lead at one of the parades,[48] and Yusuf Shahin was elected treasurer of the Strike Committee.[49] The strike generated much discussion and some discord within the Arab-American community. While *Meraat-ul-Gharb* and the Syrian Unity Association supported it, *Al-Hoda* condemned both the strike and the strikers, and was then accused by its opponents of publishing false information about the strike.[50]

The significant role played by Arab Americans in the strike is illustrated by the fact that, out of a total union membership of 30,000, some 2,500 were Syrians/Arabs.[51] They carried a disproportionate part of the burden, as some of their members were accused of having dynamite sticks in their homes. This report was later proved to be false, and the dynamite was found to have been planted to implicate those individuals and destroy the strike.[52] Finally, and sadly, two Arab Americans were killed during the strike. Hanna Rami was stabbed by a soldier or militiaman at one of the demonstrations, and Shafiq Marun was killed by an unknown assailant.[53]

While the 1912 Lawrence strike and the heavy involvement of Arab Americans in it was almost unique in the annals of Arab-American labor protest, other more recent developments are worth citing. Arab-American workers in the auto plants in the Detroit/Dearborn area, members of the United Auto Workers (UAW), protested in the 1970s against the UAW's use of its pension funds to purchase Israeli bonds.[54] A protest demonstration attracted some 2,500 people.[55] There was also concern on the part of some Arab-American workers that the UAW was not responsive to their complaints about low wages and bad treatment.[56]

Arab Americans fought on other fronts as well. An early and major event which agitated and traumatized the community was the claim by some federal judges that "Syrians" were Asian and, therefore, not eligible for U.S. citizenship. Although Americans of Arab ancestry had been treated as whites for over thirty years, in 1913 a federal judge in Charleston, South Carolina denied Faras Shahid's petition for citizenship because of the "common knowledge" that Syrians were not white. Then, in 1914, George Dow's petition for citizenship was denied based on the assumption that, as a "Syrian of Asiatic birth," Dow was not a free white person within the meaning of the March 26, 1790 citizenship statute.[57] The "Syrian" community, in one of many legal challenges over a period of ten years, asked for a rehearing.[58] A series of court cases that contributed to the definition of what

it meant to be white ended in 1924 with a recognition of "Syrians" as racially white and, therefore, eligible for U.S. citizenship.[59]

The "Syrian" community used any arguments it could in its struggle to establish its right to U.S. citizenship. These began with the assertion that "Syrians" were neither Asiatic nor black. While they might not have thought of themselves as white prior to their arrival in the New World, they inevitably became self-conscious about race once they were in the United States. In their everyday dealings and the way they thought about who they were, it had been clear to them that they were members of specific religious sects, came from an ancestral village, belonged to a family or extended family (*hamula*), and that they were "*awlad Arab*;" that is, spoke Arabic and came from an Arabic culture. Color and race had no place in their view of themselves. These might have continued to be the basic bonds of solidarity for them had it not been for the threat of losing their right to citizenship at the very moment they awakened to their Americanness.

They fought back by referring to their roots as members of the Semitic people and as Arabs – the people who came from the area which gave the world three monotheistic religions. While they utilized this argument, they had to deemphasize one aspect of it – namely, Islam and the prophet Mohammed – because of the American prejudice against that faith and its followers.[60] Instead, they emphasized their Christianity and the fact that Christ must have looked like them, had their coloring, and come from their race.[61] Surely, Americans would not deny Christ citizenship? In the end, however, they were satisfied that people from "Syria" were accepted as "white persons" because, in the words of one federal court, they were "closely related to Europeans."[62] In other words, their citizenship status was narrowly resolved by leaving out the larger category of "Arabs" or Arabians, especially Muslims. The issue of whether people of Arab background were white was not definitively settled until 1944.[63]

The African-American civil rights movement that swept across the United States in the 1950s and 1960s soon led to an effort by many minority groups to advance the civil rights of their own communities. Although various Third World-origin communities have gained federal minority status, Arab Americans have thus far been left out of that formula. The main rationale is that Arabs are "white."[64] It is ironic that the white "racial" status for which the community fought so hard has now become, at least for some Arab Americans, a stumbling block against the attainment of equal opportunity. They remain, as they say, "white but not quite."[65]

World War I and its aftermath presented the Syrian/Arab community with divisive challenges, especially in regard to the resolution of the status of Arabic-speaking regions formerly ruled by the Ottomans. Several groupings, reflecting the different views and organizations of Arabs in the former homelands, emerged within the Arab community in the United States. Some spoke out in favor of a Lebanese entity under French protection[66] or U.S. guardianship.[67] Others denounced such ideas and called for an independent "Syria,"[68] while still others called on the United States to "save the Near East."[69] The issue that aroused the greatest interest, however, was the fate of Palestine and the Palestinians. The Zionist movement succeeded in getting the British government to incorporate the Balfour Declaration of 1917 into the Mandate formula,[70] and the Palestine issue and the fate of the Palestinians have remained major concerns of the Arab-American community ever since. This has led to activism on the part of numerous individuals, groups and organizations.[71]

The organization that has led the fight for protection of the civil rights of Arab Americans has been the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC).[72] However, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks by Muslim Arab extremists, prejudice and discrimination against "Arabs" in the United States intensified greatly.[73] The Arab-American community had experienced some demographic changes since 1965, including an increase in the number of Muslim Arabs. There was also an increase in the numbers of non-Arab Muslim Americans. After 9/11, Arabs and/or Muslims and those who appeared to look like them became the objects of prejudice, discrimination, and violence, with the general public making no distinction between Arabs and Muslims. New organizations of Muslims, and Muslims and Arabs, emerged to join the ADC in the defense of the civil rights of both communities.[74]

INTEREST GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Several major Arab-American organizations were established in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The founders and members of these organizations and writers about the Arab-American experience generally believed that these were the first secular, educational and/or political organizations of their kind on a national level. The history of interest group activity by the Syrian/Arab-American community, however, suggests otherwise. Syrians/Arabs in the United States began to form ethnic churches, social clubs and mutual support organizations as early as the 1890s. While the early organizations were focused primarily on smaller units of the community, such as Maronites, Orthodox, and Druze, they banded together whenever there was an overarching issue of concern to all sections of the community.

The first major such non-sectarian organization of and for Syrians/Arabs was established on April 26, 1892 by Dr. Ameen F. Haddad. The Syrian Society of New York, as it was called, was primarily concerned about educating and Americanizing newly-arrived Arabs and their children in New York City.[75] Many sectarian organizations were formed in the next two decades, including a number focused on the concerns of women. Many of the new Syrian/Arab immigrants, particularly women and children, were illiterate or spoke little English or were destitute. The Syrian Women's Union was established in the late 1890s to help poor and working women. One effort was establishment of a nursery for Syrian/Arab children whose mothers worked at factories or as peddlers.[76] As noted above, the Syrian Ladies' Aid Society, formed on July 3, 1907, was the primary organization providing financial aid to women and their families in need, especially at the time of their arrival at Ellis Island. It also provided support for Arab school children.[77]

Among the early organizations which focused on the old homeland was *al-Nahda al-Lubnaniyya* (The Lebanese League of Progress), founded in 1911 by Naoum Mokarzel. Its main purpose was to support the creation or reestablishment of an independent Lebanon, mainly Christian and especially Maronite, under the protection of France.[78] The defense of an independent Lebanon was later championed by the World Lebanese Cultural Union.[79]

Apart from the focus on Lebanon, many groups were formed in support of "Syria" generally.[80] These associations came into existence even before World War I but especially after the defeat of the Ottomans. As early as 1899, representatives of Young Syria toured the United States to recruit members and to arouse anger against Ottoman despotism.[81] The main activities of Young Syria focused on fomenting revolution against the Ottomans. In 1899, at an open air Young Syria demonstration

in New York City, various speakers urged the "more than one hundred thousand" Arab Americans to free their former homeland from Turkish rule.[82] At another function soon thereafter, various speakers attacked the Ottoman sultan.[83] The Syrian Unity Association (Party) and the New Syria Party were active among Syrians/Arabs in the United States[84] and in 1918, while the war raged, the New York Committee for the Liberation of Syria and Lebanon worked for the defeat of the Ottomans.[85]

Concerns about the fate of Palestine and its people began rather early, as evidenced by the Palestine Welfare Society at the start of World War I.[86] The Palestine National League was active in the 1920s.[87] In 1929, representatives from the New Syria Party, joined by others from the Palestine National League and the Young Men's Moslem Society at a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, called to express their views and ask for American help in Palestine. The picture of these representatives identified Aly Jouday, Ameen Rihani, Peter S. George, Frank G. Sakran, Elias Joseph, and M.G. Sadak.[88]

The main lobbying for Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s, however, was done by the Arab National League.[89] Among the main leaders and spokesmen of the League, which also defended the old homelands generally, were William Catzeflis, Ameen Rihani, Fuad Issa Shatara (President), Amin Zeidan, Philip Elkholi, and Habib Katibah.[90] In 1937, an Arab National League delegation led by Ameen Rihani petitioned Secretary of State Cordell Hull, requesting that the United States not "discriminate between one group of its citizens [Jews] and another [Arabs]" when making policy on Palestine.[91] The League held conventions in various cities, including Flint, Michigan in 1939.[92]

By the 1930s, several Syrian- and Lebanese-American clubs were functioning successfully in the eastern, southern, midwestern and western United States.[93] Their main focus, however, appeared to be social and inspirational; that is, intended to cement the bonds of solidarity among "Syrians" in the United States and to maintain and strengthen their ties with the former homelands.[94] There was a need for a "national" organization which reflected the needs and desires of the Syrians/Lebanese, and the call for such an organization was made as early as 1907.[95] It was not until the late 1920s, however, that a serious effort in this direction was made, especially by Salloum Mokarzel, the publisher/editor of the English language journal *The Syrian World*. Mokarzel called specifically for a national federation of Syrian Clubs.[96] The result was the National Association of Federations of Syrian and Lebanese American Clubs.

It is important to note that this umbrella organization was not interested only in social issues or the affairs of Lebanon and Syria. Indeed, especially after the 1948 Arab disaster in Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel, the National Association of Federations moved closer to adopting a more "Arab" agenda, albeit a mild one. In 1951, representatives of the Association met with President Harry Truman to discuss the Palestine issue.[97] In 1955, the Association adopted a resolution which read, in part, "BE IT RESOLVED, That the policy of the United States government and its attitude toward the Arab world during the last 33 years has been (1)-Wrong; (2)-Could be corrected; (3)-Its correction is essential." It then went on to detail these three points. Copies of the resolution were sent to the President and the Secretary of State.[98] The organization began to hold occasional conferences in Lebanon and to publish the impressions its members had of the Arab homeland as well as their views of Arab causes, including Palestine.[99]

Palestine was very much the cause célèbre for activist Arab Americans in the 1940s. In 1944, Faris S. Malouf, chair of the Conference of Americans of Arabic-Speaking Origin, urged President

Franklin D. Roosevelt not to support a settlement that did not accord Palestine full justice.[100] In 1945, in response to the impending departure of the British authorities from Palestine and in view of the aggressive lobbying by the Zionist movement for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, a group of Arab scholars and activists established the Institute of Arab American Affairs, headquartered in Washington, D.C., with Dr. Philip Hitti as Temporary Executive Director.[101] Professor Hitti gave speeches and testified before Congress in support of the Arab case in Palestine and against the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine.[102] In 1946, in response to a request from the U.S. Department of State, which solicited the views of Arab Americans, the Institute of Arab American Affairs provided a memorandum rejecting most of the proposals of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine.[103] The Institute lacked money and support, however, and closed its doors within a few years.[104]

By the 1960s, the National Association of Federations of Syrian and Lebanese American Clubs had ceased to exist. The Eastern Federation[105] had died out but was reorganized in 1961 as the American Arabic Association (AMARA), which published a newsletter and defended Arab causes, especially Palestine.[106] Dr. M.T. Mehdi and his Action Committee on American Arab Relations were also active on the national scene. They defended Arab and Arab-American causes, protested Israel Bonds, spoke on behalf of Palestine and the Palestinians, and vociferously attacked those who sought to silence them.[107]

The 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the humiliating defeat of the Arab armies at the hands of Israel marked another watershed for the Arab-American community. Just as traumatizing, if not more so, was the fact that the United States government, media and entertainment industry all seemed to side with the Israelis and against the Arabs. That motivated a group of Arab-American scholars and intellectuals to form the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG). While primarily educational in nature, the AAUG quickly mobilized a relatively large section of the Arab-American intelligentsia to work toward better understanding of the Arab world and Arab-American issues, especially in the United States, through the publication and dissemination of accurate and objective information about Arabs and Arab Americans, especially as these related to the Palestine question. More objective information was seen as an instrument for better understanding between the Arab and American peoples.[108]

While the AAUG sought primarily to inform and educate, it also undertook lobbying and attempted to defend the Arab-American community against prejudice, defamation, and discrimination. In addition, it sought to mobilize the Arab-American community to participate actively in the political process. In 1972, the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) was formed specifically to serve as a political lobby.[109] In 1980, in response to continuing defamation of Arabs and Arab Americans, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee was established under the leadership of former U.S. Senator James Abourezk (D-SD). In 1985, the Arab American Institute (AAI) was formed by James Zogby to encourage Arab Americans to become active in the American political process in all its forms, including elections and running for political office.

ELECTIONS AND LOBBYING

Despite the many weaknesses inherent in a small and diverse Arab-American community and the numerous obstacles it has faced, there have been some successes. By 1984, James Zogby could argue

that, with the establishment of ADC, Arab Americans "were a community coming of age."[110] In part because of the efforts of the Arab American Institute and Zogby, its president, larger numbers of Arab Americans now register to vote. A relatively large number of political candidates who are of Arab ancestry have run for office, encouraged, guided, and supported by the Arab American Institute.[111] The 1988 presidential campaign and elections, in particular, were seen as an indication of the Arab-American "constituency come of age."[112]

Nevertheless, when it comes to specific political issues of interest to Arabs and Arab Americans, there has been limited success. A primary factor has been the negative image Americans have of Arabs. Different theories have been advanced to explain the negative stereotypes, which carry over to Arab Americans. These include "memories" of the Crusades, negative media images, anti-enemy archetypes applied to Arabs and Muslims, anti-Arab racism, and political factors, especially those relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict.[113] Whatever the reason, the important point is that these negative stereotypes are convenient and effective tools that can be used to discredit specific political views as well as the individuals or groups who espouse them, in order to keep them out of the political arena. When Arab Americans made campaign contributions to political candidates Wilson Goode (Philadelphia mayoral race, 1983), Robert Neall (Maryland congressional race, 1986), Joseph P. Kennedy II (Massachusetts congressional race, 1986), Walter Mondale (presidential race, 1984), and Hillary Clinton (New York senate race, 2000), the money was returned because it was from "Arabs," implying that they were not fully American. The obvious purpose was to strip the donors symbolically of their American citizenship and treat them as aliens. These "politics of exclusion" are used to prevent debate on pertinent foreign policy issues, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such politics, which exclude Arab Americans from effective participation in political decision-making, are a form of "political racism."[114] It is little wonder, therefore, that political lobbying by Arab Americans and their various organizations has proven largely ineffective.

More than 30 studies have assessed the Arab-American lobby and compared it to the pro-Israel lobby.[115] In virtually every instance, the conclusion is that the Arab lobby is weak, inefficient and ineffectual, and that it is no match for the far stronger pro-Israel lobby.[116] It is worthwhile noting, however, that groups representing the Arab-American lobby as well as those supporting the Jewish lobby usually inflate the influence of Arab-American organizations. The Arab-American lobby groups believe or want to believe that they are having an impact, whereas pro-Israel groups want to lessen the difference between the two lobbies so that their influence does not appear to be so lop-sided.[117] Pro-Israel writers also tend to claim that neither lobby has much of an impact on Congress or foreign policy,[118] giving the impression that there is no undue pro-Israel influence on American foreign policy in the Middle East.

The evidence is overwhelming that the Arab-American lobby has little or no impact on political issues, especially those concerning foreign policy. In the 1980s, for example, there was an effort by Arab and some Jewish Americans to place proposition "W" and other referenda in support of a Palestinian state and/or in sympathy with the Palestinians on the ballot in four American cities (San Francisco and Berkeley, California; Cambridge and Newton, Massachusetts). The only proposition that passed was in Cambridge. According to some observers, the reasons for the failure of the others were a combination of inefficiency and naiveté on the part of Arab-American supporters, the

deliberate obfuscation as well as the confusing language employed, and the fact that the opposition was better financed and organized.[119]

Whether the issue is Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq or Saudi Arabia, efforts by the Arab-American lobby have had no significant impact on specific policies. While the sale of four airborne warning and control system (AWACS) planes to Saudi Arabia in 1981 was supported by the NAAA, the controversial measure succeeded not because of the organization's lobbying efforts but because of the determination of the Reagan administration, which fought the pro-Israel lobby and the Senate on the issue.[120]

Apart from foreign policy issues, the Arab-American lobby has worked on civil rights concerns affecting the community and its members. In this area, community activists have frequently solicited and received the support of a variety of civil rights groups and organizations. While the main targeted community is Arab American, others have come to its aid in the belief that civil rights issues are the concern of all citizens. Even then, the results have been primarily sympathy and moral support rather than actual relief.

The first time the Arab-American community perceived an attack on its members involved the "Special Measures" enacted in response to the Munich airport killing of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics. These involved FBI surveillance of people of Arab background, including citizens. Various federal agencies were authorized to gather information on Arab-origin individuals and organizations deemed to be potential terrorists. In addition, the AAUG received notice from the Internal Revenue Service informing it of its recommendation that the organization's tax-exempt status be revoked.[121] These and other measures were protested by the AAUG, supported by the American Civil Liberties Union. In a related matter, Abdeen Jabara, who at the time was legal counsel for the AAUG (and a future president of the organization), was subjected to FBI surveillance and harassment.

In the 1980s and 1990s, as more and more violence engulfed the Middle East, harassment, violence and restrictions on the civil rights of Arab Americans became more widespread. Arab Americans in particular felt the brunt of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (1996) and the October 24, 2001 USA PATRIOT Act.[122] The reaction of Arab-American organizations was to publicize such activities and to protest against them to the legal and federal authorities, litigating all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court.[123] The organizations most active in this endeavor were the ADC and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), although NAAA (until it became part of the ADC) and AAI also contributed to the effort. In particular, ADC and CAIR collected and documented information about the discrimination, threats and violence directed at Arab and Muslim Americans.[124] AAI surveyed the reactions of the Arab-American community and recorded the fear, anxiety and frustration of its members at the actions of extremists and outsiders.

ARAB AMERICANS IN NATIONAL POLITICAL OFFICE

AAI has compiled a lengthy list of Arab Americans in public service at all levels of government.[125] The focus in what follows here is on the Arab Americans who have been elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Table 1 shows these with the dates of service.

Table 1.

Congressional Session			86	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109
Calendar Year			1959-60	67-68	69-70	71-72	73-74	75-76	77-78	79-80	81-82	83-84	85-86	87-88	89-90	91-92	93-94	95-96	97-98	99-00	2001-02	03-04	05-06
Name	Party	State																					
Abdnor	R	SD					H	H	H	H	S	S	S										
Abourezk	D	SD				H	S	S	S														
Abraham	R	MI																S	S	S			
Baldacci	D	ME																H	H	H			
Benjamin	D	IN							H	H	H												
Boustany	R	LA																					H
Danner	D	MO															H	H	H				
Issa	R	CA																			H	H	H
John	D	LA																	H	H	H		
Kasem	D	CA	H																				
Kazen	D	TX		H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H												
LaHood	R	IL																H	H	H	H	H	H
Mitchell	D	ME								S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S						
Moffett	D	CT						H	H	H													
Oakar	D	OH							H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H							
Rahall	D	WV							H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H			
Sununu	R	NH																	H	H	H		

■ (gray) House of Representatives

■ (black) Senate

All 17 are of Christian background, and all but one (Senator John E. Sununu, who is of Palestinian ancestry) are of Lebanese descent. Two women and 15 men of Arab background have served in the House of Representatives to date. The first Arab-American woman to serve was Mary Rose Oakar from Ohio (1977-1992); the first Arab-American man, George Kasem from California (1959-1960). The first Arab-American U.S. Senator was James Abourezk (1973-1979) who, along with James Abdnor and John Sununu, served in both the House and the Senate. As Table 1 shows, there is a 2:1 ratio of Democrats to Republicans. Only six of the 17 members of Arab background who have served in Congress are Republican; 11 have been Democrats. Of these, the Republicans came from South Dakota, Michigan, California, Illinois, New Hampshire and Louisiana; the Democrats, from South Dakota, Maine, Indiana, Missouri, California, Louisiana, Texas, Connecticut, Ohio, and West Virginia.

A review of Arab Americans in the Senate indicates that they were not elected as a result of Arab-American votes or because of moral or financial support from an Arab-American constituency. South Dakota, which ranks 42nd among states in Arab-American population, elected two senators of Arab

origin (James Abourezk and James Abdnor), one a Democrat, the other a Republican. According to the 1990 census, there were only 1,237 Arab Americans in South Dakota (0.18 percent of the state's population) – hardly enough to catapult a candidate to a Senate seat.[126] Maine, which the 2000 Census reported as thirty-ninth among the states in people of Arab ancestry, also elected a senator and a representative of Arab origin (George Mitchell and John Baldacci). Baldacci was later (2003) elected governor. Here again, the Arab-American presence of 3,365, or 0.27 percent in 1990, is too small to be a major electoral factor. Similarly, John E. Sununu was elected a U.S. Representative and then a U.S. Senator from New Hampshire, a state which ranks 35th in the number of people of Arab origin, with only 4,953 (0.45 percent of the population) in 1990. At the same time, there has been no Arab American elected from the Dearborn, Michigan area, even though that region has the nation's largest concentration of Arab Americans (30 percent). The election of Spencer Abraham for one Senate term from Michigan did not appear to be the result of Arab-American votes (there were only 76,504 Arab-ancestry individuals, or 0.82 percent of Michigan's population) in 1990, although many may have voted for him.[127]

Table 2.

CONGRESSPERSONS	PERCENTAGE SUPPORT	CLASSIFICATION
James Abdnor	22	unfavorable
James Abourezk	83	favorable
E. Spencer Abraham	20	unfavorable
John Baldacci	25	unfavorable
Adam Benjamin, Jr.	29	unfavorable
Patsy Ann Danner	24	unfavorable
Darrell Issa	N/A	N/A
Chris John	30	unfavorable
George Kasem	No votes on issues of interest to Arab Americans	
Abraham Kazen, Jr.	48	somewhat unfavorable
Ray LaHood	29	unfavorable
George Mitchell	41	somewhat unfavorable
Toby Moffett	40	more unfavorable than favorable
Mary Rose Oakar	52	somewhat unfavorable
Nick Rahall	54	somewhat unfavorable
John Sununu	43	somewhat unfavorable

Source: Based on Courtney M. Moriarty: "Arab Americans and the Legislative Process," p. 103. Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Kansas State University, 2002, under the supervision of Michael W. Suleiman

Based on voting analysis of relevant votes in the Congressional Quarterly Almanac.

For each issue of interest to Arab Americans, Michael W. Suleiman made the decision as to what that position might be.

Scale:
0-30% Unfavorable
31-40% More unfavorable than favorable
41-60% Somewhat unfavorable
61-70% More favorable than unfavorable
71-100% Favorable

Table 2 indicates that Arab-American members of Congress rarely support issues of concern to the Arab-American community.[128] The only exception is former Senator James Abourezk, who became committed to justice for Palestinians after he was elected to the Senate.[129] This low support for Arab-American issues is not surprising, as the Arab-American community is very small, quite diversified, and often divided on political issues.[130] Furthermore, as noted above, it appears that Arab Americans are not concentrated in sufficiently large numbers in any electoral district to make a significant difference. The few Arab-American political action committees and the small sums they accumulate[131] suggest that there will be an impact by the community on political issues or electoral contests only after a major concerted effort. Even when that occurs, however, the Arab-American position is substantially weakened by negative stereotypes of Arabs and Arab Americans and the campaigns to discredit Arab political candidates and their views.

SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

There have nonetheless been some cases of successful political activity on the part of Arab-American activists. The first successful major battle was their effort in federal court to maintain their racial status as "white," thereby assuring their community members the right to American citizenship.[132] The IRS attempt in the 1970s to rescind the tax exempt status of the AAUG, mentioned above, was defeated. In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that Majid Ghaidan Al-Khazraji, an Arab-American college professor, was not precluded from bringing suit under federal law if he could show he had been discriminated against "solely because of [his] ancestry or ethnic characteristics."[133] In a somewhat similar case, Omar Kader, who had experienced economically-costly discrimination because of his Arab background, applied and eventually received 8(a) [minority] status with the U.S. Small Business Administration, which enables disadvantaged groups to obtain federal government contracts for their businesses.[134] At the state level, Arab Americans in Dearborn, Michigan formed the Southeast Dearborn Community Council (SEDCC) and successfully resisted the city's efforts to rezone their neighborhood.[135]

SUMMARY AND SOME TENTATIVE HYPOTHESES

What follows is a series of tentative conclusions and hypotheses, based on the material above, that scholars can test for their validity.

- Arab Americans and their political activity are primarily and almost invariably compared to Jewish-American communities and their political activism, especially because of the relatively equal size of the two communities and their concern over similar but competing interests in the Palestine/Israel question. This is not a useful exercise. It may be more productive to compare the political involvement of the Arab-American community with that of Latino Americans as, even given the difference in size, the two communities share such characteristics as diversity and the concomitant difficulty of identifying major common objectives and articulating them as a focused political program, marginalization by the larger society, and the failure of pluralism to address adequately their concerns as communities.[136]

- The claim that Arab-American political participation began in the 1960s is inaccurate. While Arab Americans have not been major participants in politics and have not had a focused political program, and while they have suffered from marginalization by the larger society and the failure of pluralism, they have nevertheless taken part in some aspects of the political process from the earliest years of their arrival.

- Arab Americans, far from being monolithic, are very diverse, but it is possible to identify issues, policies and political practices that impact the community as a whole.

- On social and economic issues, American Arabs have tended to be conservative and to lean toward the Republican Party. Especially in recent years, however, they appear to show no particular party preference. Instead, they vote for the presidential candidate whose policies and views are closest to their concerns.

- As a community, Arab Americans tend to become actively involved in politics only when their interests are threatened. Otherwise, they exercise their rights as good citizens in a democracy and focus on their work, and personal, family and religious matters.

- On the community-wide level, Arab-American political activity has been primarily in the form of protest and interest group politics.

- To the extent that one can speak of an Arab-American lobby, its success has been modest at best, and has been the result of support provided by civil rights groups (e.g., ACLU) or governmental agencies seeking the relevant policy in the name of the national interest (as in the Reagan Administration's support for the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia).

- Arab-ancestry members of Congress are not elected as a result of Arab-American votes or of significant Arab-American community support. Perhaps as a consequence, there is little or no discernible link between their vote on issues and their ethnic background.

- Four major issues have been and will likely remain of great concern to the Arab-American community. One relates to labor conditions and concerns about job discrimination. A second is the issue of civil rights and equality. The third issue of long standing is a just and fair settlement of the Palestine question. The fourth is the issue of citizenship, and the need to feel that Arab Americans are accepted as full members of the American society and its politics.

NOTES

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2. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "Preface," in Elaine C. Hagopian and Ann Paden, eds., *The Arab-Americans: Studies in Assimilation* (Medina University Press International, 1969), p. v; James J. Zogby, "Arab-Americans: The Missing Element in Middle East Policy," 3 *World Affairs Journal* 1 (Winter 1999), pp. 18–25.
3. Hitti, *Syrians in America*, op. cit., pp. 25, 89.
4. Hitti, op. cit.

5. Donald E. Cole, *Immigrant City: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1845-1921* (University of North Carolina Press, 1980), p.142.

6. Cole, *Immigrant City*, op. cit., p. 146.

7. Michael W. Suleiman, "Arab-Americans and the Political Process," in Ernest McCarus, ed., *The Development of Arab-American Identity* (University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 37-60.

8. Najib Miqati, "If I Were Not Born Syrian, I Would Want to Be," *Meraat-ul-Gharb*, Nov. 4, 1910, p. 3 (in Arabic); Andrawes Niqula, "Patriotism and Al-Hoda," *Meraat-ul-Gharb*, Nov. 23, 1910, p. 2 (in Arabic).

9. Mikhail Naimy, "Mikhail Naimy's Speech," *Al-Sa'ih,* July 28, 1919, p. 5 (in Arabic).

10. Hitti, *Syrians In America*, p. 102.

11. Gabriel Elias Ward, *Kitab al-jundi al-suri fi thalath hurub* (*The Syrian Soldier in Three Wars*) (Syrian American Press, 1919, in Arabic). *See also* Ashad G. Hawie, *The Rainbow Ends* (Theo. Gaus' Sons, 1942).

12. Michael W. Suleiman, "Early Arab-Americans: The Search for Identity," in Eric J. Hooglund, ed., *Crossing the Waters: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants to the United States before 1940* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), pp. 37-54. "Levant" refers to the countries to the east of the Mediterranean, usually meaning Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine/Israel, although it sometimes is used to include Egypt as well.

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14. Michael W. Suleiman, "The Arab Community in the United States: A Comparison of Lebanese and Non-Lebanese," in Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds., *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Immigration* (Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B. Tauris, 1992), pp. 189-207.

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16. Patricia S. Maloof, "A Comparative Analysis of Assimilation Patterns of Three Lebanese-American Communities," M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 1974.

17. Kristine J. Ajrouch, "Ethnicity, Gender and Identity among Second Generation Arab-Americans: Growing up Arabic in America," Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1997; Nadine C. Naber, "Arab San Francisco: On Gender, Cultural Citizenship, and Belonging," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 2002.

18. Almost all the above studies deal with socio-economic issues. *See also* Jennifer J. Read, *"*Dressed for Success: Culture, Class, and Labor Force Achievement among Arab-American Women," Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 2001.

19. Mohammad M. Siryani, "Residential Distribution, Spatial Mobility, and Acculturation in an Arab Muslim Community," Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1977; Charlotte K. Bessecker-Kassab, "Immigrant Use of Political Media in the U.S.: A Case Study of the Maronite Lebanese of South Florida," Ph.D. diss., University of Miami, 1992.

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26. Lucius Hopkins Miller, "A Study of the Syrian Communities of Greater New York," 3 *Federation* (1903), pp.13–58; Louise Seymour Houghton, "Syrians in the United States" (a four–part essay), 26 *Survey* 14 (July 1, 1911), pp. 480–495; 647–665; 786–803, and vol. 27 (1911), pp. 957–968. *See also* Michael W. Suleiman, "The Arab-American Left," in Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas, eds., *The Immigrant Left in the United States* (SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 233–255; "Impressions of New York City by Early Arab Immigrants," in Kathleen Benson and Philip M. Kayal, eds., *A Community of Many Worlds: Arab Americans in New York City* (Syracuse University Press, 2002), pp. 28–45; and "The Mokarzels' Contributions to the Arabic-Speaking Community in the United States," 21 *Arab Studies Quarterly* 2 (Spring, 1999), pp. 71-88.

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30. Iliya Abu-Madi, "A Comment," 6 *Al-Samir* 23 (1935), pp. 18–20 (in Arabic).

31. M. M. Maloof, "From Beersheba to Berlin, via Boston," *Boston Evening Transcript* (Aug. 22, 1917), part 2, p. 5.

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34. W.A. Mansur, "Our Syrian-American Fellowship," 3 *Syrian World* 8 (Feb. 1929), pp. 6–22; *see also* Tom Hundley, "Arabs Don't Fit Violent Image," *Detroit Free Press*, July 7, 1987.

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36. Farid Ghosn, "America," 1 *Al-Funun* 6 (September 1913), pp. 20-26 (in Arabic).

37. As'ad Malaki, "The Lame Cat and the Lame Civilization," 5 *Al-Akhlaq* 2 (1924), pp. 7–8 (in Arabic).

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42. Michael W. Suleiman, "Arab Community in the United States," in Hourani and Shehadi, *The Lebanese in the World*, op. cit., p. 205.

43. Abu-Laban, "Social and Political Attitudes of Arab-Americans," op. cit., p. 29.

44. "AAI/Zogby Group Poll," op. cit., p. 8.

45. Arab American Institute, "Arab American Institute Poll Results: Arab Americans are strong advocates of war against terrorism; Overwhelmingly endorse President Bush's actions; Significant

numbers have experienced discrimination since Sept. 11," survey conducted on Oct. 1, 2001, available at http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=487.

46. *See* the first in the series of Zogby International surveys of Arab-American opinion in the key electoral states of Michigan, Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. James J. Zogby, "Report on Arab American Battleground States Poll," Feb. 24–26, 2004.

47. Cole, *Immigrant City*, op. cit.

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49. Farid Ghosn, "The Lawrence Strike," *Meraat-ul-Gharb* (Feb. 12, 1912), p. 4 (in Arabic).

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55. Abdeen Jabara, "Workers, Community Mobilized in Detroit," *AAUG Newsletter* (June 1974), p. 10.

56. Dan Georgakas, "Arab Workers in Detroit," *MERIP Reports* 34 (1975), pp. 13–17; and Nabeel Abraham, "Detroit's Yemeni Workers," *MERIP Reports* 57 (1977), pp. 3–9, 13. The other labor activity that should be mentioned here is that of Yemeni–American farmworkers in California. Yemeni "immigrants" in California lead a hard life, especially since most are males away from their families, often isolated in rural areas and unable to practice their religion or traditions. They are also often excluded from membership in the United Farm Workers Union. When they do acquire such membership, it does not benefit them much. For information on Yemeni–American migrant farm workers, *see* Jonathan Friedlander, ed., *Sojourners and Settlers: The Yemeni Immigrant Experience* (University of Utah Press, 1988); "The Yemenis of Delano: A Profile of a Rural Islamic Community," in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith, eds., *Muslim Communities in North America* (SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 423-444. *See also* Ahmed Mohamed Hamoud Shuga'a, *Inside the Yemeni Agricultural Camp in California: Characteristics of Life and Motivation to Migrate*, D.A. diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1984; Mary Bisharat, "Yemeni Farmworkers in California," *MERIP Reports* 34 (1975), pp. 22-26; and Jack Matalka, "Yemeni Arabs as Farmworkers," in James Zogby, ed., *Taking Root, Bearing Fruit: The Arab-American Experience* (Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1984), pp. 83, 85.

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62. *Dow v. United States et al.*, 26 F.145 (4th Cir. 1915).

63. In *Ex parte Mohriez*, 54 F.Supp. 941 (D. Mass. 1944), Judge Charles E. Wyzanski, Jr. wrote that "the Arab people stand as one of the chief channels by which the traditions of white Europeans, especially the ancient Greek traditions, have been carried into the present." Although, as noted above, a

1924 decision recognized "Syrians" as white, a contradictory decision was handed down in 1942. *In re Ahmed Hassan*, 48 F. Supp. 843 (E.D. Michigan 1942).

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66. Eyyoub Tabet, "Opinion on the Syrian/Lebanese Issue," *Al Sa'ih* (June 6, 1918), pp. 1–2 (in Arabic).

67. H.I. Katibah, "Syria for the Syrians under the Guardianship of the United States," 1 *Syrian National Bulletin* 9 (1919). 15 pp.; no pagination.

68. "Memorandum on the Application of the Mandatory System of the League of Nations by France in Syria" (Syrian American Society of the United States, 1925); *see also* Alhourani, *The Arab-American Press and the Arab World*, op. cit.

69. Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, *America Save the Near East* (Beacon Press, 1918).

70. The following are samples of the many and continuing discussions about Palestine covering the period up to World War II: H.I. Katibah, "The Palestine Arab Case," *Palestine & Transjordan* (May 8, 1937), pp. 5–6; As'ad Arqash, "The Situation in Palestine," *Al-Sa'ih* (Dec. 29, 1921), pp. 1–2 (in Arabic); Anwar Mahadeen, "The Duty of American Youth to Palestine," 3 *Syrian Ark* 1 (1938), p. 6; "Rights in Palestine of Jews Debated: Ameen Rihani and M.W. Weisgal Discuss Subject from Opposite Viewpoints," *The New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1929, p. 4. *See also* Lawrence Davidson, "Debating Palestine: Arab American Challenges to Zionism, 1917-1932," in Michael W. Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Temple University Press, 1999), pp. 227–240.

71. The literature on this topic is extensive and easily available.

72. Among its various publications to instruct the community about its rights and what its members can do to defend themselves are: *Legal Guide* (1984); *Political Action Guide* (1984), and *Educational Outreach and Action Guide: Working with School Systems* (1993). *See also* ADC publications detailing harassment of and violence against Arab Americans: *Congressional Hearings on Anti-Arab Violence, a Milestone for Arab-American Rights* (1986); *1991 Report on Anti-Arab Hate Crimes: Political and Hate Violence against Arab Americans* (1992); *Anti-Arab Racism in the United States: Preliminary Report for 1995* (1995); *1995 Report on Anti-Arab Racism: Hate Crimes, Discrimination and Defamation of Arab Americans* (1996); *1996-97 Report on Hate Crimes and Discrimination against Arab Americans* (1997); *1998-2000 Report on Hate Crimes and Discrimination against Arab Americans* (2001).

73. Hussein Ibish and Anne Stewart, eds., *Report on Hate Crimes and Discrimination against Arab Americans: The Post-September 11 Backlash, September 11, 2001-October 11, 2002* (American–Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 2003). A Vera Institute of Justice study found in 2006 that Arab Americans experienced a substantial fear of racial profiling and a lack of trust in law enforcement personnel after 9/11. Andrew Elliot, "After 9/11, Arab-Americans Fear Police Acts, Study Finds," *The New York Times*, June 12, 2006.

74. *A Rush to Judgment* (Council on American-Islamic Relations [CAIR], 1995). *See also* subsequent publications by CAIR: *The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States: The Price of Ignorance* (1996); *The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States: Unveiling Prejudice* (1997); *Patterns of Discrimination* (1998); *Stereotypes and Civil Liberties* (2002); *Guilt by Association* (2003); and *Unequal Protection* (2005).

75. "Training Syrians to Be Americans," *New York Herald*, May 14, 1893, p. 16; *Syrian Society of New York: First Annual Report* (George R. Valentine, 1893); "Syrian Society's Work: Teaching the Children of the Washington Street Colony," *The New York Evening Post* (Feb. 23, 1906), p. 14.

76. "Nursery for Syrian Babies," *The New York Times*, Mar. 19, 1899, p. 4.

77. "Syrian Ladies' Society in America," *Al-Jami'ah* (New York), Oct. 19, 1907, p. 3 (in Arabic); Mary Basila, "Syrian Ladies' Aid Society," *Al-Jami'ah*, June 20, 1908, pp. 6-7 (in Arabic); *Constitution and By-Laws of the Syrian Ladies' Aid Society of New York* (Turner & Wild, 1907); *Syrian Ladies' Aid Society: Annual Report, 1944* (Syrian Ladies' Aid Society, 1945). See also Evelyn Shakir, "Good Works, Good Times: The Syrian Ladies' Aid Society of Boston, 1917-1932," in Eric Hooglund, ed., *Crossing the Waters: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants to the United States Before 1940* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), pp. 133-143; and also Evelyn Shakir, *Bint Arab: Arab and Arab American Women in the United States* (Praeger, 1997), especially pp. 61-64.

78. Al-Nahda Al-Lubnaniyya, "Al-Kitab al-Lubnani," *The Lebanese Gazette* (Al-Hoda Press, 1936). *See also Al-Hoda, 1898-1968* (Al-Hoda Press, 1968). For a critique of the organization, *see* Murad Daher Abu-Madi, "From Weakness, Strength," *Meraat-ul-Gharb* (Sept. 27, 1911), p. 4 (in Arabic).

79. *World Lebanese Cultural Union* (Beirut: Samir C. Atalla, 1975).

80. *See*, e.g., *Syria before the Peace Conference* (Syrian Lebanese League of North America, 1919). 18 pp.; no pagination. In this appeal to the Peace Conference and the French government, "Syria" included roughly the entities of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan. It was signed by practically all members of the PEN League, including Gibran Kahlil Gibran and Mikhail Naimy.

81. "Syrians' Anger," *Al-Ayyam* (June 29, 1899), pp. 3, 4 (in Arabic). *See also* "Syrians and the Sultan," *New York Daily Tribune* (July 29, 1899), p. 2.

82. "'Young Syria' Holds a Meeting," *New York Daily Tribune* (Aug. 11, 1899), p. 5.

83. "Hot Future for the Sultan," *New York Daily Tribune* (Aug. 25, 1899), p. 14.

84. Gabriel Awwad, "Syrian[-American] Associations," *Meraat-ul-Gharb* (Sept. 8, 1911), pp. 4-5 (in Arabic); Nassif Nicolaus, "The Syrian Unity Party," *Al-Sa'ih* (Nov. 3, 1921), pp. 1-2 (in Arabic).

85. Khalil Zeiniyah, "The Syrians in America," *Al-Sa'ih* (Oct. 24, 1918), pp. 1-2 (in Arabic); Eyyoub Tabet, "Opinion on the Syrian/Lebanese Issue," *Al-Sa'ih* (June 6, 1918), pp. 1-2 (in Arabic).

86. Ya'qub Jirjis Khalil, "The Annual Palestine Welfare Society Party," *Meraat-ul-Gharb* (Jan. 15, 1915), p. 5 (in Arabic).

87. No author, "Arabs Call on Stimson," *Washington Post* (Sept. 7, 1929).

88. "Arabs Call on Stimson," op. cit. "Aly Jouday" may be Aly Joudym.

89. "A Communique from the Arab National League," *Al-Sa'ih* (Aug. 6, 1936), p. 9 (in Arabic); H.I. Katibah, "Arab National League Urges Strong Unified Aid in Its Work to Combat Palestine Situation," 4 *Syrian Voice* 12 (1936), pp. 1, 11.

90. Izzat Tannous, *The Palestinians* (I.G.T. Co., 1988); "Zionism Decried by Arab Leader," *The New York Times*, June 6, 1937, p. 37; "The Arab National League," 1 *Palestine & Transjordan* 4 (1936). Fuad Shatara, the president of the Arab National League, exchanged letters with President Roosevelt on the issue of Palestine. *See* "The Arab National League," op. cit. *See also* Lawrence Davidson, "Debating Palestine: Arab American Challenges to Zionism, 1917-1932," in Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America*, op. cit., pp. 227-240.

91. "Hull Hears Arab Plea; Delegates Present Their Side in Issue with Jews in Palestine," *The New York Times* (Feb. 2, 1937), p. 12. Leaders of the Arab National League (formerly known as *al-Nahda al-Arabiyya* (Arab Renaissance) began their memorandum to the U.S. Secretary of State in their meeting with him as follows: "The Arab National League, composed of Arab-Americans of all Arab countries…" *See* "Memorandum of the Arab National League," *Palestine & Transjordan* (Mar. 6, 1937), pp. 7, 9; "The Arab Case in Washington," *Al-Sa'ih* (Feb. 11, 1937), p. 11 (in Arabic).

92. Fuad Issa Shatara and Habib Ibrahim Katibah, "A Call to Attend the Fourth Congress, in Flint, Michigan," *Al-Sa'ih*, July 17, 1939, p. 4 (in Arabic).

93. Faris S. Malouf, "The Eastern State Federation," *National Herald* (Aug. 1958), pp. 13-14; "History of the Federations, II. Southern Federation," *National Herald* (Sept. 1958), pp. 4-5; Elaine C. Hagopian, "The Institutional Development of the Arab-American Community of Boston: A Sketch," in Elaine

C. Hagopian and Ann Paden, eds., *The Arab Americans: Studies in Assimilation* (Medina University Press International, 1969), pp. 67-83.

94. The National Association essentially reflected the same ideas and objectives as those of the regional federations. *See Constitution and By-Laws of the Federation of American Syrian Lebanon Clubs* (no place of publication, no publisher, 1952) – amended from 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951 documents; and Baddia J. Rashid, "Organization and Administration of the Federation," 10 *Federation Herald* 7 (July 1954), pp. 5-6.

95. Shibel Nassif Dammous, "A Voice of Reason," *Al-Jami'ah*, Nov. 9, 1907, pp. 1-2 (in Arabic).

96. "Readers' Forum…A National Federation of Syrian Societies," 4 *The Syrian World* 4 (Oct. 1928), pp. 51-54.

97. No author, "Truman Gets Arab Plea," *The New York Times*, Oct. 4, 1951, p. 10.

98. "National Association Adopts Resolution Critical of U.S. Near Eastern Policy," *National Herald,* Dec. 1955, p. 4.

99. 1959 Overseas Convention and Pilgrimage in the Middle East (Damascus, UAR: no publisher indicated, 1959) (in Arabic).

100. "Justice for Arabs in Palestine Asked," *The New York Times* (Nov. 28, 1944), p. 17; Faris S. Malouf, "Resolution Urges Justice Toward Palestine," *Federation Herald* (Jan. 25, 1949), p. 6.

101. *Constitution of the Institute of Arab American Affairs* (Institute of Arab American Affairs, 1945).

102. Philip K. Hitti, *The Jewish National Home in Palestine: Hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee,* 78th Congress, 2nd session (Feb. 15, 1944), pp. 241–258.

103. *Memorandum of Institute of Arab American Affairs on the Recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Institute of Arab American Affairs, 1946).

104. "The Institute of Arab American Affairs Temporarily Suspends Operations," 5 *Arab American Affairs Bulletin* 7 (Jan. 15, 1950), pp. 1-12. The suspension turned out to be permanent.

105. *See* footnote 93, *supra.*

106. Elaine C. Hagopian, "The Institutional Development of the Arab-American Community of Boston: A Sketch," in Hagopian and Paden, *The Arab Americans*, op. cit., p. 79.

107. *See The Action Committee on American Arab Relations Yearbook: 1964-1965* and *The Action Committee on American Arab Relations Yearbook: 1965-1966*, both published by the New World Press, 1965 and 1967.

108. *The First Decade, 1967-1977* (Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1977).

109. NAAA, headquartered in Washington, DC, published a variety of newsletters and magazines, though its main journal was *Voice*. Among its publications are *Creating New Realities* (1980s), *How to Make a Difference with Your Senators and Congressman* (1989), and *Policy Platform* (1993). Under the general editorship of John Law, its Middle East Policy and Research Center (MEPARC) produced a very useful publication for a number of years in the 1980s and 1990s. It included legislative and media analysis, as well as profiles of individuals in public office. It also produced "Issue Briefs" on a variety of topics pertinent to the Arab-American community; e.g., "Congress and Lebanon" (1989), "Congress and the Palestinians" (1989).

110. James J. Zogby, *Arab-Americans: A Political Community Coming of Age* (American–Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1984).

111. The many activities of the Arab American Institute are detailed on its web site: http://www.aaiusa.org.

112. Helen Hatab Samhan, "Arab Americans and the Elections of 1988: A Constituency Come of Age," in Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman, eds., *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change* (AAUG Press, 1989), pp. 227–250.

113. Michael W. Suleiman, "Islam, Muslims and Arabs in America: The Other of the Other of the Other…," 19 *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 1 (1999), pp. 33-47.

114. James Zogby and Helen Hatab Samhan, *The Politics of Exclusion: A Report on Arab-Baiting in the 1986 Elections* (Arab American Institute, 1987); Helen Hatab Samhan, "Politics and Exclusion: The Arab American Experience," 16 *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2 (Winter 1987), pp. 11-28.

115. Benjamin Welles, "Arab Power," 10 *Washington Magazine* (1975), pp. 110-122, was perhaps the first of such studies.

116. Among the more scholarly and more informative such reports are Ayad Al-Qazzaz, "The Arab Lobby: Political Identity and Participation," in Wilbur C. Rich, ed., *The Politics of Minority Coalitions: Race, Ethnicity, and Shared Uncertainties* (Praeger, 1996), pp. 257-267; Andrea Barron, "Jewish and Arab Diasporas in the United States and Their Impact on U.S. Middle East Policy," in Yehuda Lukac and Abdalla M. Battah, eds., *The Arab-Israeli Conflict – Two Decades of Change* (Westview Press, 1988), pp. 238-259; Nabeel A. Khoury, "The Arab Lobby: Problems and Prospects," 41 *Middle East Journal* 3 (Summer 1987), pp. 379-396; Gregory Orfalea, "The Arab American Lobby," 1 *Arab Perspectives* 4 (July 1980), pp. 12-21; Cheryl Rubenberg, "The Middle East Lobbies," 17 *Link* 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1984), pp. 1-13; Janice J. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups* (Pluto Press, 2005); and Robert H. Trice, "Domestic Interest Groups and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Behavioral Analysis," in Abdul Aziz Said, ed., *Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Praeger, 1981), pp. 117-138.

117. Mitchell Bard, for example, claimed that there was a "balance of lobby power." Mitchell Bard, "Ethnic Group Influence on Middle East Policy – How and When: The Cases of the Jackson–Vanik Amendment and the Sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia," in Mohammed E. Ahrari, ed., *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Greenwood Press, 1987), pp. 45-64. However, only the year before, he had written about the Arab lobby as weak and unpopular. Mitchell Bard, "The Arab Lobby," 32 *Midstream* 3 (1986), pp. 3-5.

118. *See*, for example, Steven L. Spiegel, "Ethnic Politics and the Formulation of U.S. Policy toward the Arab–Israeli Dispute," in Ahrari, *Ethnic Groups*, op. cit.

119. *See* Andrea Barron, "Referenda on the Palestinian Question in Four U.S. Cities," 18 *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4 (Summer, 1989), pp. 71-83; Jeffrey Blankfort, "Proposition W," 19 *Middle East Report* 2 (1989), pp. 38-40; and "Proposition W and the Pacification of the U.S. Middle East Movement," 24 *Israel & Palastina* (1990), pp. 35-55.

120. Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East* (Westview Press, 1999, 6th ed.), p. 335. The powerful role of the pro-Israel lobby is detailed in John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, John F. Kennedy School of Government (Harvard) Faculty Research Working Paper Series, No. RWP06-011, available at http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP06-011 (Mar. 13, 2006).

121. M.C. Bassiouni, ed., *The Civil Rights of Arab Americans: "The Special Measures"* (Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1974); Elaine C. Hagopian, "Minority Rights in a Nation-State: The Nixon Administration's Campaign against Arab-Americans," 5 *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1-2 (1975-1976), pp. 97-114. The AAUG fought and won the case for tax-exempt status.

122. Elaine C. Hagopian, ed., *Civil Rights in Peril: The Targeting of Arabs and Muslims* (Pluto, 2004). The statutes are the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, P.L. 104-132 and Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT Act), P.L. 107-156.

123. Kathleen M. Moore, "A Closer Look at Anti-Terrorism Law: American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee v. Reno and the Construction of Aliens' Rights," in Suleiman, *Arabs in America*, op. cit., pp. 84-99; Mary Mourra Ramadan, "ADC: Counter-Terrorism Bill Poses Threat to Constitutional Rights," 7 *Al-Hewar* 1 (July/Aug. 1995), pp. 18-21.

124. The web sites for these two organizations provide samplings of their activities. http://www.adc.org; http://www.cair.com.

125. "Roster of Arab Americans in Public Service & Political Life 2006," available at

http://aai.bluestatedigital.com/page/file/61bf4d1f1b5868b202_64m6b9e8y.pdf/2006_Roster.pdf; http://www.aaiusa.org.

126. There is general consensus among Arab-American leaders, scholars, and Zogby International, which has done much polling of Arab Americans, as well as some U.S. Census Bureau staff, that the figures for Arab-ancestry Americans constitute an undercount. Zogby International and AAI estimate that the actual numbers are closer to three times the census figures. Nevertheless, for the purposes of our argument here, Arab Americans do not constitute a large enough community to make a major political or electoral impact.

127. The data for Arab-ancestry population figures are found in *The Arab Population 2000: Census 2000 Brief* (U.S. Census Bureau, Dec. 2003). *See also We the People of Arab Ancestry in the United States: Census 2000 Special Report* (U.S. Census Bureau, March 2005).

128. Courtney Moriarty, *Arab Americans and the Legislative Process: An Analysis of Voting Participation and Trends by Arab-American Congresspersons, 1959-2000*, Undergraduate Honor Thesis, Kansas State University, 2002. Obviously, different results may be obtained depending on which votes are considered and whether or not the "general orientation," rather than the actual votes, are used in the analysis. For instance, the AAI "Scorecards" used in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 included "votes on legislation; sponsorship of legislation not voted upon; and endorsement of special dear colleague letters." *2001 Congressional Score Card* (AAI, 2001), p. 1. *See also* "Directory," 13 *Middle East Insight* 2 (Jan.–Feb., 1998), pp. 95-135. Based on those factors, Nick Rahall may be placed in the "more favorable than unfavorable" column.

129. James G. Abourezk, *Advise & Dissent: Memoirs of South Dakota and the U.S. Senate* (Lawrence Hill Books, 1989). Abourezk did not run for re-election to the Senate.

130. *See* the various public opinion surveys reported by Michael W. Suleiman and Zogby International/AAI. *Also see* Jose Miguel Sandoval and Mark Stephen Jendrysik, "Convergence and Divergence in Arab-American Public Opinion," 5 *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 4 (1993), pp. 303-314; Yossi Shain, "Multicultural Foreign Policy," 100 *Foreign Policy* (Fall, 1995), pp. 69-87. In the late 1980s, when there was an attempt in California to pass Proposition W in support of a Palestinian state, less than one percent of Arab Americans in San Francisco were active in the campaign. Friedhelm Ernst and Paula Kotakis, "Perspectives from the Community: Interviews with Fuad Mugannam and Nidal Totah," 24 *Israel & Palastina* (1990), pp. 18-22.

131. Nidal M. Ibrahim, "The Price of Politics," 4 *Arab American Business* 4 (April/May 2004), pp. 19, 22-23, 37. *See also* the reports that compare pro-Arab and pro-Israeli PACs and their financial contributions to political candidates, especially at election time, in the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, and Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, op. cit.

132. López, *White by Law*, op. cit.

133. *Saint Francis College v. Al-Khazraji*, 481 U.S. 604 (1987).

134. Omar M. Kader, "Arab-American Businessman Achieves Breakthrough With Minority Status," 4 *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 10 (1991), p. 45.

135. Barbara C. Aswad, "The Southeast Dearborn Arab Community Struggles for Survival against Urban 'Renewal,'" in Barbara C. Aswad, ed., *Arabic Speaking Communities in American Cities* (Center for Migration Studies and AAUG, 1974), pp. 53-83; "Detroit Arabs Fight City Hall," 6 *AAUG Newsletter* 3 (Aug. 1973), pp. 2; and, especially, Richard D. Robinson, *The Process of Change in a Community Organization: An Anthropological Analysis of the Urban System*, Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1984.

136. I have relied on two main texts for information about Latino Americans: Rodney E. Hero, *Latinos and the U.S. Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism* (Temple University Press, 1992); Sharon Navarro and Armando Xavier Mejia, eds., *Latino Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (ABC-CLIO, 2004).

The Political Incorporation of Immigrant Groups:
An Historical Perspective on the American Experience

GARY GERSTLE

This essay explores and analyzes the political incorporation of immigrant groups in the United States across the last two centuries. Political incorporation refers to the process through which immigrants and their descendants have come to think of themselves as Americans with political rights and with a voice in politics, should they choose to exercise it. It is a process that, while central to the republic's past, present, and future, has been complex and frequently marked by contradiction. On the one hand, the United States arguably has managed throughout its history to incorporate more immigrants, both in absolute and relative terms, than any other nation. This has been an extraordinary achievement. On the other hand, the United States has almost always barred some immigrant groups either from entering the United States or from allowing them to become citizens. Groups of native-born Americans, meanwhile, have often discriminated against members of racially or religiously "suspect" immigrant groups, making the process of political incorporation more arduous and incomplete than it otherwise would have been.

This essay begins with a general framework for understanding political incorporation in the United States, one that should prove useful in understanding Arab-American involvement in politics. It then explores the experiences of groups with which the experience of Arab Americans can profitably be compared. In general, it seems useful to locate the Arab-American experience somewhere between that of southern and eastern European Christian and Jewish immigrants who arrived early in the twentieth century, and who were subjected to religious and racial prejudice without ever formally being defined as nonwhite, and that of Mexican and Asian immigrants who faced both more intense racial discrimination than Europeans and, frequently, formidable barriers to political involvement. Considerable attention is also paid below to the history of Irish Catholic immigrants to the United States. In the nineteenth century, this group experienced a hostility toward their religion that resembles the hostility toward Islam encountered by Muslim Arabs today. In the twentieth century, however, Irish Catholics demonstrated how a group once reviled for its faith achieved social acceptance and political incorporation in the United States. The twentieth century experience of German Americans is equally relevant to the case of Arab Americans because of the former's association in the public imagination, in the World War I era, with foreign enemies of the American state. This historical and comparative overview will provide a framework within which to evaluate questions pertaining to the politics of Arab Americans today.

The process of political incorporation operates in three dimensions: formal, political-cultural, and political-institutional. The formal dimension entails immigrants becoming citizens of the United States and thereby gaining the right to vote, sit on juries, serve in the military, and hold elective office. Citizenship in the United States has always been relatively easy to acquire for immigrants defined as white, but for immigrant groups defined as nonwhite, citizenship was often out of reach. Between

1870 and 1952, for example, this category included immigrants from East and South Asia (but not Hispanics), effectively barring them from the most elementary dimension of political incorporation.

The political-cultural dimension refers to the process through which individuals come to feel as though they belong in and to the United States and can play a part in its democratic politics. Belonging can develop through formal naturalization and political channels – becoming a citizen, joining a political party, voting, and enlisting in the military. Typically, however, it develops in more multifaceted and diffuse ways: through learning English and gaining exposure to American culture; among the young, through going to school and absorbing both the manifest curriculum (American literature, American geography, American history) and the latent one (through which schoolchildren learn about "American" notions of physical beauty, dress, male-female courtship, music, and sports); through participating in American holidays, both sacred (Christmas, Thanksgiving, July 4th and, at one point, Memorial Day) and profane (the World Series, the Super Bowl, "American Idol," and spring break); and, sometimes, through discovering powerful affinities between American culture, religion, and politics and one's Old World roots. Because of the complex and multilayered nature of this process, it has sometimes unfolded almost invisibly. Its advance has often surprised both immigrants and their native-born hosts. In the present day United States, for example, the children of Mexican immigrants are learning English more quickly and thoroughly than outsiders generally recognize.[1] As this second-generation Mexican linguistic pattern suggests, the political–cultural dimension of incorporation can often operate independently of formal naturalization processes. It has almost always involved a mix of voluntarism (immigrants or their children choosing to embrace American customs and culture) and coercion (state or private authorities compelling immigrants to Americanize).[2]

The political-institutional dimension of political incorporation refers to the institutions that immigrants and their offspring join or establish and through which they seek political influence. Political parties are examples of these sorts of institutions; so are political machines, the municipal organizations developed by professional politicians between the 1840s and 1960s to control local politics through alliances with private business interests on the one hand and ethnic constituencies on the other. Immigrants frequently turned to work-based institutions such as labor unions and small business associations to voice their political concerns, and they were also active in establishing new ethnic or religious institutions to promote their interests. Churches, synagogues, and mosques have sometimes functioned in this role as have fraternal, civil rights, and lobbying organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hiberians (Irish), the American Jewish Committee and American Jewish Congress, the American Israel Political Action Committee, the Sons of Italy, the Japanese American Civic League, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and the Council on American–Islamic Relations. Sometimes these institutions have worked to integrate immigrants and their offspring into established patterns of American politics. At other times they operated in ways that have shaken up and even transformed those established patterns.

In evaluating the political-institutional dimension, we have to be alert to historical changes in its character. Political scientists and historians have argued, for example, that the prime institutions of immigrant political incorporation in 1900 – political parties, political machines, and labor unions – are now in eclipse, and thus of much less utility to immigrants today than to the generations who

preceded them. Some scholars conclude from studies of these trends that political incorporation has become a more difficult proposition than it once was and that immigrants are, indeed, incorporating more slowly than they once did. Other scholars, however, stress that new institutions have arisen to take the place of those earlier "incorporators."[3] We will return to this subject later in this essay.

Although Americans do not consciously think about the process of political incorporation in terms of the three dimensions outlined above, many tell a narrative about immigrants and American history that deploy them nevertheless. That narrative, or story, goes something like this: prior to the 1960s, immigrants to the United States, most of whom were European, quickly acquired citizenship and developed feelings of belonging to the United States. Millions who fled poverty and religious and political oppression in their native lands were inspired by the United States' promise of freedom. They wanted to become American, to be reborn as new men and women, and to become part of a country that they associated with liberty, self-rule, and economic opportunity.[4]

In this popular telling of the immigrant experience, the United States welcomed the newcomers. Naturalization law required little more than residence in the United States for five years, obedience to the country's laws, and the ability to produce two witnesses who could vouch for an individual immigrant's character. Political mobilization and influence took longer to develop, simply because immigrants needed time to find their way into existing political parties, to build new ones, or to establish ethnic associations with the ability to battle for political power and to influence public policy. If it took two or three generations of hard work, however, it did happen, making the process of incorporation complete.

There is no doubt that millions of immigrants followed the path of political incorporation described above, demonstrating again and again the remarkable integrative capacities of the American nation and of American republicanism. American history, however, is also full of episodes of partial or non-incorporation of immigrants along each of the three dimensions of the incorporative process. While this is a lesser-known story, in part because it runs counter to the myth of the United States as a land of freedom and opportunity, it is an important story that we must comprehend if we are fully to understand the process of political incorporation.

Consider, for example, the nationality law passed in 1790 by the first U.S. Congress. It declared that in order for an immigrant to be eligible for citizenship, he had to be free and white.[5] The law was meant to bar immigrants from Africa, slave or free, from U.S. citizenship, and it had precisely this effect from its passage until after the Civil War. In 1870, Congress amended the 1790 law in order to allow immigrants of African descent to naturalize.[6] This reform was part of Reconstruction, a revolutionary project to give all blacks in the United States the same access as whites to American nationality and freedom. Even as Congress exempted blacks from the provisions of the 1790 law, however, it kept the statute on the books, its prohibition on nonwhites becoming citizens now directed at the Chinese, who had begun immigrating to the United States in large numbers in the 1850s and 1860s.

Over the course of the next fifty years, the courts extended the ban on citizenship for nonwhite immigrants from the Chinese to the Japanese, Indians, and then to virtually all East and South Asians. Government officials also engaged in a twenty year effort to exclude immigrants from Armenia, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt from citizenship eligibility on racial grounds. These immigrant

groups included many Arabs in their ranks. The campaign ultimately failed in the 1920s, but not before it had convulsed the lives and emotions of an entire generation of individuals who had come to the United States from West Asia and North Africa. The 1790 law still remained in force against East and South Asians, preserving the racial cast of naturalization law in the United States for another generation, as Congress did not repeal it until 1952.[7] For most of its history, in other words, the United States barred groups of immigrants defined as nonwhite from ever becoming citizens.[8]

Some analysts of immigration policy have argued that the 1790 law, even with its restrictions, has to be counted as the most liberal naturalization law in the world at the time of its passage. This is true, in the sense that this statute allowed virtually any European male to become a citizen of the United States. Other countries that had delineated formal naturalization mechanisms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries defined immigrant eligibility for citizenship far more narrowly than the new United States had done.[9] Moreover, the United States mitigated some of the worst effects of the 1790 law in 1868 when the Fourteenth Amendment established an extraordinarily generous and egalitarian policy of birthright citizenship. The amendment granted citizenship at birth to all children born to immigrants on U.S. soil, even if those immigrants had not naturalized, had entered the country illegally, or were barred by the 1790 law from ever becoming citizens.[10] Thus, in 1900, a child born to a Chinese immigrant on U.S. soil automatically received citizenship even though his or her father was prohibited from having the opportunity to gain an equivalent status. The same is true of a child born on U.S. soil in 2006 to an undocumented alien from Mexico.

The birthright policy of the Fourteenth Amendment effectively opened a back door to the political incorporation of groups who were told, in other ways, that they could never enter the American polity. By constructing this generational back door, the United States spared itself the situation that arose in Europe after World War II, where immigrants in countries such as Germany and Italy were barred from citizenship for two and sometimes three generations, rendering routine the complete isolation of these groups from normal political life. Some of the 2005 political turmoil in Europe involving Muslim groups stems from these barriers to immigrant naturalization put in place a generation or two ago.[11]

Of course, the mere possession of citizenship should not be interpreted to mean that an immigrant or the child of an immigrant has been incorporated into the United States polity. Citizenship is a legal status. Possessing it tells us nothing about the other dimensions of political incorporation, a sense of belonging to the United States and the ability to influence politics and policy through organization and action. If we shift our attention from the Chinese to the Irish, from one of the most poorly treated immigrant groups to one that today we regard as being among the most favored in U.S. history – and the most precocious in terms of political mobilization and influence – we can gain a better appreciation for how complex and uneven the process of political incorporation has been.

The Irish were one of the largest groups to come to the United States in the nineteenth century. They advanced quickly in American politics as a result of their numbers, the liberal U.S. naturalization laws that gave them easy access to citizenship, their knowledge of English, and the sophisticated political consciousness that they had developed during decades of struggle against the English masters in their homeland. They proved themselves adept at penetrating existing political institutions in the United States, especially local branches of the Democratic Party in the northeastern, midwestern, and western cities where they settled. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Irish also occupied

top leadership positions in many labor unions and were learning how to make trade union power a mechanism of political advance. The Irish were also good at creating new institutions with the ability to influence politics. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the dense archipelago of Catholic institutions that arose in the United States between the 1870s and the 1920s: parish churches and schools, welfare agencies, universities, and fraternal societies such as the Knights of Columbus. While Catholics of many ethnic backgrounds contributed to this institutional achievement, Irish Catholics were at its center. The institutions were important launching pads for political mobilization, allowing the political advance of the Irish to occur across a broad front. Still, the front moved slowly, unevenly, and sometimes not at all, often because the Irish encountered fierce hostility and discrimination and challenges to their fitness to be members of the American republic.[12]

Some of the hostility arose from the desperate poverty of hundreds of thousands of Irish who constituted the first waves of immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s, most of whom were fleeing Ireland's potato famine. But a good deal of it, and the part that endured the longest, arose from religious, rather than economic, antagonisms. Irish immigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were largely Roman Catholic, and they entered a country that was overwhelmingly and intensely Protestant. Significant numbers of the original seventeenth-century British immigrants to North America were Protestant zealots who saw themselves engaged in a holy and global war against Roman Catholicism. They were determined to make America into a Protestant redoubt that would first halt the spread of Catholic influence into the New World and then eliminate it from Europe. These Protestants, known to us as Puritans and Pilgrims, accused the Catholic church of undermining Christian piety and faith by elevating the Pope to a divine status, corrupting clergy, pursuing worldly ambition, and substituting rituals grounded in superstition and magic for true Christian faith.

By the late eighteenth century, many Americans believed that Protestantism was not only the one true Christian religion but that it alone among the faiths nurtured the political qualities central to the fledgling American republic: freedom, individual rights, and popular sovereignty. The large Protestant majority in America associated Catholicism with the politics they despised: monarchy, aristocracy, and tyranny. The intensity of these anti-Catholic sentiments did not surface in the constitutional debates of 1787 and 1788, and the framers put the country on the path to religious toleration by refusing to denigrate any religion by name or establish any faith as the country's official religion. This apparent embrace of religious pluralism, however, had more to do with feuds between Protestant sects about which of them should enjoy primacy than it did with a softening attitude toward Catholicism. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the United States' Protestant majority construed Popery as one of the chief threats to the American republic. Many in that majority viewed Catholic immigrants as the papacy's fifth column, sent to the United States to gain political power, destroy democracy, and to put the new nation under the pope's control.[13]

This history is easily forgotten now that Catholic-Protestant antagonisms have dissolved and Catholics feel as secure in the United States today as do their erstwhile Protestant antagonists. It is important to remember how recently acceptance of Catholicism became a defining feature of American life, however, because from the 1840s through the 1940s, this was not the case. Generations of Catholic Americans suffered discrimination, were accused of disloyalty to the United States, and were frequently told that they were not fit to enjoy the privileges of American citizenship. A major

reason why Catholics developed their own institutional infrastructure – schools, universities, welfare agencies, fraternal organizations – is either because they were not welcome in the established institutions or because they believed that if they entered those institutions they would come under unbearable pressure from Protestants to sacrifice their faith.

Anti-Catholic sentiments help to explain why Irish Americans, for all their talent as politicians, could not get one of their own nominated for the office of U.S. president by either mainstream party until 1928, almost a hundred years after they began arriving in the United States in large numbers. The Irish American whom the Democratic Party chose that year, Alfred Smith, the governor of New York, was routed by his Republican opponent, Herbert Hoover, who seized every opportunity to stigmatize Smith as a papal minion who could not be trusted to lead the United States. As late as 1960, the second Irish-Catholic nominee for president, John F. Kennedy, felt obligated to appear before a group of Protestant ministers in Houston to assure them that his election would not deliver the United States to the pope.[14]

This discrimination occurred to people who were by and large U.S. citizens or had easy access to citizenship. It underscores that simply measuring political incorporation through citizenship status is inadequate to understanding the phenomenon. Mae Ngai has introduced the phrase "alien citizen" to describe the situation of groups who have possessed formal citizenship rights but, for reasons of religion, nativity, or race, have not been fully accepted as Americans. Ngai has used this phrase to analyze the 1940s and 1950s experience of Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans, groups that suffered more serious discrimination than the Irish or other European groups ever did. The phrase, however, can be extended to other groups – Mexican Americans, eastern and southern European Americans, even Irish Americans – who have faced a disjuncture between their formal rights and citizenship status on the one hand and their experience of those rights and membership in the American polity on the other. It underscores the importance of the second dimension of the process of political incorporation, that which focuses our attention on belonging, and it causes us to inquire more closely into the responses of those groups and individuals who gained formal membership in the American polity while feeling as though they did not belong to it.

Historically, citizen immigrants have reacted in three distinct ways to their experience of not belonging, or of what we might call civic alienage: first, quiescence and quietude; second, an eagerness to prove one's bona fides as Americans by displays of patriotism and proclamations of allegiance to American ideals; and third, a determination to establish new institutions and new policies that would change the United States sufficiently to allow alien citizens to feel as though they could overcome their alienation and make this new land their home. Over the course of their lives, of course, many immigrants reacted in all three of these ways, depending on the moment, event, and circumstance. While in some instances they responded in two or even three of these ways simultaneously, the three responses are analytically distinct and need to be treated as such.

The quiescent response to civic alienage entails accepting discrimination and marginality as a fact of life and doing one's best to cope with it. It often reflects a calculation that one (or one's group) is weak, and that speaking out or mobilizing will only make things worse. There are many instances of such quiescence, from the Japanese-Americans' response to their World War II internment to the lack of protest by eastern and southern European-Americans to Congress's racially discriminatory decision in 1924 to all but end further immigration from their countries of origin. Some scholars

have argued that Arab Americans, after the repeated challenges to their whiteness and thus to their eligibility for citizenship early in the twentieth century, deliberately kept a low profile.[15]

Immigrant organizations sometimes deployed public quiescence as a mask for behind-the-scenes efforts to overcome discrimination. This was a strategy adopted by Jewish groups such as the American Jewish Committee early in the twentieth century, and it was informed not just by a fear of losing political confrontations that became too public but also by internal tensions within the Jewish community itself. Members of the American Jewish Committee tended to be prosperous and assimilated second- or third-generation German Jews. They thought of themselves as worldly, culturally refined, the natural leaders of American Jewry, and those best positioned to represent their tribe to Gentile America. They worried a great deal, however, not just about whether they, themselves, would be able to move freely in Gentile America but what the presence of masses of eastern European Jewish immigrants would do to the image of Jewry in the United States. Many German Jewish leaders viewed the Jewish immigrants as uncouth, unruly, and uncultured, and thus as a threat to the Jewish image. These leaders therefore labored hard not only to help their impoverished co-religionists adapt to the United States but also to do so in ways that would keep them out of the public eye.[16]

Anxieties about recently arrived co-ethnics were hardly unique to Jewish Americans. One can find an abundance of similar sentiments among the long settled elites of other immigrant groups: among the "lace-curtain" Irish of the early twentieth century, who saw the Irish poor as a threat to their hard-earned respectability; among the established Mexican-American families of New Mexico and Arizona, who feared the contaminating effects of close contact with waves of new Mexican migrants coming across the border in the early twentieth century; and among Arab-American Christian elites, whose strategy of relative invisibility was upset in the 1970s and 1980s by the arrival of large numbers of Muslim Arabs.[17]

This desire to put the best face on one's community also expressed itself in an eagerness among groups of ethnics to demonstrate their American patriotism. They did this by associating themselves with the symbols of the United States (such as flags), learning English, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, singing the national anthem, proclaiming their fealty to the core American values of liberty, equality, and opportunity, and demonstrating their loyalty to the United States in times of war. Sometimes, too, immigrants attempted to display their patriotism by demonstrating how Old World values underlying their ethnic institutions were deeply American in spirit. Some of this patriotism was heartfelt, some of it was strategic (a way to improve one's prospects for work and acceptance in the United States), and some of it was simply capitulation to Americanization pressures deemed too powerful to resist. Regardless of its sources, immigrant patriotism has been a potent mechanism of political incorporation.[18]

One of the outstanding historical examples of patriotic adaptation accelerating political incorporation was the mission successfully undertaken by the Catholic Church in the United States to demonstrate the compatibility between its religious faith and Americanism. This movement had multiple nineteenth century origins, but it crystallized as a mission in the late nineteenth century, when American church leaders embraced it. These leaders tended to be Irish-American clerics who had decided that the Catholic Church had to Americanize itself in order for Catholics to be fully accepted. This "Americanist" turn within the U.S. Catholic Church aroused deep opposition both in the Vatican and among non-Irish groups of Catholics in the United States. The former condemned "Americanism" as bordering on heresy while the latter (French-Canadian, Italian, and Polish Catholics were prominent in their ranks) viewed

it as a political plot by Irish-American clerics to strip them of the freedom to practice their faith as they had done for generations in their homelands.[19]

Catholic Americanizers fought Catholic traditionalists for forty years until the events of the 1930s and 1940s tipped the battle decisively in favor of the former. The economic misery generated by the Great Depression caused many Catholics to rethink their traditionalism and to open themselves to new political ideas and movements, especially those that called upon them to embrace American ideals and to use them to rebuild an ailing American republic. Then the Second World War compelled millions of young Catholic men to serve in the U.S. military, an experience that further intensified their sense of belonging to the country. Finally, the Cold War allowed and even encouraged many Catholics to represent their faith as a quintessential expression of American political principles. Anticommunism facilitated this union of Catholicism and Americanism. The Vatican had made the fight against Communism a religious imperative of the highest order in the 1930s. When this fight became a priority of the U.S. government in 1946, the U.S. and the Vatican, in effect, became allies.[20]

Seeing the United States embracing anticommunism in the late 1940s allowed many Catholics to feel as though the United States was embracing them as well. Within Catholic communities in the United States, lingering tensions between Catholicism and Americanism vanished overnight. For the first time, many American Catholics felt as though they could speak on behalf of the American republic. Their Catholic inheritance made them not just acceptable Americans but exemplary ones. From Senator Joseph McCarthy to Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, from labor priest and Richard Nixon advisor Father John Cronin to Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada, from the brilliant Yale undergraduate William F. Buckley to President John F. Kennedy, Catholics were among the lions of the postwar American anti-communist crusade. As the names on this list suggest, Irish Catholics seized the lead and showed other groups of ethnic Catholics the way.[21]

The U.S. struggle against communism, the Americanization of the U.S. Catholic church, and the political incorporation of American Catholics were processes that went hand in hand in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. It is hardly an accident that the first Catholic American to become president of the United States was an anticommunist warrior who won election in large part because of his perceived toughness on Cold War issues.

If the Irish-American experience conveys a sense of the benefits that can accrue to a group by aligning itself with American ideals and American foreign policy, the German-American experience in World War I offers a sense of the perils that confront a group refusing or unable to do so. Prior to 1914, German Americans had been one of the largest, most prosperous, most respected, and most visibly ethnic of American immigrant groups. They seemed to be both integrating into American life and maintaining important elements of their ethnic culture. Many German immigrants believed that they had become American in terms of allegiance to the U.S. state and in terms of their embrace of American democratic ideals. But in matters of culture – and especially in terms of language, music, and literature – they still loved and practiced things German.[22] The German-Jewish-American philosopher Horace Kallen deemed this German-American perspective to be not just a legitimate mode of adaptation to the United States but a preferred one. In 1915 he labeled it cultural pluralism, and today we recognize it as a forerunner of multiculturalism.[23]

The entry of the United States into a world war against Germany in 1917 convulsed the proud German-American population. President Woodrow Wilson's administration, worried about the millions of German speakers in the United States, expected these immigrants to become 100 percent American overnight, which meant that they were called on both to pledge loyalty to the American state and to extinguish from their lives all signs of affection for German culture. When German immigrants were perceived as slow to do the latter, the U.S. government began condemning German culture as barbaric, censoring German newspapers and books published in the United States, and arresting thousands of German speakers suspected of disloyalty. State and local governments banned the performance of German music in the United States (this included Beethoven's symphonies), removed German books from library shelves, and prohibited the teaching of German literature and the German language in schools.[24]

In this wartime climate of repression and hate, German Americans risked being fired from work, losing their businesses, and being assaulted on the street. In 1917, a St. Louis mob lynched an innocent German immigrant whom they suspected of subversion. After only twenty-five minutes of deliberation, a St. Louis jury acquitted the mob leaders, who had brazenly defended their crime as an act of patriotism.[25]

Such experiences devastated the proud German-American community. Its members began hiding their ethnic identity, changing their names, speaking German only in the privacy of their own homes, and celebrating their holidays out of the public eye. While the physical assaults on individual Germans, the violation of their civil liberties, and the racialization of Germans as barbaric stopped soon after the Armistice was signed in November 1918, many German Americans would take far longer to recover from the shame and vulnerability they experienced in 1917 and 1918. Millions would never again celebrate their Germanness in public. Many abandoned their heritage entirely, choosing to assimilate into white Anglo-Protestant culture (if they were Lutheran) or into Irish-American culture (if they were Catholic).[26]

In some respects, German Americans can be seen as having fared well over the long term despite their World War I ordeal. By the 1930s and 1940s, individual German Americans had ascended to positions of political power and influence throughout American society. Robert Wagner of New York was a leading U.S. senator, Walter Reuther had become one of the nation's most powerful labor leaders, and General Dwight D. Eisenhower had become the United States' most important military commander. While none of these men had to fend off accusations that their German heritage rendered their patriotism suspect, however, none of them dared speak about their Germanness in public. They presented themselves, and were seen by the public, simply as Americans. It was as if the ethnic group that only thirty years earlier had been so proud and so public in its practice of cultural traditions had disappeared as a collective entity. Indeed, it can be said that World War I inflicted upon German America a mortal cultural wound. Outside of small and barely visible pockets, German ethnicity never revived. Most Americans today do not even regard the Germans as having been a viable ethnic group in the United States; Germans are simply assumed to have assimilated into white native-born America upon arrival. As the above indicates, however, this assumption misreads the past. The critical event shaping the twentieth century terms of German-American political incorporation and loss of ethnic identity was World War I, when German Americans ran afoul of the U.S. state and became vulnerable to charges that they lacked proper regard for the American republic.

That the United States is currently fighting foes in Iraq and elsewhere who share a religion and culture with many Arab Americans raises the possibility that the latter will be subjected, as German Americans once were, to extreme demands for conformity to American ideals and for demonstrations of loyalty to the American state. The situation of Arab Americans today is not identical to that of German Americans a hundred years ago. The cultural pressure on Arab Americans, for example, does not seem as great as the 100 percent Americanism demanded of German immigrants during World War I. Whereas the U.S. government sought to obliterate German culture then, it is now taking major steps to encourage the study of Arabic language and literature in American universities.[27] The American government has also refrained, quite deliberately, from making the war on terror into a total war, and from whipping up the kind of popular hatred of enemies, internal and external, that total wars usually require. Nevertheless, many Arab Americans have been subjected to forms of scrutiny and surveillance greater than what most non-Arab Americans have experienced. Many feel, too, as though their loyalty to the United States has been unfairly challenged. Most either cannot escape this scrutiny, or would not choose to escape it, by passing imperceptibly into white or Christian America, as German Americans did in the 1920s and 1930s. Thus the German-American experience in World War I remains a troubling precedent for how the American state can turn on a group of immigrants and undermine its prestige, legitimacy, and voice in American politics.

The Irish-American experience offers a more hopeful historical precedent for the incorporation of Arab Americans. A group that was once despised for its religion and culture is now fully accepted and integrated into American politics. That process took a long time (more than a hundred years), and it required sustained efforts on the part of Irish Catholics to demonstrate their patriotism and to insist on the compatibility between American democracy and Catholicism. Irish Catholicism has also benefited, in the 1940s and beyond, from the convergence of deeply felt Catholic political convictions and the post-World War II aims of U.S. foreign policy. This convergence came late in the process, however, and could have meant little had it not been preceded by an Americanization movement among U.S. Catholics that had been going on for generations and that accelerated during the era of the European-initiated world wars.

In the Americanization experience of Catholic immigrants in the United States, it is possible to glimpse the third response to civic alienage noted earlier: a determination to establish new institutions and new policies that would change the United States sufficiently to allow alien citizens to feel as though they could overcome their alienation and make this new land their home. Irish Catholics did not incorporate into the United States by sacrificing their religion. To the contrary, they established Catholicism as a legitimate expression of Americanism. American Jews went through similar struggles, battling for generations against anti-Semitism until they had won widespread assent to the proposition that the values underlying the United States were not Christian but Judeo-Christian.[28] Americanization, then, should not be understood entirely in terms of immigrant capitulation to prevailing patterns of American politics, culture, and society. It has also meant altering, disrupting, and sometimes transforming those patterns in ways that allowed the newcomers to embrace the United States as their own.

Perhaps the best example of this transformative form of incorporation is the 1930s labor movement, whose ranks were full of immigrants and their descendants – Irish, German, Italian, Jewish, Polish, Greek, Arab, French Canadian, and others – united by their poverty and marginality, and by their conviction that, as Americans, they deserved better. These working-class ethnics took seriously the first principles of

the republic – freedom, democracy, and opportunity – and infused them with new meaning. Freedom now meant the right of a worker to speak his or her mind at work or to cast a ballot for a Democrat at the polling station without fear of reprisal from a management that favored Republicans. Democracy meant ending the regime of autocracy at the workplace and replacing it with one in which workers had a voice in the conditions of their labor. Opportunity only had meaning, these trade unionists argued, if poor workers and their families had access to government-guaranteed forms of assistance that would cushion the effects of unemployment, illness, the loss of a breadwinner, and old age.[29]

Ethnic workers mobilized not just in unions but in politics. Millions of immigrant Americans and their children voted for the first time in the 1930s, and most of them cast their votes for the Democratic candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt. They not only helped to carry him to victory in four elections but helped to shift the balance of power in the United States from conservatism to liberalism, and from a politics that glorified the free market to one that celebrated the role of government in regulating a capitalist system that seemed unable to right itself. Regardless of whether one supports or opposes the politics embodied in what came to be called the New Deal, one has to concede that it wrought major changes. Immigrant and ethnic voters were a key constituency in this transformation.[30]

These voters also began to engineer a significant reorientation in American conceptions of belonging by insisting that Catholics and Jews had as great a claim on the United States as did the descendants of those original English settlers who had wanted to make the United States a Protestant land. The New Deal never self-consciously promoted religious pluralism or multiculturalism, and never described its supporters as a "rainbow coalition" of different ethnic and racial groups. Indeed, in important ways the New Deal reinvigorated older cultural and racial prejudices. The groups pouring into the Democratic Party were a diverse lot, however, and their very presence began to disrupt accepted ways of defining and representing the American nation. This became abundantly clear in World War II when the dominant and most honored image of the nation became that of the multiethnic platoon, with its Protestant, Irish, Polish, Italian, and Jewish soldiers fighting side by side to preserve American democracy and freedom. In these and other ways, the incorporation of immigrants had convulsed and changed American politics and culture.[31]

The civil rights movement of the 1960s represents another example of the transformative form of political incorporation, although the initial protagonists were African Americans rather than immigrants and their descendants. They had themselves been subjected to a sharp form of civic alienage, in that they had long experienced a chasm between their formal status as citizens and their ability to possess and enjoy those rights. In the process of claiming their rights, African Americans forced the United States to confront the depths of racial, gender, and other forms of discrimination in ways the nation had rarely done before. African-American militancy impelled Congress not only to put through the most vigorous civil rights legislation since Reconstruction but also to enact the Immigration Act of 1965 that finally ended the racially-based system of immigration restriction that had been in place since the 1920s.[32] After 1965, it became almost impossible for the American government to deny foreigners entry into the United States and access to citizenship on the basis of race. The result over the next forty years was an immigration wave unprecedented in its global origins and racial diversity.[33]

The civil rights upheaval also challenged prevailing notions of cultural integration and incorporation. Through the "Black is Beautiful" movement, African Americans signaled that their political

incorporation would not cost them their cultural pride or distinctiveness. Immigrant groups, both old and new, quickly adopted a similar stance in regard to their own ethnic cultures, thereby broadening and intensifying the effort to locate the United States' vitality in its ethnic and racial diversity. The breadth and strength of this movement would have been unimaginable to immigrant and native Americans a hundred years earlier.[34] The movement's influence on politics can be discerned in the dramatic rise in the number of political officeholders who were the children and grandchildren of immigrants and in the rising importance of racial and ethnic group interests in Democratic Party affairs.

The changes wrought by the civil rights movement did not always strengthen the forces of political incorporation. Some groups of new immigrants saw in post-1960s multiculturalism an opportunity to cultivate their native cultures and ties to their homelands while keeping themselves distant from American culture and politics. Other groups that wanted to draw close to American politics discovered that traditional mechanisms of incorporation such as labor unions and political parties no longer worked as capably as they once had.[35]

Moreover, the Immigration Act of 1965 mentioned above had unintentionally created a whole new class of immigrants chronically estranged from American politics. To restrict immigration from Latin America, the act had imposed quotas on the number of immigrants allowed to enter the United States from other Western Hemispheric countries in any given year. These quotas failed to deter immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries with high poverty rates from entering the United States through tunnels, under cover of darkness, or with false documents. Within twenty years of the law's passage, the United States had become home to millions of these immigrants, now categorized as illegal aliens. Except for those able to take advantage of the amnesty provision of the Immigration Reform Act of 1986, these "illegals" had no access to U.S. citizenship, the most elementary form of political incorporation. Their status resembled that of East Asian immigrants of a century earlier who were barred from becoming citizens. By the 1990s, many native-born Americans had come to regard these undocumented immigrants as a drain on the nation's resources, a source of criminality, and a threat to American politics and culture. The sentiment intensified in the long period of national insecurity following the September 11 attacks and sparked suspicion of other groups of immigrants, too, especially those of Muslim origin and from the Middle East.[36]

The Civil Rights revolution therefore cannot be said to have eliminated all the obstacles to the participation of immigrants in American politics. The events of those years, however, as of those in the 1930s, do demonstrate the transformative potential of political incorporation. Immigrants' participation in politics has sometimes changed the United States in major ways. These changes have not come easily. They have required political mobilization on a large scale, new institutions and strategies, and years and sometimes decades of struggle. The outcomes, however, have often been positive for immigrants and a source of national renewal.

NOTES

1. Rubén G. Rumbaut, "Assimilation and its Discontents: Ironies and Paradoxes," in Charles Hirschman, Philip Kasinitz, and Josh DeWind, eds., *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience* (Russell Sage Foundation, 1999), pp. 182–185; Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (University of California Press and Russell Sage Foundation,

2001), pp. 118–128; Tamar Jacoby, "The New Immigrants: A Progress Report," in Jacoby, ed., *Reinventing the Melting Pot: The New Immigrants and What It Means to Be American* (Basic Books, 2004), pp. 23–24.

2. Gary Gerstle, "Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans," 84 *Journal of American History* (September 1997), pp. 524–558.

3. Gary Gerstle and John Mollenkopf, "Introduction," in Gerstle and Mollenkopf, eds., *E Pluribus Unum: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), pp. 1–30; Evelyn Savidge Sterne, "Beyond the Boss: Immigration and American Political Culture from 1880–1940," in Gerstle and Mollenkopf, *E Pluribus Unum*, op. cit., pp. 33–66.

4. The trope of America as a place of rebirth is often thought to have originated with the eighteenth century French-American farmer, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. *See* his *Letters from an American Farmer* (London: Printed for T. Davies, 1782; E. P. Dutton & Co., 1912).

5. An Act to Establish an Uniform Rule of Naturalization, Mar. 26, 1790, 1 Stat 103–104.

6. Naturalization Act of July 14, 1870, 16 Stat. 254.

7. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (McCarran–Walter Act), P.L. 82–414.

8. Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Americans and the Alchemy of Race* (Harvard University Press, 1998); Ian F. Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York University Press, 1996); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Randa A. Kayyali, *The Arab Americans* (Greenwood Press, 2006), pp. 45–64.

9. Aristide Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

10. Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment reads, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."

11. Gerald Neuman, *Immigrants, Borders, and Fundamental Law* (Princeton University Press, 1996).

12. Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1865: A Study in Acculturation* (Harvard University Press, 1941); David A. Gerber, *The Making of an American Pluralism* (University of Illinois Press, 1989); Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford University Press, 1985); John McGreevey, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (University of Chicago Press, 1996); Christopher J. Kaufmann, *Patriotism and Fraternalism in the Knights of Columbus: A History of the Fourth Degree* (Crossroad, 2001); Paula Kane, *Separatism and Subculture: Boston Catholicism, 1900-1920* (University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

13. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (Rutgers University Press, 1955); David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

14. John F. Kennedy, Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Sept. 12, 1960, available at http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/66.htm.

15. Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans in World War II* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971); Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 2001); Kayyali, *The Arab Americans*, op cit..

16. Stuart Svonkin, *Jews Against Prejudice: American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties* (Columbia University Press, 1997); Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton University Press, 2006); Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).

17. Kane, *Separatism and Subculture*, op. cit.; Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Harvard University Press, 1999); Kayyali, *The Arab Americans*, op. cit.

18. Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

19. Op. cit.

20. Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism*, op. cit., chs. 7, 9; Gerstle, *American Crucible*, op. cit., chs. 4–6.

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Michigan Arab Americans:
A Case Study of Electoral and Non-Electoral Empowerment

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The journey of political participation by Michigan Arab Americans, from their arrival in Highland Park at the beginning of the twentieth century to work in the Ford Model T plant to the crucial role they now play in Michigan political life, has been a story of both individual participation and community upheaval. Today Arab-American participation in the fabric of the American political process is an accepted reality. However, early Arab-American participation was largely confined to a handful of activists who executed their vision apart from any organized movement within their respective communities. Their participation was a result of their unwavering commitment to forging a role for themselves in mainstream American politics, a commitment that gave birth in later years to focused lobbying and solid activism.

The decade of the 1960s was pivotal in the lives of all Americans, regardless of race or national origin. It was a decade that spoke for and changed the opinions of an entire generation of people, and many more following them, about issues such as civil rights, women's rights, and war and peace. It was during this time, more than fifty years after its arrival in the United States, that the Arab-American community began both to move toward a more unified vision of community and to attempt seriously to influence American political life. Arab Americans finally began to mobilize as a result of the 1967 war in the Middle East. While they started acting politically on a community level, it took another 20 years for Arab Americans' issue-oriented street participation to be augmented by party politics and solidified lobbying activity.

Arab Americans at their best have proven to be a voting bloc capable of swaying close elections and influencing major political campaigns. They have time and time again succeeded in delivering votes that have affected local and state elections. Their path has not been easily paved, however. It is a path that has been consistently fueled by a need to be heard and accepted. Those who came before us were a fearless group of people who not only demanded to be heard, but also made sure they were.

This essay is a first attempt to reflect on the history of our people within the American political mainstream. Its focus is the portion of the dialogue that took place in the state of Michigan from the early 20th century until today. In the process of researching this paper, I have frequently had to rely on the memory and evaluations of many individuals as well as my own personal recollection of faces, places, events, and memories. As a result, some readers may not embrace all of these "facts" as their own, but I hope they will accept this effort as an honest attempt to turn our collective memory into a cohesive reflection of the Arab-American political journey thus far.

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THE EARLY YEARS

Prior to the early 1900s, the Arab-American presence in Michigan was negligible, although Detroit frequently served as a springboard for migration to other developing cities such as Cedar Rapids and Chicago. As did many immigrants who came before and after them, Arabs arrived on American soil poor and uneducated and were forced, by virtue of their circumstances, to work as laborers, miners and, in substantial numbers, as peddlers.[1] They would travel from town to town selling their wares and settling where there was work and opportunity.

Arab Americans labored in the Seattle region during the years of railroad construction and, as did many other ethnic groups, found their way to North and South Dakota, seeking to acquire land and hunt with ease so as to ensure their survival and the improvement of their circumstances.[2]

Like all immigrants, the early Arab immigrants were prepared to toil to achieve upward mobility and were focused primarily on gaining employment, raising their families, and integrating themselves into the surrounding society. It is safe to say that their public participation was for the most part limited to the development of their places of worship, fraternal organizations, and small business networks. In small and often isolated areas all around the country, but particularly in the Midwest, they slowly gathered themselves into prayer and community groups.

It was not until 1908, when the first Ford Model T plant opened in Highland Park, that Michigan had an identifiable Arab-American community. For what may have been the first time, Arab Americans began to take note of the potential they had in Michigan, which later came to symbolize an opportunity to claim their own piece of the American dream. With the automotive industry growing quickly in Michigan, the prospects of becoming a worker in a new and what was then a highly paid industry provided the community with a new sense of confidence and hope. There are early documented efforts by Arab Americans to create their own forms of community organizations and cultural and religious centers, which became the building blocks of institutional development and answered the rising need for identity preservation. In 1919, Arab Americans built a mosque in Highland Park, where most of the community was concentrated.

Beginning in 1917, with the building of the Ford Rouge industrial complex in what was to become Dearborn, Michigan, the community rapidly became one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans in the nation. Within twenty years, the Ford Rouge plant became the largest industrial complex in the world, with 90,000 workers, and a source of economic opportunity for many immigrants.[3] Workers at these plants were not required to speak English and the salary of $5.00 a day, if still quite low, was considered exceptional. Arab Americans all over the country began pouring into the city of Dearborn, and this is where the story of our people in Michigan truly begins.

It was during this time that some Michigan Arabs distinguished themselves as appointees, ward heelers and judges, as well as a very small number of candidates for public office. While there were a number of key appointments from the community as early as the 1920s and 1930s, generally speaking, Arab Americans played no serious role in electoral politics. In the main, their initial efforts were to blend in, learn English and raise their families. While it was an important first step, this concentration on the basics inhibited them from getting the kind of jumpstart into mainstream politics that many other ethnic communities experienced. The largest exception to this non-political role was Arab-American participation in union and employment-related activities from the 1920s through the 1940s.

THE UNION MOVEMENT AND THE SEARCH FOR OUR OWN VOICE

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the three largest Arab-American communities were concentrated around the Hamtramck, Dearborn, and Flint auto plants, in worker-centered, mixed immigrant communities. During this time the Flint Fisher Body plant and Ford Rouge plant became pivotal in the United Auto Workers' (UAW's) labor organization efforts. The UAW was formed in 1935 by activists fed up with the poor working conditions that were imposed on plant employees, who were forced to work in unsafe conditions for low wages and without job stability.[4] The workers, including Arab Americans, organized a series of sit-down strikes, the first of which lasted for 44 days.[5] Arab-American workers seized the opportunity to enlist in a movement that addressed their daily lives and working conditions, and thus they became embroiled in the discourse of the times. In many ways, the participation of Arab Americans in the UAW's battle with the auto manufacturers became the segue that would place the Arab-American community in the mainstream political dialogue of the time.

For the Arab Americans who suddenly found themselves in the throes of this enormous event, exposure and, to some degree, participation in the vocal discontent and powerful demonstration of the will of the "common man" ignited the need for recognition. Their involvement in current events through the labor union movement slowly provided some key members of the community with the skills to wage their own battles on issues that were important to the residents of Southeast Michigan. Southeast Dearborn was a melting pot in its own right. A multiethnic district with many of the characteristics found in blue-collar towns across the nation, it was engaged in a cross-cultural and cross-ideological dialogue involving union organizers, communists, anarchists, Democrats, nationalists and, at times, ward heelers, all intent on improving the circumstances of the less fortunate of the community. Aliya Hassan, when asked what Arab Americans thought about these events, stated, "We didn't know what to think because we were in it and on both sides: the unions and the companies."[6]

A number of people rose to prominence during this period. George Addes, for example, became a key UAW organizer at the very beginning of the union's efforts and eventually became its first secretary-treasurer. By the 1950s, Arab Americans were active in the union's electoral efforts, working to get Arab-American voters out to support union candidates and the Democratic Party. Grassroots workers and ward heelers such as Mary Saad, Joe Berry and, in later years, Mohammed Issa, were part of these efforts. It was an era in which Arab Americans slowly began to realize the importance of voting rights and began to consider what they could afford to do to influence electoral politics and to improve their conditions.

Arab Americans would wrestle with the union in 1973 over the union's purchase of Israel Bonds. The dispute resulted in walkouts at the Dodge main plant and demonstrations against the union's leadership. The Arab Workers' Caucus nominated and elected candidates to the UAW convention, where they raised the Arab-American workers' issues. It was an example of Arab Americans engaging in successful activism that led to a form of organized electoral politics – something that was unprecedented at the time.

Helen Atwell was one of the leaders who emerged during this period. In 1972, she became the first Arab-American woman to run for Dearborn City Council, managing to gain the political backing of the UAW. Her campaign focused on issues of urban renewal. It is safe to say that her political

leanings and civic vision made her someone with whom UAW officials could easily identify. She did not win the race, but nonetheless played an important role in paving the road for others to follow.

In the 1970s, Steven P. Yokich, an Arab American who was a Detroit native, worked his way up through the union ranks. He eventually joined the UAW executive board in 1977, was elected vice president in 1980, became the president in 1995 and remained in that office through 2002. He was a man who believed in equality and was an exemplary example of what the UAW ideally stood for. He also was well known for his commitment to justice for people of all races. During his tenure, Arab Americans were a strong presence in the UAW.

The relationship between the Arab-American community and various unions across the country played a primary role in the maturing of Arab-American awareness and political acumen. In Michigan, the UAW has supported the political leaders of the Arab-American community. The synergy of character, ideals, and mutual needs has offered each group the ability to work with the other and make unprecedented strides.

THE 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, AND EARLY 1960s

There was very little direct electoral participation by Michigan Arab Americans from the 1920s through the 1940s, but there were exceptions. One such was attorney Bill Cody, an electoral activist who was appointed Court Commissioner in the 1930s. The 1940s and early 1950s saw a gradual increase of individuals who began to achieve personal success and became political figures. Among them was George Bashara, Sr., who was unsuccessful in his bid for a judgeship in the 1940s even though he was supported by several Michigan communities and leading entrepreneurs such as the Hamity Brothers of Flint, who were successful store owners and businessmen. Although George Bashara's campaign was unsuccessful, it encouraged Arab Americans to become more involved in the world of politics.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, more and more Arab Americans, determined to gain respect from the general public, sought to participate in political and governmental affairs. This was particularly true of Arab-American attorneys such as John Khoury, who was appointed to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. Joseph G. Rashid was appointed as chief trial lawyer by the Prosecutor's Office in the 1950s, and went on to become a judge of the 3rd Circuit Court (1957-1977). He was later followed as a circuit court judge by his son James J. Rashid (1987-2005). Judge Rashid Sr. had substantial support from the Arab communities in Michigan and, by example, created a path for others to follow. Walter Shamie, a businessman at the time, ran for the office of mayor of Detroit. Judge Anthony Mansour, a key figure in Flint Republican politics, worked to support Arab-American issues and candidates regardless of party.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Arab nationalism and the pan–Arab movement that originated in Egypt and swept the Middle East also crossed the ocean and began affecting Arab Americans, setting the stage for their greater participation on specific issues. This development was followed by the first of several large waves of immigrants, who arrived in Michigan with a very different set of expectations and ideals than those who preceded them. The new immigrants came determined to preserve their language, culture, and religious beliefs. They arrived in communities that, by the early 1970s, were being affected by the civil rights and anti-war movements, as well as by local issues such as Dearborn residents' fight for urban renewal.

Michael Berry is a prominent example of political activism from this period. He was a young, ambitious and politically active lawyer who became involved in Democratic Party politics during the late 1940s and exerted a great deal of effort on G. Mennen Williams' successful gubernatorial campaign of 1949. Berry was also a key participant in the drive to recall Orville Hubbard, the segregationist mayor of Dearborn, as Berry believed that Mayor Hubbard's views about African Americans also extended to Arabs. Berry was elected to the Michigan Democratic Party executive board in 1954, and worked tirelessly to elect John Dingell to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1964. In 1967, he was elected as the head of the Wayne County Road Commission, the single most powerful position in the county.

Remaining loyal to his beginnings, Berry consistently promoted issues of labor, civil rights, equality and fairness. One of the grandfathers of the American Arabs' political awakening in Michigan and around the country, Berry was a pioneer and a symbol of achievement for the thousands of eager Arab immigrants who landed on American shores as a result of the Palestinian-Israeli Middle East crisis. His influence as a power broker and the respect he engendered were so great that in 1978, Detroit's international airport was named after him.

Jim Khalil, of the Islamic Federation of America, was another activist of the 1950s-1970s. He collaborated with Bill Lucas in the Wayne County Sheriff's office and later worked with him when Lucas served as Wayne County Executive. There are numerous other examples of individuals who created a name for themselves before the 1960s, but until 1967 they concentrated primarily on issues of survival, stability and equality. The 1967 war, however, was a political shock for Arab Americans. While they lacked the organizational structure for action, they were compelled to make their feelings known to other Americans.

THE LATE 1960s AND 1970s: CRITICAL TIMES FOR ARAB AMERICANS

The late 1960s and 1970s were periods of pan-Arabism and organizational development. This was a formative period for the community. A small number of activists in Michigan, New York and other parts of the country were particularly affected by the pan-Arab movement. The nationalist ideology that was becoming the mantra of millions was finding an audience in the United States. The issue of civil rights was at the forefront of the American political agenda, and the time was ripe for debate and revolutionary ideas. Fueled by these events, some Arab Americans began to stand out for both their personal achievements and their contributions to "their people." One such person was Abdeen Jabara, who was of Lebanese descent but spoke almost no Arabic. After two years at the University of Michigan, he went to see the Middle East for himself. He returned to the United States to complete law school in the 1960s and then went back to the Middle East to work for the Palestine Research Center. Jabara would later play a key role in Arab-American politics.

While Jabara was exploring his roots, the Arab community began taking the major step of creating organizations dedicated to expanding its political horizons. Ambitious and unapologetic activists created organizations such as the Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG), which was critical to the intellectual development of the community and which, by default, became the first think tank within the Arab-American political arena.

Activist groups and student organizations were being formed by the dozens, wherever one could find a generous congregation of Arab individuals. A feeling of self-sufficiency and a stubborn

commitment to "making a difference" were sweeping across most Arab-American communities. The humble attempts of previous times were long gone; instead, there was a swelling of confidence that would lead to great accomplishments.

As this took place, individuals continued to forge new roles for themselves. James H. Karoub, for example, served as the Police and Fire Commissioner of Highland Park in 1959-1964. He was a state legislator, serving in 1961-1963 and 1965-1968. Although he won the primary for mayor of Highland Park in 1968, he was found ineligible because he was still serving in the Michigan House of Representatives.[7] He returned to private law practice and influenced the outcome of several legislative political races. His law practice quickly became the multi-client lobbying firm of Karoub & Associates.[8] In the 1970s and early 1980s, it was the most powerful lobbying firm in Michigan and, in addition to its regular clients, often acted on behalf of Arab-American organizations such as the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) and the Arab Chaldean Council (ACC).

It was during this period that the United States government, under President Richard Nixon, initiated "Project Boulder," which spied on Arab Americans across the country.[9] The reaction from the Arab-American community was one of outrage. Suddenly, Arab-American national and local organizations engaged in battle. That required a new level of national coordination, which would help provide a partial platform for national electoral politics in the future. It was at this time that the Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC) and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) came into existence. The organizations were led by people like Abdeen Jabara, James Zogby, and U.S. Senator James Abourezk, as well as others who would not only play a role in their communities but would also become leaders of national Arab-American political life.

It was also during this time that ACCESS was created, in response to the new immigrants' needs for human services. Hassan Nawash, Mohsen Moneim, Helen Atwell, Alan Amen, Catherine Amen, Don Unis, Ali Baleed Almaklani, Mohsen Hubashi and, somewhat later, Aliya Hassan, Hassan Jaber, Anan Ameri, Linda Hallick, Noel Saleh, Nancy Andedow Grey, and many other activists with a background in various struggles joined together to create an organization that not only could provide service to new Arab-American immigrants but could begin to institutionalize advocacy as well. George Khoury became the first president of ACCESS in 1971. By the 1990s, what began as a small storefront operation would become both the nation's largest Arab human service agency and a consistent advocate on local and national levels. In the years that followed, ACCESS became an important force in local and national electoral politics and in the nationwide movement to develop a network of Arab community centers, as well as the moving force behind the creation of the Arab American National Museum.

This groundswell of activity became a fundamental evolutionary factor in institutional development. By the 1970s, Arab Americans were not only speaking out on the Palestinian issue but were also highly involved in local and state politics and making substantial efforts to address anti-war, environmental, and urban renewal issues. Within the context of their community discourse and their struggle to improve their neighborhoods and insure their civil rights, they became intent on influencing and making a contribution to the larger society. In a multitude of ways, the ideological and political turmoil within the Arab-American community, in Michigan and elsewhere, was becoming increasingly reflective of the 1970s era in American history. A primary weakness was that the

majority of Arab-American activists remained activists and did not transition easily into the electoral political process. Because of a tendency to be suspicious of government agencies, Arab Americans did not perceive the electoral sphere to be a venue for "their" politics.

1980s AND 1990s: UNDERSTANDING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

That situation changed in the 1980s and 1990s. An urban renewal battle in Dearborn in 1972 had generated the campaign of Helen Atwell, the city's first Arab-American city council candidate. Although she did not win, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, Arab Americans frustrated by a lack of progress were running for office in Dearborn and other cities. It was not long before people like Suzanne Sareini and Alan Amen were either elected or appointed to office. Sareini was elected to the Dearborn city council in 1990, and as of 2006 is in her fifth four-year term. Amen was appointed to the Dearborn school board in 2001 for a single term. The previous decades had been spent cultivating alliances on a personal and political level; now it was time to test the might of those relationships.

The entry of Jesse Jackson into the presidential election campaign of 1984 and the creation of the Arab American Institute (AAI) in 1985 were critical to the continued development of electoral activism for Michigan's Arab-American community and its integration into political life. During this time, Arab-American involvement in both Michigan and national party politics became solidified. Jesse Jackson was possibly the first national politician to acknowledge the Arab-American community publicly as a potentially valuable constituency. He made an effort to appeal to its leaders, thereby gaining the community's cautious trust. Many of Jackson's platform issues resonated with Arab Americans, who were interested in issues such as health care, free education, equal rights and, of course, the question of Palestinian statehood. Four years later, when Jesse Jackson ran for president again, he won the Michigan primary by 55 percent, and the Arab-American vote helped him do so.

This resulted in a new-found respect in the Michigan party establishment for the Arab-American community and its concerns and involvement. It was at this point that electoral politics began to gain momentum and party participation and issue-based politics became part of the Arab-American political discourse and activities. When AAI was formed in 1985, it began by urging a large number of Arab Americans in several Michigan cities to run for the positions of precinct delegate and national delegate. All over Michigan, from Detroit to Lansing, Flint, and Grand Rapids, there was a drive to "go where no Arab had gone before" in mainstream politics.

It is important to note that this activity, though more vibrant and issue-oriented in the Democratic Party, also began to take place in the Republican Party. As noted above, in 1990, Suzanne Sareini, a Democrat, became the first Arab American to be elected to the Dearborn city council. Early in her term, at the urging of Arab-American Republican leader Spencer Abraham, she switched parties and became an active Republican. She later served on a number of state, county and local commissions and was appointed to positions of influence by former Michigan governors James J. Blanchard (D) and John Engler (R) and by former President George H.W. Bush.[10]

As Sareini and Abraham helped garner support for the Republican party in the Arab-American community, the Democratic party began to take note. Both parties were now seriously involved in appealing to the Arab-American constituency, which they recognized as a force capable of changing election outcomes in Michigan. Just as Governor George Romney had tried to do after his 1966

run for office, both parties were suddenly keen on mobilizing the Arab-American community. Arab Americans and their community leaders had finally arrived at a level of political maturity. Organizations such as ACCESS and the Arab Chaldean Council had discovered the value that could result from lobbying – in their case, for human service policies and funding.

By the 1990s, a large number of Michigan Arab Americans were running for office. When Spencer Abraham decided to run for the Senate in 1994 on the Republican ticket, the Michigan Arab-American community was exhilarated at the prospect of one of their own achieving such a prominent and influential position. Support poured in from cities all over Michigan as well as from outside the state. Abraham won the race. He was defeated by Debbie Stabenow in his bid for reelection in 2000, but was then appointed by President George W. Bush as U.S. Secretary of Energy, a position he held until 2005.

By 2000, the voice that had begun to make noise decades before was now loud enough to be heard across the entire state. While George H.W. Bush's campaign had made an effort in the early 1990s to appeal to Michigan Arab Americans, it was a sign of the times that George W. Bush actively pursued and to some degree catered to the Arab-American vote ten years later. Albert Gore's campaign also reached out to the Michigan Arab population in 2000, with Senator Joseph Lieberman, his running mate, making a visit to Michigan and addressing the Arab-American community. Michigan was now recognized as a testing ground for the Arab-American voting bloc, which was seen as a possible factor in deciding close elections. The Michigan Arab-American leadership also played a key role in the Detroit mayoral races of Dennis Archer (who served as mayor in 1994-2001) and Kwame Kilpatrick (2002-present). Politicians and government officials in states such as California, Texas, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Illinois began paying attention.

By the mid-to-late 1990s, it had become routine for Arab Americans to work with party officials on campaigns in support of candidates all over the political spectrum. Arab Americans serve today as key operatives in states such as Michigan, guiding the Arab-American community's votes towards candidates who are sympathetic to its issues. Individuals such as Youssef Ghafari, Nasser Beydoun, Dr. Yehia Basha, and Anthony Mansour are only a few of the active, vocal and successful Republican leaders of the Michigan Arab-American community. Dennis Deno of Lansing, John Nicola and Alex Issac of Flint, and Karen Henry of Grand Rapids play a pivotal role in the Democratic party in their respective cities, where they help raise awareness of the issues pertinent to the Arab-American community. This writer represents Detroit Arab-American Democrats on the Democratic party's central committee. In 2004, the president, vice-president, and treasurer of the Flint Democratic party were all Arab Americans. Sally Shaheen Joseph served as Supervisor of Flint Township from 1992 through 2000. As of this writing, Abdul Haidous is the mayor of the city of Wayne; Barbara Farrah and David Farhat have served in the Michigan House of Representatives since 2002; and Leo Farhat has been an Eaton County Commissioner for the 6th District since 2002 as well.

More and more Arab Americans have also been appointed to public office. Azzam Elder, an Arab Muslim community activist, was appointed as Deputy Wayne County Executive in 2005 and in April 2006, Charlene Mekled Elder became the first Arab Muslim female judge in the history of the state of Michigan.

Today, the Detroit area abounds in political activists. In addition to the ongoing efforts of AAI, there is now a plethora of active PACs such as AAPAC (Arab American PAC), which has been

responsible for electing several school board members in Dearborn, and YPAC, a PAC that mobilizes the Yemeni-American community. ACCESS and the Arab American Chamber of Commerce, in alliance with other national ethnic organizations, have also stayed engaged. There are similar efforts and organizations in the Chaldean community.

9/11 AND BEYOND

Although the events of 9/11 shocked the entire nation, they had a particularly chilling effect on Arab Americans. This was particularly true in Michigan, where their numbers and concentration make Arab Americans highly visible. Since September 11, Arab Americans have experienced a setback in the steady progress they had been making. The warlike images of Arab Americans, similar to those of their Japanese-American counterparts during World War II, have strengthened anti-Arab sentiment. National and international politics continue to pollute the political atmosphere in Michigan, where it is now not unusual for such images to be used against Arab-American candidates.

While 9/11 sent the community into a state of fear and inactivity (although there were important exceptions to this), it also created a sense of urgency about continuing on the path toward integration and reaffirming the community's validity and its loyalty to the nation. In many ways, the fear eventually gave way to an unprecedented political vigor, while the anger and shock at the shadow of suspicion that fell over the community were converted into a renewed commitment to the political issues of civil rights and immigration policy.

This writer was himself attacked as a terrorist during an unsuccessful campaign for a seat on the University of Michigan Board of Regents in 2006. Interestingly, Senator Carl Levin and a large number of Jewish leaders and politicians from both parties spoke out against the attempts to discredit law-abiding Arab-American citizens. Abed Hammoud, who ran unsuccessfully for mayor of the city of Dearborn in 2001, felt it necessary to resort to distributing a flyer, complete with his photograph, that read, "Yes, I came here as an immigrant. But my entire family is here. I have no mysterious connections to any place overseas, other than wanting peace and justice for people everywhere."[11] Whatever progress was made during this period was the result not only of the effort of local groups but of continued institutionalized electoral work at the national level by AAI and ADC. In addition, newer issue-oriented efforts by national organizations such as the National Network for Arab-American Communities (NNAAC) began making an impact on immigration issues, and other organizations such as the National Association of Arab Professionals (NAAP) started to take shape.

In the aftermath of these events, and with the background of the leadership role that the Arab-American community in Michigan has played, there has been a concerted effort to return to the issues and not be deterred by the poisonous atmosphere of ethnocentrism. There has been a positive effect, seen in the improved rate at which individual Arab Americans are willing to donate to Michigan institutions that reflect their culture. Great strides have been made, for example, in building the new Islamic Center of America. The new Dearborn institution, which will be among the largest Islamic centers in the nation, will be placed in the region with the nation's largest Middle Eastern population. The first Arab American National Museum, also located in Dearborn and devoted to telling the "Arab-American story," opened its doors in May 2005.

The mantra of the times has become the creation of institutions that work to invigorate political participation at all levels and address all the concerns of Arab Americans. ACCESS and many other intermediary organizations have been cultivating their political astuteness. Examples of people at the forefront of the new race for institutional recognition are Maha Freij, Karen Rignal, Taleb Salhab, Rashida Taleb and Jaime Kim who, along with their counterparts across the country, helped to forge the NNAAC. The Arab American National Museum, which raised $16 million in less than three years, is a testament to the possibilities of philanthropic efforts in the Arab-American community.

In the end, the ability of the Arab-American community to work with others will also be a key factor in its political development. The Michigan Arab-American community is relatively new to electoral politics and has not yet forged the alliances necessary to succeed in the long run. This should be possible because of the community's resources, but success will be determined by its ability to see beyond its own issues and embrace those of others. The community must move along the path of growth, development, and political acumen, while maintaining its strong beliefs in the core issues that have been its launching pad.

In many ways, we are the youngest class of immigrants to join mainstream America, and as such, we have the capacity to interject a particular intelligence into the political discourse of our time. This, however, cannot be part of an intellectual discussion alone, but must be matched by our will to act in the electoral arena. It is not our questions and concerns that will propel us forward, but our keen sense of respect and understanding for the people we work with in seeking solutions for these questions. We must build bridges and not only assist others in crossing to our side but make the effort to cross over to theirs.

Dr. James Zogby, founder of AAI, has commented, "Michigan is our New York." Michigan can and should be a model of political participation. American politics are more open to entry by diverse groups than are the politics of any other nation. That does not mean our community does not face walls of resistance. Those walls, however, are surmountable, given the devoted tenacity that the community has time and again demonstrated in reaching beyond established goals and arriving at faraway horizons.

NOTES

1. Abdo A. Elkholy, "The Arab-Americans: Nationalism and Traditional Preservations," in Elaine C. Hagopian and Ann Parden, eds., *The Arab Americans: Studies in Assimilation* (The Medina University Press International, 1969), pp. 3-17, at p. 5.

2. "Summary of North Dakota History," taken from the *North Dakota Centennial Blue Book 1889-1998*, http://www.minot.k12.nd.us/mps/cc/ndhistory.html.

3. Vivian Baulch and Patricia Zacharias, "The Rouge Plant – The Art of Industry" (*Detroit News*, no date), available at http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=189&category=business; Thomas J. Sugrue, "From Motor City to Motor Metropolis; How the Automobile Industry Reshaped Urban America," *Automobile in American Life and Society* (2004), http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Race/R_Overview/R_Overview1.htm.

4. Vivian Baulch and Patricia Zacharias, "The Historic 1936-37 Flint Auto Plant Strikes" (*Detroit News*, no date), http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=115&category=business.

5. Patricia K. Zacharias, "How labor won its day" (*Detroit News*, no date), http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=150&category=business.

6. Author's interview.

7. A short biography of Karoub, along with an index of his papers, is housed at the Michigan Historical Collection, University of Michigan, http://www.umich.edu/~bhl/bhl/mhchome/reaccess/karoub.pdf.

8. http://www.karoubassociates.com/about/index.htm.

9. "Operation Boulder" was launched after the terrorist attacks on the Munich Olympics in 1972. Directives issued by President Richard Nixon, apparently after requests from Israel, authorized the FBI to investigate Arabs in the United States so as to uncover possible ties to terrorist activities. The FBI went to the homes and workplaces of hundreds of Arabs, who were investigated, interrogated, photographed and finger-printed. *See* Norman Kempster and Ronald J. Ostrow, "Ties to Arabs Carry Risk of Terrorist Acts in U.S.," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 27, 1978; Elaine Hagopian, "Minority Rights in a Nation-State: The Nixon Administration's Campaign against Arab-Americans," 5 *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Autumn 1975-Winter 1976), pp. 97-114, at 100-104; Michael R. Fischbach, "Government Pressures against Arabs in the United States," 14 *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Spring, 1985), pp. 87-100, at 88-92.

10. A short biography of Councilwoman Sareini is at http://www.cityofdearborn.org/departments/citycouncil/Sareini.shtml.

11. *See* Alexandra R. Moses, "Arab American candidate faces tough campaign in Dearborn," *Bint Jbeil*, Oct. 6, 2001, available at http://www.bintjbeil.com/E/news/011006_dearborn.html.

Arab-American Political Participation:
Findings from the Detroit Arab American Study

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Describing Arab-American political participation is not easy, in part because participation has so many dimensions that the very definition of the term becomes an issue. Do we mean voting or demonstrating or joining a group or having a "support your local police" bumper sticker? How do different types of participation – political and non-political, national and local – relate to each other? What do we do with the fact that the Arab-American community does not function as a cohesive entity but is highly differentiated by religion, nationality, class, immigration cohort, and reason for arrival? How can we even generalize?

Consider, for example, the expected participation patterns of two Arab-American communities. The first is primarily an immigrant community with 78 percent of its adult population born over-seas. Few of its members speak English in the home (86 percent use Arabic or Chaldean), most (63 percent) get their television news via satellite dishes that bring Al Jazeera and other Arab stations into their homes; and half believe an Arab or Muslim accused of terrorism could not receive a fair trial in the United States. Would such a community even participate in American politics?

Now consider a second community, in which 91 percent say they are proud to be American, 86 percent say they feel at home in the United States, 86 percent say the United States is a land of equal opportunity, and 86 percent say they have confidence in the local police. The lives of people in this community are such that only a handful (seven percent – below the risk level of the general popula-tion) are at high risk for anxiety or depression. Will they not be at the front of every parade?

These are in fact not two communities but one, and the statistics reflect data from the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) of 2003, the study from which much of this paper will be drawn.[1] If responses to these questions seem to defy simple answers, that is because they do, indeed, defy simple answers. The Arab-American communities of metropolitan Detroit consist of a complex mosaic of patterns that do not lend themselves to simple generalizations.[2] There are Christians and Muslims and sub-groups of each. There are Lebanese, Iraqis, Yemenis, Syrians, Palestinians, Jordanians, and Egyptians. There are those whose ancestors have been in the United States for a century, and others who are still learning the language. There are educated professionals, business owners, union workers, service workers, and welfare recipients. Sub-groups live in different places, move in different circles, marry along different lines, and vote differently. It is very difficult for leaders to create cohesive political behavior, or for social scientists to identify cohesive political positions.

The Detroit Arab American Study was conducted just after President Bush delivered his "Mission Accomplished" speech, two years after the attacks of September 11. The Iraqi resistance was not yet orga-nized and many in the Iraqi community enthusiastically supported the war. The USA PATRIOT Act had

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been passed and FBI interviews with Arab immigrants caused grave apprehension about civil liberties in the community, with many individuals thinking they might be under surveillance. While then–Governor George W. Bush had criticized the ethnic profiling of Arab-Americans during the 2000 election and had won the support of many in the community, he had since come to be seen as "profiler-in-chief."

PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION

Perhaps we can think of three distinctive types of political participation: Prominent Citizens, Politically Influential Organizations, and Individual Participation. Prominent Citizens hold positions of influence or trust in the public sector, be they elected, appointed or civil service. Far from being marginalized and excluded from the political system in southeast Michigan, many Arabs hold prominent positions there. There are at least two Arab-American mayors, several members of city or county councils, members of boards of education, judges, and members of the state legislature. The following summary by Howell and Jamal makes the point:

> The City of Detroit…is…home to the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit–Windsor Tunnel which carry between them nearly a third of all traffic crossing the US/Canada border. The Ambassador Bridge is…owned by an immigrant from Lebanon, Manuel Maroun. Likewise, when international travelers arrive at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, they pass through a terminal bearing the name of another Lebanese American, former Wayne County Road Commissioner Michael (Mohammed) Berry. Flight schedules and ground traffic at the airport are managed by Hassan Makled, Director of Airfield Operations…All this coming and going is carefully monitored by Detroit and Wayne County Homeland Security Task Forces, both of which are led, in part, by Lebanese American law enforcement officers who are also Shi'a Muslims. These men are among more than 60 deputized Arab Americans in Wayne County alone, where Azzam Elder, a Palestinian American, was recently named Deputy Wayne County Executive. Elder is one of at least 34 Arab Americans in Michigan to hold a political appointment, while the state is home to at least 21 Arab American elected officials. This list…does not include the much larger number of Arab Americans who sit on the boards of local hospitals and the United Way, serve as Regents of state universities, or are active participants in the local ACLU, UAW, Civil Rights Board, or many of the State's important non-profit organizations.[3]

The second dimension of participation is at the organizational level. As noted elsewhere in this volume, a number of national organizations came into existence after 1967. There is a host of local organizations in the three-county area of Southeast Michigan (Macomb, Oakland, Wayne), and organizations drive the political process. Individuals vote but organizations raise money, organize rallies, mobilize voters, and bless candidates. There are mosques and churches, national and town clubs (e.g., Lebanon Club, Syria Club, Jordan Club, Ramallah Club, and Yemeni Benevolent Association). There are influential community-wide organizations including the American–Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Arab-American Chamber of Commerce, ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services), the Arab American and Chaldean Council, and the Chaldean Federation. These have major corporate, government, and political

linkages. Some sub-contract with the government to run social service programs, job training, youth programs, English-as-a-second-language programs, health care, and even torture recovery counseling. They have large budgets and provide jobs for many individuals in the community. They are powerful players, linking together ethnic organization, government money, corporate sponsorship, and political promotion, and their annual dinners draw top political leaders such as governors and senators.

As voters, Michigan Arab Americans have traditionally leaned toward the Democratic Party, with its appeal for minorities, its civil rights tradition, and its support for the Oslo Accords. In 2000, because of George W. Bush's criticism of racial profiling and the use of secret evidence, the community made a shift and gave him a plurality of its votes.[4]

In spite of the list of Prominent Citizens above, the political environment for Arab-American participation is sometimes unfriendly, for three reasons. First, people with unusual names are handicapped. If your name is Djemal Zeitoun you have a harder job of winning over the voters than if your name is James Oliver. Second, the political environment is resistant to Arabs, especially Muslims. The constant barrage of anti-Islamic and anti-Arab statements and writings from pundits, religious leaders, and ideologues has had an impact. A 2003 poll by the Pew Research Center showed that 44 percent of Americans thought Islam was more likely to encourage violence than other religions, up from 25 percent in 2002. Disturbingly, this pattern held when the numbers were controlled for education. Moreover, 31 percent said they would be reluctant to vote for a Muslim for office.[5] Finally, Arab Americans (and Muslim Americans who are not Arabs) appear to be the only identifiable group of citizens that are monitored by organized forces that attempt to reduce or marginalize their involvement in politics. Michael Suleiman has referred to this as a "politics of exclusion."[6] There have been several cases of persons appointed to advisory committees or staff positions having their appointments challenged on the grounds that they made an "anti-Israeli" or "pro-terrorism" statement or associate with people with such views and, as noted elsewhere in this volume, some candidates have even returned donations from Arabs, both Christian and Muslim.[7]

Participation Background

The way social scientists study public opinion is to begin with what we know about people *not* in the study. The traditional view of political participation tended to follow the thinking of Alexis de Tocqueville, who suggested that when a person became involved in an organizational process, that person learned skills, gained confidence, and was then able to participate in a variety of other organizations.[8] More recent research has refined these observations. It now appears that different types of participation may operate quite independently from each other. Participation in national political processes such as voting would be different from participation in localized organizations such as parent-teacher associations, religious congregations, or social clubs. Class-based associations such as the Chamber of Commerce have their own dynamic.

When we think of an immigrant community, the primary organization that comes to mind is the church or mosque. Often this is the first organizational structure formed and often it is drawn from a village or sub-national base. If past patterns hold, the congregation quickly becomes multifunctional, serving both as a worship center and as a center of community activities. It may well be that for an

immigrant community, even into the second or third generation, there will be a multifunctional pattern of participation that is different from patterns in the general population.

Recent research has identified patterns that we can use to contextualize and compare Arab-American behavior.[9] Three patterns stand out. First, participation tends to be much higher among the more established elements of society. People act to promote and protect their interests, and those with more resources are more likely to be active. As Melissa Miller puts it, "[B]oth organizational and political activity are biased toward individuals of privilege. The wealthy and well educated are more likely to both join organizations and participate in politics…Organizational joiners tend to be male, white, older, married, own their own homes, earn higher incomes, and boast higher levels of education. On nearly every dimension of status, joiners demonstrate privilege." The impact of education is particularly significant: "The magnitude of bias against those with little formal schooling is especially pronounced."[10]

Second, not all participation is the same. Participation in national politics (such as voting) is different from participation in local or community activities. "Income, education and age figure prominently in predicting nationally-focused participation, while their effects are insignificant when it comes to locally–focused participation… [Y]ears of residence in the community, marital status and home ownership all prove significant in predicting local participation, but not national…At the national level, resources matter. At the local level, social ties matter."[11] The common research practice of asking about a whole range of activities and then putting them together into a cumulative index, as if each was equal to the others, may not work.

Third, participation can be issue-specific or group-specific. Clusters of individuals can be highly mobilized around one issue but not around others, and mobilization can spread within ethnic or communal groups, making generalizations about factors that predict campaign activity difficult."[12]

The analysis below will center upon four key questions:

- What is the pattern of participation in the Arab-American community, especially compared with the general population?
- How do different types of participation link to each other?
- What impact does religious participation have on other types of participation?
- How are male and female patterns similar or different, and why?

I. WHAT IS THE PARTICIPATION PATTERN?

When compared with the general population, Arab Americans exhibit a participation deficit. Table 1 draws on both the DAAS and a companion study of the general population of southeast Michigan, which asked most of the same questions of 508 persons.[13] The table shows that Arab Americans are noticeably below the general population in terms of media consumption and political information, and are less likely than other Americans to watch television news or read a newspaper. They were less likely to know the name of John Ashcroft, the Attorney General at the time, or the majority party in Congress (Republican). While equally likely to follow the war in Iraq (where some of them had national and family ties), they were noticeably less likely to follow the war on terror. (Thirty-seven percent reported following it little or not at all, compared with

TABLE 1. Political involvement levels by percent, general population and Arab Americans

	GENERAL POPULATION	ARAB AMERICANS
Watch TV news daily	82	58
Watch Arab news/ weekly	Not Asked	58
Read newspaper daily Never	29 22	17 43
Arabic radio news daily	Not asked	30
Read Arabic newspaper	Not asked	30
Internet news daily Never	16 22	29 28
Knows Attorney Gen. Knows majority party	46 76	35 52
Follow War on Terror Very closely, closely	77	62
Follow Iraq war Very closely, closely	70	68

Ideology
    Conservative
    Middle of road
    Liberal
	34
	47
	17
		44
		40
		16

Voted 2000 Registered now Ever signed petition Political donation Contacted official/2 yrs Demonstrated Public meeting	70 85 81 21 16 4 35	55★ 80★ 37★ 15★ 14★ 10 28

Attend religious services
    Weekly
    Few times per year
    Less than that
	24
	25
	28
		21
		25
		23

Active in
    Sports organization
    Art, museum, cultural
    PTA or PTO
    Professional, business
    Village, town club
    Ethnic or advocacy
    Religious group
    Union member
    Volunteered
	26
	15
	18
	25
	Not asked
	Not asked
	39
	14
	51
		21
		15
		14
		20
		9
		10
		34
		5
		35

*Citizens only

23 percent of the general population). As political information is a very important factor in driving political action, this is a serious shortfall.

It is not surprising that Arab-American levels of political participation are below those of the general population, given the large proportion who are immigrants. It is common for recent immigrants to focus upon family, religion and work, and to stay away from the public sphere. They often do not understand the issues, the means of political expression, or the proper procedures for action. The data reflect this pattern. Even Arab-Americans citizens, however, are less likely than the general Michigan population to be registered to vote (80 percent to 85 percent) and less likely to have voted in the 2000 election (55 percent to 70 percent). There is a particular deficit in other types of political activity. Arab Americans are less likely to have signed a petition or made a political donation, although they are equally likely to have contacted an official.

One might expect that an ethnic community would be focused upon community organizations and less upon public affairs. The ethnic organization is the place where people know you and your culture and where you feel at home. The public arena can be more bewildering and less familiar than the "small community." In particular, the religious organization might well be the focus of one's life and identity. There is some truth to this expectation, but there are also surprises. Arab Americans are more likely to have volunteered in some capacity or to have attended a protest or demonstration in the past year. There is no difference between the two populations in other areas, such as attending a public meeting or being involved in some art or cultural organization. Arab Americans are less likely to be involved in a PTA, a business or professional organization, or a union.[14]

II. HOW DO DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARTICIPATION LINK TO EACH OTHER?

These patterns raise as many questions as they answer. The more interesting question is not just what but why: what drives or inhibits participation and how various activities interact. Table 2 shows how certain types of participation patterns are related. First, there are activities that are "political," such as voting. It correlates well with signing petitions, sending money to political causes, and writing or contacting public officials. These political activities also correlate with a variety of other activities that are not overtly political. Those who vote are involved in the PTA, village or town associations, and ethnic advocacy groups. While the relationships are strong, it is not clear what is driving what (for example, does being involved in your town association lead you to vote, or does voting lead you to such involvement?).

A second type of activity involves class interests. A survey question asked about union membership but since very few respondents were involved (only five percent), it is of lesser significance. The broader question about involvement in a "professional or business" association tapped a much larger number of people (20 percent). This could involve everything from shopkeepers through attorneys to import-export firms. As there are an Arab-American Chamber of Commerce, a Syrian Medical Association, and a small business association dominated by Middle Eastern people, many of these organizations are ethnic in makeup and are what Rudolph and Rudolph call para-communities.[15] Such organizations emerge out of an ethnic or religious group when a sub-element of that group becomes concentrated in or associated with an economic or class function and forms organizations to represent their interests. At that point, the community has an ethno-class dimension to its public

Table 2. Correlations Between Types of Participation*

	VOTED	SPORT CLUB	ART, MUSIC OR CULTURE	UNION	PTA	BUSINESS	VILLAGE OR TOWN CLUB	ETHNIC OR ADVOCACY GROUP	SIGNED PETITION	DONATED MONEY	WROTE TO OFFICIAL
Voted	X	.215	.193	.133	.220	.278	.194	.209	.454	.276	.290
Sport		X	.539	.433	.466	.507	.381	.380	.277	.193	.179
Culture			X	.488	.465	.535	.494	.527	.257	.192	.270
Union				X	.528	.476	.447	.472	.317	.298	.246
PTA					X	.524	.486	.462	.148	.163	.100
Business						X	.447	.499	.317	.298	.246
Village							X	.601	.188	.157	.129
Ethnic								X	.252	.234	.227
Petition									X	.390	.431
Donated										X	.327
Wrote											X

Correlation coefficient is Pearson's R. All figures shown are significant at least in the .01 range, using a 2-tail correlation coefficient.

face. Whatever the nature of these organizations, they seem to charge other relationships. They are obviously linked to political activity (voting, donating, signing a petition, and writing to an official) but are far more strongly linked to almost every other branch of community activity, most of which have no obvious economic or class overtones (such as PTA and art or sports clubs).

The third type of activity involves community or cultural organizations that are neither political nor economic. Those, for example, who are involved in a village or town association have contacted officials through letters or petitions or in other ways, but the strength of those relationships fades when compared with other activities. Their real engagement is in other community organizations. Clearly, there is a cluster of communal organizations whose memberships are overlapping.

Consider the case of involvement in a school association (the PTA or PTO). While in the past, analysts considered this to be the domain of stay-at-home mothers, the reality was quite different. Working

mothers were more active in such organizations than their non-working counterparts.[16] While PTA involvement is linked to political activities, it is much more strongly linked to almost every other cultural and community activity that we measured. The school is a community-wide organization, and involvement in school activities appears to correlate with a wide range of community and social activities. What emerges consistently throughout this table is that while we can distinguish conceptually between distinctive types of activities, there is much real world overlap between them. This is not surprising, but it indicates that there are other forces at work that do not appear in Table 2.

Finally, it should be noted that these patterns run both ways. Strong correlations show that people who are more active in one organization tend to be more active in another. Less obviously, they also show that people *not active* in one organization tend not to be active in another. It would be a mistake to romanticize the ethnic community as a scene from a 1950s movie in which *everyone* comes together in a town hall meeting to make a decision. Anyone who has been to an Arab or Chaldean community event knows the high level of enthusiasm and linkage found there, but what is not obvious is the number of individuals who are absent from these organizations or activities. The bloc of people in the community who are not involved or engaged in any meaningful way shows up in the percentages of Table 1 more than in these correlations. It is not surprising that such an element exists, for it exists in all communities, but its existence must be noted.

National Versus Local Participation

Earlier we saw that in the general population, voting tends to follow class lines and is distinct from involvement in local activities. Table 3 illustrates how this works in the Arab-American community by comparing two activities, voting and PTA involvement. Voting follows the national pattern of being rooted in economic and social position. Income, education and business ownership all correlate highly with voter turnout but much less with PTA involvement. (In fact, income is positively correlated with voting but is inversely correlated with PTA involvement). Political information (reads newspaper, knows who is Attorney General, knows which is majority party in Congress) also shows much stronger relationships with voting. Three characteristics sustain PTA activities: being female, being married, and living in the Dearborn area "enclave," where perhaps 64 percent of all Muslims, and few Christians, live.[17] (The minus sign indicates that women rather than men are more active). Clearly, these two types of participation illustrate the national pattern in that they call upon different resources and different types of people. It is interesting that among voters, both information items correlate at an equal level but not among PTA activists. They were more likely to know the name of John Ashcroft but not which party was dominant in Congress. Both of these were Washington-oriented questions, but it is possible that the name of then-Attorney General Ashcroft had an almost local dimension in that policies associated with him (for example, FBI interviews of recent Arab immigrants) seemed relevant to the neighborhoods. Party dominance in Washington was more distant, at least in terms of the concerns of those in the PTA, which tends to deal with neighborhood-focused issues.

III. WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN RELIGION AND PARTICIPATION?

In the United States, a congregation almost always has what Stark and Finke call a "niche." It may have an ethnic profile, a class profile, or an ideological profile. Those congregations with a stronger

Table 3. Correlations with Voting and with Participating in a Parent Teacher Association (Arab Americans).

	VOTED	ACTIVE IN PTA
Income	.331★★	-.195★★
Education	.323★★	.163★★
Owns business	.184★★	.114★★
Married	.064★	.120★★
Gender (male)	.040	-.089★★
Lives in enclave	.100	.132★★
Reads newspaper	.335★★	-.139★★
Knows Ashcroft	.307★★	.112★★
Knows majority party	.018	.045
Trusts people	.098★★	.002

Pearson's R Correlation coefficient, two tail.
★Significant at .05; ★★Significant at .01

sense of separation or distinction from the broader society tend to generate a stronger sense of membership identity with the congregation. There are also high levels of political engagement whereby congregations "serve as the primary organizational vehicles for social conflict."[18]

African-American churches offer a helpful model for looking at the impact of Arab-American religious organizations on participation. While the two communities are quite different in many ways, both have a strong sense of identity and a non-mainstream position in society. As Fredrick Harris notes in his study of African-American congregations, "The influence of religious culture on political mobilization is perhaps the least explored aspect of the interrelation of religion and political behavior."[19] He believes that church affiliation and attendance provides members not only with the skills and confidence to participate in the political system but, in addition, with a sense of civic culture (a sense of being citizens of a broader system) and a determination to produce social change.[20]

Harris also notes that religious organizations can generate an "oppositional disposition" that enables individuals "to challenge their marginality through modes of action and thought that call for inclusion in the political system instead of exclusion from the polity…By rejecting violence as a political strategy and supporting protest-demand activism, this oppositional civic culture among black Americans promoted inclusion within the polity rather than separation from existing political structure." In other words, African-American religion "fostered both loyalty to the regime *and* opposition to aspects of that regime."[21]

Robert Putnam addresses these issues from the perspective of social capital and its relationship to civic engagement. Social capital involves self-confidence, trust in society, commitment and engagement. It has two dimensions, bridging and bonding. Bonding processes pull homogeneous groups together, a process particularly relevant to an ethnic community.[22] Bridging networks, in contrast, pull diverse groups together for common purposes. The best outcome for society is that a bonding organization will promote the integration of the group into the larger society rather than its

separation. While bonding, "by creating strong in-group loyalty, may also create strong out-group antagonism" and accelerate tensions within society,[23] Putnam believes that "faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America….churchgoers are substantially more likely to be involved in secular organizations, to vote and participate politically in other ways, and to have deeper informal social connections."[24]

Robert Bellah's description of what he called the American Civil Religion is also relevant to this analysis. Americans believe that the United States is a unique country, bringing people from different nations together into a common identity, and aspiring to fair play and full equality for all citizens. That identity allows for exceptional diversity within its population, freeing groups to observe their separate religious or cultural practices so long as they affirm the national "myth."[25] We should not romanticize this concept, or overlook the real problems faced by immigrants – Arab or otherwise – but there are some who feel this is a land of promise of which they are a part.

These models leave us with some questions: In the Arab-American community, does strong religious involvement increase engagement with the broader community or does it generate a sense of separatism and isolation? Do patriotism and protest go together, or do they diverge? Are those who identify with the American myth more likely to participate in the political process? Are they uncritically supportive of governmental authority or are they empowered to be critical of objectionable policies?

Table 4 shows the responses to a question about whether one was active in the congregation, inactive, or not involved. The most powerful pattern is that those active in religious organizations are significantly more likely to be involved in a host of other organizations and activities. This is a pattern that also emerges in the general population, but in the Arab-American community it is consistently stronger. Moreover, it does not apply only to ethnic organizations such as culture clubs, town and country clubs, and to advocacy groups such as ADC, but extends as well into the common organizations of society. People are noticeably more likely to be involved in the PTA or a union if they are active in a congregation. The pattern also extends into the political realm. Active members of a congregation are more likely to vote or be registered. They are also more likely to have participated in a low frequency activity, such as contacting an official, contributing to a political cause or signing a petition.

There is also evidence of both the civil religion and an "oppositional" culture among the religious. Those who are religiously active are more likely to be proud to be Americans and to feel at home in the United States. However, while they are more likely to trust people in general, they are also more likely to feel that Arab Americans are not respected by the general population. Regarding whether the media are hostile to Muslims and Islam, the pattern is not there. This is not surprising since perception of a hostile media is widespread in the community (and in the general populace as well). One does not have to attend religious services to feel this way. Overall, however, congregational involvement appears to be linked to an "oppositional" culture and a love-hate relationship with power. Active individuals are significantly less likely to trust the legal system, and while the patterns are not statistically significant, four other items all run in this direction. Active members are less likely to think a person accused of terrorism can receive a fair trial, and are less likely to trust the local police, the political parties or the federal government. They are not significantly different in a willingness to compromise on civil liberties (increased surveillance of citizens) as a means of enhancing security in the post-September 11 age.[26]

Table 4. Correlations of different characteristics with whether one is religiously active, General Population and Arab Americans

ACTIVE IN CONGREGATION		
	GENERAL POPULATION	**ARAB AMERICANS**
Voted 2000	–.054	.212★★
Registered to vote	.21★★	.233★
Signed petition	–.038	.271★★
Political donation	.038	.169★★
Contacted official	–.13★★	.168★★
Active village or town club	Not asked	.352★★
Active ethnic advocacy group	Not asked	.340★★
Active in sports club	.035	.339★★
Active in culture club	–.074	.356★★
Active PTA/PTO	–.073	.344★★
Active professional or Business	–.154★★	.357★★
Union member	–.078	.205★★
Proud to be American	.125	.149★★
Equal opportunity	.146★★	.058
Home in America	Not asked	.90★★
Media bias: Islam	.062	–.035
Arabs not respected	Not asked	.187★★
Trust legal system	.106★	–.189★★
Fair Trial	.03	–.044
Surveillance	.033	.037
Confidence in ethnic advocacy group	Not asked	–.003
Trust people	.021	.096
Trust police	.157	–.042
Trust parties	.113★	–.053
Trust DC government	.196★★	–.070

Correlation coefficient is Pearson's R two-tailed test
*significant at .05
**Significant at .01

What do these findings say about the role of religion in creating and enhancing a political culture of engaged resistance? There is no doubt that the religious structures in some way encourage or push individuals into the political and public arena.[27] Active individuals are more likely to be institution-ally involved and more likely to be participants in a variety of activities. They are more likely to feel a part of the country and to affirm its civil religion, but are also more likely to believe that there are institutional and cultural impediments to their full involvement in the system. Interestingly, while

they are more likely to be active in an ethnic or advocacy group (ADC is the most prominent), confidence in such organizations appears to cut across the community without regard to whether one is active in religious organizations or not.

IV. WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN GENDER AND PARTICIPATION?

Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba have noted that while the participation gap by gender is less in the United States than in other democracies, men do participate at higher levels than women. (On an eight-point scale, women participate at 1.96, men at 2.27).[28] This is not a simple categorical difference; "gender differences are contextual, their extent and nature varying across social domains." Class, race and ethnicity all play a role, producing a "heterogeneity among men and among women." We should conceptualize any differences less as a dichotomy (male and female) than as "overlapping bell curves with different means." In other words, "Sometimes the differences among men and among women are greater than the differences between men and women."[29]

Three "hunches" or working hypotheses offered by Burns et al. about why such differences occur are relevant here and can provide a base of analysis.[30]

First is the thesis that women have less free time for participation than men and that "those with children at home and full-time jobs, simply do not have the time [and]…are too preoccupied at home to pay attention to politics."[31] Second is a family structure argument: that the patriarchal family does not train females for participation. When "men function as the undisputed head of household and women are unequal at home, women can never function equally as citizens." This is connected to a socialization argument, that childhood and adult socialization "create different environments for men and women and lead them to draw different conclusions about the relevance of politics to their lives."[32] Women may live in a world with less exposure to informal political chat and other politicizing cues. Finally, the socioeconomic resources argument holds that education, income, and occupational status drive participation, and that where women are disadvantaged in those areas, they will be less likely to participate.

When they examined the data, Burns et al. found that no single reason explains the gap in political activity. Instead, there are several factors.

First, men enjoy an advantage when it comes to the single most important resource for political participation, formal education. In addition, the non-political institutions of adult life – in particular, the work place – function as an important source of the factors that foster participation. Because women are less likely than men to be in the work force, and because, even if employed full time, they are less likely to hold the kinds of jobs that provide these factors, gender differences in work force experiences loom large in our explanation of the disparity in political activity. Finally, women are less likely than men to be psychologically engaged with politics – that is, to be politically interested, informed, or efficacious – a deficit that contributes significantly to participatory inequalities. However, when women are in an environment where women seek and hold visible public offices, they are more politically interested and informed, and disparities in psychological orientations to politics shrink.[33]

Americans are often told that Arab women are held back from their natural potential by Arab or Islamic culture. If Arab men have the opportunity to achieve whatever is within their potential and merit, then perhaps male-female differences could be explained by cultural or religious values. This is a hypothesis to consider.

A Pattern of Minimal Differences

When we look at the evidence, we find that Arab–American men and women are remarkably similar. They are similarly likely to be citizens, to be fluent in English, to watch television news in English or Arabic, to read an Arabic newspaper, to perceive a media that is hostile to Muslims and Arabs, and to follow the war on terror. They are equally likely to be registered to vote, to have signed a petition, made a political donation, participated in a demonstration, attended a public meeting, or hold certain ideological tendencies (both genders tend to be conservative or middle of the road). They are equally likely to feel at home in the United States, to identify with the country, and to feel that this is a land of equal opportunity.

An unpublished analysis of gender experiences and perspectives in the aftermath of September 11 also found a remarkable absence of differences in this significant area.[34] Men and women were within a few percentages of each other in terms of whether they had a bad experience after September 11 (men 16 percent, women 15 percent), whether they had a supportive experience after September 11 (men 34 percent, women 32 percent), whether anyone in their family had experienced one of five specific overt harmful acts (an average of one percent difference over the five acts), whether they were guarded or nervous during the interview (no difference: 14 percent each). A few differences did emerge. In keeping with the hypothesis that women are more security conscious than men, women were seven percent more likely to say that September 11 had shaken their sense of security and 11 percent more likely to say the Iraq War had shaken their sense of security. The pattern, however, was not consistent. On four questions about willingness to compromise civil liberties to enhance security, men on average were slightly (three percent) more likely to approve. Regarding three other civil liberties compromises (these targeted at Arab Americans), there was on average just a little over one point difference.

On cultural issues, there was a difference, but even here the picture was mixed. Women were more conservative on some issues, but not much different on others. They were 19 percent more likely to say that premarital sex was never justified (men 59 percent, women 78 percent) and somewhat more likely to support modest dress (a seven percent difference in wearing *hijab* [head covering] among Muslims, for example). On issues such as abortion, gambling, or divorce, however, the two genders were similar. (Muslims and Christians were likewise remarkably similar). Both genders were trusting of people (men 88 percent, women 85 percent) and less but similarly trusting of people in their neighborhood (men 31 percent, women 37 percent). Men and women both showed high levels of confidence in certain local institutions (schools, men 69 percent, women 77 percent; police, men 84 percent, women 87 percent; the legal system, men 68 percent, women 65 percent). The pattern persisted when respondents were asked about trust in political parties (men 25 percent, women 22 percent) and in the federal government (men 55 percent, women 51 percent). Anyone looking for dramatic differences between men and women will find them more often absent than present.

At some points, however, men and women diverge, often in ways significant for political involvement. Demographically, women have deficits in those areas most likely to produce higher levels of participation. They are less likely to work outside the home (70 percent of men but only 40 percent of women do, as discussed below), to have a college degree (28 percent of men, 19 percent of women), or to be involved in a business or professional association (men 12 percent, women 8 percent). There is also a deficit in media consumption (see Table 5). Women are significantly less likely

to read a daily newspaper or to get news from the Internet. Equally important, women suffer a major information deficit. Women were 27 percent less likely to know the name of the U.S. Attorney General and were 16 percent less likely to be able to identify the Republicans as the majority party in Congress at the time. These findings are not surprising. Burns et al. noted that men were 14 percent more likely to know the name of at least one U.S. senator from their state.[35] Since information is linked to political participation, these are important differences. It should not be surprising, then, that Arab-American women citizens are significantly less likely than men citizens to have voted or to have contacted an official during the past two years. While we should not over-generalize, the expectation that men are more likely than women to have a public life appears to be true, not only among Arab Americans but in the general public as well. (For purposes of comparison, the general population exhibits statistically significant gender differences in the following areas: read Internet news, know Attorney General, know majority party, follow Iraq war, voted 2000).

Table 5. Participation and political information by gender (percent).

	MALE	FEMALE
Read newspaper daily★★ Never	26 35	10 49
Arabic radio news daily★★	38	23
Internet news daily★★ Never	34 21	23 36
Knows Attorney General★★ Knows majority party★★	50 61	23 45
Follow war on terror Very closely, closely	 66	 58
Follow Iraq war★ Very closely, closely	 71	 65
Voted in 2000★ Contacted official, last 2 years★	59 17	52 11
PTA or PTO★ Professional, business★★ Union member★	11 27 7	17 14 3

*Correlation coefficient is Pearson's R. *Significance >.05; ** >.01.*

What Drives Gender Participation Patterns?

Table 6 shows the impact of various factors upon whether or not one votes. It reports the pattern for Arab-American males and the pattern for Arab-American females, with the impact of each trait calculated separately for males and then females. For example, for females, education produces a shift from 32 percent turnout to 76 percent turnout as we move from least educated to most educated. The correlation

between education and turnout for females is .324. The comparable shift for males is from 43 percent to 80 percent, with a correlation coefficient of .318, very similar to the female pattern in terms of impact. Only citizens are included in this table. All patterns are very significant (.000).

When this table is compared with the significant differences of participation rates by gender shown in Table 1, the results are revealing. While men and women participate at different levels, they show similar patterns in *direction of impact*, patterns that track national trends very closely. As noted earlier, there is a national tendency for men to be more involved than women in the political system. We also noted that this is a function of having the "resources" associated with participation. This table shows that being possessed of those resources that drive political engagement affects women and men in similar ways. For both genders, voting is enhanced by more education and more information. As younger women tend to be better educated than their mothers, we might anticipate that gender differences will narrow over time.

Table 6. Percentage voting by trait, for men and women, citizens only. Correlation coefficient reported separately for male and for female.

	FEMALES		MALES	
	%	COEFFICIENT	%	COEFFICIENT
Education				
Less than HS	32		43	
High School	52		34	
High School +	50		63	
Bachelor degree	73		71	
Bachelor degree+	76	.324	80	.318
Read newspaper				
Never	37		40	
Once or twice/week	59		57	
Several days/week	58		69	
Daily	80	.329	77	.331
Majority party correct	63		68	
Majority party incorrect	39	.240	58	.222
Identified Ashcroft	70		71	
Failed to identify him	45	.243	45	.262
Interview conducted in				
English	60		68	
Arabic	35	.234	41	.246

The Working Woman

For women, what impact does working outside of the home for pay have upon participation and involvement? Does being involved in the work force drive women out of their home-based environment, give them a broader view of the world, and push them into higher rates of participation? Alternately, are home-based women left to do most of the volunteer work that other women do not do? Burns et al. found "systematic evidence" that "compared with their counterparts who are at home full time, mothers

of school-age children who are in the work force full time are more active in politics and more likely to take part in community political activity, to give time to charity, and to be affiliated with the PTA or another youth-oriented organization.[36]

Table 7 shows how working outside the home is related to six different types of activities. For men, such work makes no statistically significant difference in any of the examples. The near universal expectation that men will enter the workplace seems to negate any impact it has on other activities. For women, the pattern is quite different. For three of six examples, there is no significant difference for those who work and those who do not. All such activities are in what we might call the community sphere (involvement in a congregation, an ethnic association, or a village or town club). These are activities that would involve both men and women, often the whole family. There is some tentative difference with congregational involvement, but even then, its significance level is .06, just short of true significance.

Table 7. Works for pay versus participation level, Arab-American men and women (percent).

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY	MEN	WOMEN
Congregation		
Works for pay	32	42
Not working	35	32
Ethnic Association		
Works for pay	13	12
Not working	10	6
Village or town club		
Works for pay	10	7
Not working	9	7
PTA		
Works for pay	12	25
Not working	7	12
Contacted Official		
Works for pay	14	17
Not working	12	5
Voted, 2000		
Works for pay	48	54
Not working	43	35

When we turn to three activities in the public arena, we find a different pattern. All three show that for women there is a definite impact of work for pay. (All three are highly significant at the .000 level). The first two deal with involvement in the political system – voting and contacting officials. The conventional finding mentioned earlier is that political participation is driven by position within society. For Arab-American men this does not include work force involvement but for women it is quite significant, showing big differences of engagement. PTA involvement is another matter. Here the issue is not politics but care of the family, particularly the children. Assuming that women are a primary source of socialization, we might think that those women who stay at home to look after the family would be

disproportionately involved in PTA-type activities. The table, however, shows that women who work outside of the home are more involved than those who do not, and that it is an error to suggest that working women play less of a role in the education of their children than those who do not.

A SECOND LOOK AT PARTICIPATION PATTERNS

There is one more stage of analysis. Since different variables influence participation simultaneously, it is necessary to sort out which variables have a true impact versus relationships that might be spurious. For example, if men have higher education levels than women, is it education or gender that most directly influences participation? Multivariate analysis is a statistical technique for answering these questions. We set up a logistic regression testing the impact of 16 different independent variables on voting and on PTA participation. These variables include education, marital status, work for money, gender, live in Dearborn enclave, used English or Arabic in the DAAS interview, read a newspaper, know the name of the Attorney General, know the majority party in Congress, active in a congregation, proud to be American, feel at home in the United States, believe the media are hostile to Islam and Muslims, trust the legal system, trust the police, trust the federal government.

Table 8 reports two things – the "odds ratio" and the p-value for significant values. To see how this works, look at the column on voting and the impact of education. While most variables are simple yes/no categories (male or female, knows Attorney General or not), education is measured at five different levels and is therefore the most complex variable in the table. As we saw in Table 6, a person with a low education has a very low likelihood of voting. What we want to know is how additional levels of education will affect turnout when we take into account all other variables. That is called the "odds" and is reported in the table. For example, those in the highest education level are 2.85 times more likely to vote than the lowest educational level. (Look at the explanation below the table for the meaning of specific categories). Note that the real impact of education on voting comes at the upper levels. Educational increases at the lower levels do not produce significant change and as such are not reported. Look also at marital status. Categories 1 and 2 include people now married or once married. There is some modest difference between the two, but compared with single people (who are coded zero), those married or ever married are dramatically more likely to be involved. For both education and marital status, the patterns are very significant.

After both models were estimated, two variables, education and marital status, significantly affected both voting and PTA involvement. Consistent with national patterns reviewed earlier, educated people are more likely to be involved in the electoral process *and* in PTA activities. That pattern is repeated here. Marital status has a similar impact. The difference between being married or formerly married is marginal but the difference between being now married or ever married and being never married is very great. Again, this is consistent with national studies.

Four variables influenced voting but not PTA involvement: reading the newspaper, knowing the name of the Attorney General, trusting the federal government, and using English in the interview. Three of these are the usual suspects for predicting voter turnout – social position, level of information and political trust. Using English clearly indicates a familiarity with the culture that is empowering for voters. It is not important with PTA involvement where one is working with neighbors and friends. There, good will and enthusiasm can compensate for other skills. Knowing about Ashcroft

Table 8. Logistic analysis of voting and PTA involvement, reporting odds ratios and significance. Only significant patterns are shown.

	VOTING		PTA INVOLVEMENT	
	ODDS	SIGNIFICANCE	ODDS	SIGNIFICANCE
Education 4 versus 1	3.05	.000	2.32	.04
Education 5 versus 1	2.85	.003		
Read paper 1 versus 0	1.84	.003		
Read paper 2 versus 1	2.61	.001		
Knows Ashcroft	1.76	.005		
Knows majority party			1.83	.04
Trusts federal government	.52	.003		
Marital status 1 versus 0	3.64	.000	7.84	.001
Marital status 2 versus 0	2.96	.000	8.76	.000
Gender (female)			.501	.001
Used English in interview	2.37	.001		
Active in congregation			3.1	.000

How variables were coded:

Education: 1. Less than High school. 2. High School 3. Some college 4. College degree 5. Advanced degree

Marital status: 0. never married 1. Once married, divorced, widow/widower, separated 2. married

Read Newspaper: 0. Never 1. One to several times per week 2. Daily

Congregational involvement: 1. Active 0. Inactive or not involved

PTA involvement: 1. Active 0. Inactive or not involved

probably indicates political engagement since at the time he was seen as unfriendly to the community, and most politically engaged people could have identified him.

Three variables influenced the odds of PTA involvement but not voting: being female, being active in a congregation, and knowing the majority party in Congress. The first two are very predictable for reasons discussed earlier. The third variable is strange. There is no theoretical reason why people active in the PTA should know the majority party. Had they known the name of John Ashcroft, that might have made sense. The PTA is a social group and the concerns of the community might have been disseminated among the members, especially in an ethnic neighborhood with many Arabs in the PTA. John Ashcroft was a matter of concern, but knowing the majority party did not have that charged impact. Its appearance will have to remain an enigma.

We might note the variables that have no independent impact upon either voting or PTA involvement. Working for pay is one. Earlier, that seemed to be a significant element in how women related to the public realm, but when we take into account other variables (education and marital status, for example), working outside the home fades to insignificance. Likewise, living in the Dearborn area, which one might have thought would produce big effects, had no independent impact. A whole series of trust issues (trust the legal system, trust the police, believe media is hostile to Muslims and Islam) also have no impact. These trust questions could have measured an oppositional culture had

they turned out negative but, if such a culture exists, it was not reflected in these items. Equally neutral are the two questions that measure the civil religion (proud to be an American and feel at home in the United States). Such sentiments either cut across the community or are byproducts of other variables that absorbed their significance.

We can tell from this table that the two types of participation are driven by very different forces. For voting, socio-economic position and information are particularly important. PTA activism is more influenced by community involvement. Not surprisingly, women are more involved in the PTA than men, and for both voting and PTA involvement, being married or formerly married is a strong plus factor. Overall, the nine variables that influence participation are very predictable and are well within the parameters of known social science research. This is a very conventional outcome.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Arab-American studies is a relatively new field, struggling to find a paradigm and a body of scientific theory to serve as a foundation for its efforts. Some studies have been excellent but empirical studies are few, as are works that build upon and test existing theory. Efforts to put the Arab-American experience into some historical context by making meaningful comparisons with other immigrant or ethnic experiences in the past are equally scarce.[37] Some studies present a pan-racial model, suggesting that all "people of color" share a common set of experiences and positions in society, but this model has its limitations. Anyone trying to put contemporary Haitians and Cubans into the same box with Arab-Americans will see how overly broad (or narrow) the concept can be. Moreover, the model often focuses more upon the thinking and behavior of the majority population (sometimes seen as a power structure with little internal differentiation) than upon Arab Americans themselves. Those interested in how diverse ethnic groups create a common consciousness or set of institutional structures would do well to consider some of the really fine research from the past, for example Rudolph and Rudolph on caste transformation in India, or Melson and Wolpe on emergent tribalism in Nigeria.[38] Such studies are distant enough to be challenging but relevant enough to be conceptually useful. The scientific process involves analyzing a specific case or set of data and extracting patterns and models that can be generalized into theory and then tested in a neutral way against other cases in different places and in different times with confirmation or refinement following. A study from lands or times far away can free us from contemporary distractions.

Three things are needed at this point. The first is more empirical analysis, using scientific samples of Arab-American public opinion. As valuable as such samples are, gathering them is difficult and expensive.[39] Second, we need more studies that are grounded in existing research and have solid theory behind them. This will produce results that are testable according to recognized standards of validation so that findings can be of use to the broader scientific community, not only to other Arab Americanists. Being cited in studies *not* having to do with Arab Americans will enhance the stature of the field. Third, we need more studies that are comparative. The question becomes, with whom should we compare? Is the relevant comparison group contemporary Guatemalans and Hindus, or Poles in Chicago a century ago or Jews in New York at that same time? We need to be more creative in seeking out useful historic analogies.

Arab Americans often say "we exist on both sides of the hyphen," but those who study Arab Americans are often so attentive to the waves of non-western immigrants now coming into the country that they overlook the rich literature that analyzes historical development in this land.[40] While there is no doubt that those from the Arab world are unique in some ways, the *American* experience with receiving new waves of vastly different immigrants also has its own uniqueness. Consider Robert Wiebe's description of the Germans who arrived in this land in the mid-1800s (author's summary):

> They had two religions so different from each other as to prohibit interaction. They were drawn from different parts of Germany so as to share no common territorial identity. Their identity as Germans was with a language and a culture, not with a state and its interests. Separated from Germany, they "concentrated on life in America" and created new identities and organizations. "Proudly German in culture, they constructed inturning little societies around church, language, customs, and celebrations. There they prospered in groups: German families embedded in German communities situated once and for all in America. The more binding the cultural cement, the more self-sufficient their social environment became; the more self-sufficient their environment, the more distant they grew from Germany.[41]

Does this not sound like a description of at least some Arab immigrant communities in this country? And if so, would it not be interesting to compare 19th century Germans with Arab Americans? No one can deny that at the moment, Arab Americans are experiencing a ferocious whiplash from the spillover of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into this country, and a backlash from September 11.[42] At the same time, however, they are in a country with its own history. Without denying that which is unique, there surely must be other patterns that are shared.

THE CONTEMPORARY DYNAMIC

Let the reader think back to the excerpt from Howell and Jamal explaining how deeply Arab Americans are integrated into Detroit's public realm. Let the reader also remember the USA PATRIOT Act, FBI and NSA surveillance, Treasury Department monitoring of Islamic charities, and inflammatory rhetoric from the electronic media. There must be a way to reconcile these contradictory phenomena.

There are few places in the country where the Michigan pattern is repeated. In Michigan, an Arab American appointed to a civil rights board does not lose the appointment after protests; an Arab American who sends a donation to a candidate does not have the money returned; and an Arab American slated for public office is not vetoed by state party leaders. At the large annual dinners held by Arab-American organizations, attended by powerful public officials such as governors and senators, there is a dynamic that illustrates how this successful interaction operates. The officials declare that the Arab Americans are fine citizens who have brought their hard work, family values, and rich culture into the American mainstream. The Arab Americans affirm the wonders of the country and praise the United States as a land of opportunity. The result of these exchanges is that the Arab-American community and its leaders get to participate in the political system and acquire powerful friends who will resist hostile actions directed against that community. The officials receive political

support from an immigrant community more fully integrated into the mainstream of society. Both sides proclaim themselves devoted to American security and determined to stop discrimination or ethnic profiling. It is an exchange that works to the benefit of all parties.

At the same time, however, this accommodation is being challenged. On the domestic front, hawkish anti-Islamic intellectuals, media personalities, and politicians use phrases such as "Arab terrorism" or "Islamic extremism" as if they were single words. Public opinion shows high levels of suspicion of and hostility towards Arabs and Muslims.[43] Incidents of violence and harassment are not as frequent in the Detroit metropolitan area as in some other major cities, but they occur. On the Arab and Muslim side, there is a constant barrage of anti-American statements by overseas militants. This creates serious problems for Arabs and Muslims in the United States, as they are frequently confused with such people or are put in the uneasy position of explaining away or repudiating intemperate words or violent actions simply because they share a category with others. There are also ethnic and religious chauvinists within the domestic communities, on the one side insisting that Arabs and Muslims are not truly Americans, on the other attacking those who accommodate for being "too American." The middle ground is strong but is being buffeted.[44]

What appears to be happening in the Arab-American community is complex but is generally consistent with what social science theory would predict. First, most Arab Americans are pleased to be in this country and identify with it, in spite of doubts about some of its policies. Second, there is strong identification with their own community organizations and structures, and confidence in those bodies. Third, involvement in these organizations appears to be linked to involvement in other organizations, both communal and society-wide. To borrow from Putnam, both bonding and bridging are taking place. The congregation plays a role in this engagement. Fourth, both men and women are dispersed across the participatory spectrum from active to indifferent. The forces that drive both genders into the public or community arena are more similar than different and are the same forces that affect their non-Arab neighbors. While the overall base levels of participation for Arab Americans are lower than for non-Arab Americans, the dynamic of who participates and who does not is quite similar. Arab-American participation levels are different from the general population in their statistical means, just as men are different from women in their statistical means but by and large, what drives anyone away from those means, into higher participation rates or into lower participation rates, is very similar for all population groups analyzed in this paper.

Put simply, in terms of behavioral participation, there does not appear to be any unique "Arab" pattern that is beyond what we know about national trends or about other ethnic groups. In other words, statistically speaking, Arab-American participation patterns are the normal ones typical of the American polity.

★ ★ ★

QUESTIONS USED IN THE SURVEY

Demographics: What is the highest grade of school or degree that you competed? Tell me the number of the income group that includes your total family income before taxes in 2002. This figure should include your income from all sources, and the income of all family members living with you. It should include salaries, pensions, dividends, interests, and public assistance. Now I have a few

questions about the work you do. Do you own your own business? At the present time are you doing any work for pay?

Was the interview conducted in English or Arabic? Report living in Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, or southwest Detroit.

Media and information: In a typical week, about how often do you watch the news on television: every day, several days, one or two days, or never? In a typical week, do you watch any television news broadcasts in Arabic? In a typical week, about how often do you listen to the news on the radio: every day, several days, one or two days, or never? [After asking how often someone reads a newspaper] Are any of the newspapers you read in Arabic? In a typical week, about how often do you read a newspaper: every day, several days, one or two days, or never? Repeat for "how often do you read news items on the Internet?" Since 9/11, how closely have you been following the news about the "war on terrorism": very closely, closely, a little, or not much at all? How closely have you been following the news relating to the conflict between the U.S. and Iraq (four choices)? Now, I have two questions bout the government in Washington. Many people don't know the answers to these questions. If you don't know, just tell me and we'll go on. Who is the current Attorney General of the U.S? Which party currently has more members in the United States House of Representatives, the Democrats or the Republicans? Next, think about American news coverage of Islam and Muslims. Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?

Political Engagement: Thinking politically and socially, how would you describe your own general outlook: very conservative, moderately conservative, middle–of–the–road, moderately liberal or very liberal? Think back to the presidential election in November, 2000, when Al Gore was the Democratic candidate and George W. Bush was the Republican candidate. Did you vote in that election? Are you currently registered to vote? Now I'm going to ask you how many times you've done certain things in the past 12 months, if at all. For all of these, I want you just to give me your best guess, and don't worry that you might be off a little. Would you say you never did this, did it once, a few times, about once a month on average, twice a month, about once a week on average, or more often than that: Attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of town or school affairs? Now I'm going to read a list of voluntary organizations. For each one, please tell me whether you are active in the organization, an inactive member, or neither: Sports or recreational organization; art, music or cultural organization; labor union; a parents' association, like the PTA or PTO, or other school support or service group; professional or business association; village or town club (like Ramallah or Bint Jebail); ethnic association, including advocacy groups like ADC, the Yemeni Benevolent Association or the Chaldean Federation); church, synagogue, mosque or other religious organization. Not including weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services? Do you attend every week or more often, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times per year, or less often than that?;

Political Action: Now I am going to read some types of political action that people can take. Have you ever signed a petition? Since January 2000, have you contributed money to any organization that supported political candidates? In the past 12 months, have you called or written a government official to express your opinion on a political issue? In the past 12 months, have you taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration about any social or political issues? Would you say that most

people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? How much confidence do you have in [the US legal system]: a great deal, a lot, not very much, or none at all? (Repeat about "The local police;" about "political parties;" about "the government in Washington, D. C."

Political Environment: "Arab-Americans are not respected by the broader American society." Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree? Do you think Arabs or Muslims who are accused of supporting or engaging in terrorism can receive fair trials in the U. S.? How effective is each of the following organizations and groups in meeting the needs of Arab and Chaldean Americans [civil liberties and anti–discrimination groups]?

Civil Religion: On another topic, how proud are you to be American? Would you say you are very proud, quite proud, not very proud, or not at all proud? Please tell me how you feel about each of the following statements. First: "the United States is a land of equal opportunity." Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree? To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: "I feel at home in America"? (Five choices).

Civil Liberties: Would you be willing to give up some civil liberties if that were necessary to curb terrorism in this country? Would you support increasing surveillance of U.S. citizens by the government, as a way to reduce terrorist acts?

NOTES

1. The Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) consists of 1,016 hour-long interviews by trained, bilingual interviewers with a scientific sample of Arab Americans and Chaldeans drawn from the tri–county Detroit area. The members of the research team were Wayne Baker, Sally Howell, Amaney Jamal, Ann Lin, Andrew Shryock, Ronald Stockton, and Mark Tessler. Interviews were conducted from July to November, 2003, with most done before September. For further information, *see The Detroit Arab American Study: Preliminary Findings and Technical Documentation*, July, 2004, available at www.isr.umich.edu.

2. There is no consensus about how many persons of Arab heritage are in the county or in the Detroit metropolitan area. According to the 2000 census, 1.2 million persons nationally identified with an Arab ancestry. 115,000 of these were in Michigan, and 80 percent of them lived in the three-county area covered by the DAAS. G. Patricia de la Cruz and Angela Brittingham, "*The Arab Population, 2000*" (U.S. Census Bureau, December, 2003), p. 3. An Arab American Institute brochure ("Arab American Demographics: Michigan," 2003) cited a total of 450,000 in Michigan and 3.5 million in the United States. The census found that nationally 37 percent were Lebanese, 12 percent Syrian, 12 percent Egyptian, 6 percent Palestinian, 3 percent Jordanian, 3 percent Moroccan, 3 percent Iraqi, and 1 percent Yemeni. De la Cruz and Brittingham, op. cit.; *see also* "Arab American Demographics," Arab American Institute, 2003. In Michigan, the heritage pattern is different: Lebanese 36 percent, Iraqi 30 percent, Syrian 6 percent, Palestinian 3 percent, Egyptian 2 percent, Jordanian 2 percent. In the three–county area of southeast Michigan, the DAAS found 37 percent identified with Lebanon/Syria, 35 percent with Iraq (25 percent of these were Christian), 12 percent Palestine/Jordan, 9 percent Yemen, and 7 percent other. DAAS, op. cit. Helen Samhan ("By the Numbers," *Arab American Business*, Oct. 2003, pp. 27-28, 35) used census data to report the socioeconomic makeup of all Arab Americans as compared with the national population: Has B.A., 40 percent (U.S. general population 25 percent), professional or management, 42 percent (U.S. 34 percent), retail trade, 31 percent (U.S. 15 percent), service, 12 percent (U.S. 27 percent), income of $75,000 or up, 30 percent (U.S. 22 percent). Since the national population is more American-born than the Michigan community, its socioeconomic position is higher. The DAAS found that 58 percent of the southeast Michigan population was Christian, 42 percent Muslim. The Arab American

Institute reports a religious breakdown nationally of 63 percent Christian, 24 percent Muslim, with 13 percent reporting no religion (www.AAISA.org/ Arab-Americans /22/ demographics).

3. Sally Howell and Amaney Jamal, "The Aftermath of the 9/11 Attacks among Arab Americans: Detroit Exceptionalism and the Limits of Political Incorporation," paper presented to the Michigan Conference of Political Scientists, 2005, pp. 6-7.

4. The Zogby Poll reported Bush 46 percent, Albert Gore 38 percent, and Lebanese-American Ralph Nader 13 percent. James J. Zogby, "The Arab American Vote in the November 2000 Election" (Arab American Institute, Dec. 14, 2000). For additional information *see* www:AAIUSA.org/resources/ opinion polls.

5. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Religion and Politics: Contention and Consensus," July, 2003, www:People-Press.org/reports; *see also* Scott Keeter and Andrew Kohut, "American Public Opinion About Muslims in the U.S. and Abroad," in Philippa Strum and Danielle Tarantolo, eds., *Muslims in the United States* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2003), pp. 185-202.

6. Michael W. Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Temple University Press, 1999), p. 13.

7. *See* Michael Suleiman, "A History of Arab-American Political Participation," *supra*, p. 12. A good discussion of these problems in the 1980s is Nabeel Abraham, "Anti-Arab Racism and Violence in the United States," in Ernest McCarus, ed., *The Development of Arab-American Identity* (University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 155-214.

8. Alexis DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Harper Collins, 1969, reprinting the 1850 edition) (ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence), Part II, pp. 513-517, 520-524.

9. Melissa K. Miller, *The Joiners: Voluntary Organizations and Political Participation in the United States* (Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 2004) has a thorough review of the literature. This summary relies upon her work.

10. Op. cit., p. 201.

11. Op. cit., p. 150.

12. Op. cit., p. 164.

13. We did a companion study to the DAAS of the general population of southeast Michigan. The companion study, called the Detroit Area Study of 2003, asked most of the same questions as the DAAS and, as indicated in the text above, interviewed 508 persons from the same area in which the DAAS was conducted. References to the "General Population" in this chapter refer to that study. Table 1 reports data from those two studies. Full questions are at the end of this article. This analysis does not report on subgroups by, e.g., race or class in the general population.

14. Some of these activities, such as art or cultural organization and sports organization were designed to tap patterns within the Arab-American community and are more useful for internal community analysis than for comparing Arabs and non-Arabs.

15. Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 29-36.

16. Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba, *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation* (Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 374.

17. Half the students in Dearborn schools are Arabs, mostly Lebanese or Yemeni. The student body of several schools is overwhelmingly Arab American. A local PTA could well be primarily an ethnic association of women who know each other and even have village ties in their homeland. "Community" has a different meaning in this context.

18. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (University of California Press, 2000), p. 202.

19. Fredrick Harris, *Something Within: Religion in African-American Political Activism* (Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 35.

20. Op. cit., pp. 40, 66.

21. Op. cit., pp. 40, 67.

22. Robert K. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Touchstone Books, 2000), pp. 22-23.

23. Op. cit., p. 358.

24. Op. cit., p. 66.

25. Robert Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (University of Chicago Press, 1992). The third paragraph of this article notes some figures that reflect these values. Comparable figures for the general population are similar: 94 percent who were citizens and 80 percent who are not citizens said they were proud to be Americans compared with 98 percent of the general population; 86 percent believe this is a land of equal opportunity compared with 74 percent of the general population. A study in Canada by the Canadian Arab Federation (non-random and drawing disproportionately from the educated classes active in organizations) found that 85 percent said they were proud to be Canadian. *See* Raja G. Khouri, *Arabs in Canada, Post 9/11* (Toronto: G7 Books, 2003), p. 20.

26. From several issues on civil liberties, increased surveillance was chosen because Arabs and non-Arabs were very close in their positive responses (Arabs 56 percent, non-Arabs 52 percent). A similar non-difference was found on a general question about willingness "to give up some civil liberties" to curb terrorism. On items specifically targeting Arab-Americans, non-Arabs were dramatically more tolerant of such actions.

27. While writing this paper, the author asked several people who attend a variety of Arab mosques and churches if their religious leaders mentioned politics or encouraged people to vote. There was a mixed response about whether political issues were discussed from the pulpit but all said they were encouraged to vote either by the imam or priest, or by organized groups within the congregation.

28. Burns et al., *Private Roots of Public Action*, op. cit., p. 1.

29. Op. cit., p. 28.

30. Op. cit., p. 7-8.

31. Op. cit., p. 7.

32. Op. cit., p. 360.

33. Op. cit., pp. 8-9.

34. Ronald R. Stockton, "Arab Americans in an Age of War: Findings From the Detroit Arab American Study with an Emphasis upon Gender Patterns," paper presented at the annual convention of the American Political Science Association, Sept., 2004.

35. Burns et al., op. cit., p. 343.

36. Op. cit., p. 374.

37. For example, how many studies make reference to Franklin Roosevelt's "Americans All" campaign of the 1930s and 1940s? Omitting such precedents suggests a de-contextualization of the Arab-American experience.

38. Rudolph and Rudolph, op. cit.; Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective," LXIV *American Political Science Review* 4 (Dec., 1970), pp. 1112-1130.

39. Anyone interested in a shortcut is welcome to use the Detroit Arab American Study data set, which is in the public domain and available to anyone who wants it. Contact the Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan at www.isr.umich.edu.

40. The reader not familiar with this literature might want to start with three excellent historical studies. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (University of California Press, 2002), is about three politicized communities with homeland consciousness; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford University Press, 1989) covers four different religio-ethnic communities that entered this land from England in the 1600s and 1700s, groups that are treated today as if they are the same but

which in fact maintain quite different traditions; and Robert H. Wiebe, *Who We Are: A History of Popular Nationalism* (Princeton University Press, 2002) considers how nineteenth century immigrant groups (Germans, Swedes, Norwegians and others) navigated the multi-ethnic, multi-religious environment of American society.

41. Wiebe, op. cit., p. 29

42. *See* Louise Cainkar, "The Impact of the September 11 Attacks and Their Aftermath on Arab and Muslim Communities in the United States," 13 *GSC Quarterly* (Summer/Fall, 2004); Sally Howell and Andrew Shryock, "Cracking Down on the Diaspora: Arab Detroit and America's 'War on Terror,'" 76 *Anthropological Quarterly* No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 443-462; Steve Salaita, "Ethnic Identity and Imperative Patriotism: Arab Americans Before and After 9/11," 32 *College Literature* (2005), pp. 146-168.

43. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Fewer Say Islam Encourages Violence," July 26, 2005 (www.people-press.org); *Washington Post-ABC News Poll*, Mar. 6, 2006, available at www.washingtonpost.com.

44. The concept of a "middle ground" comes from Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), which describes how a minority group – the French – lived among and had to work out mutually beneficial accommodations with the powerful Algonquin people. It also describes how other Algonquin and other French felt threatened by these accommodations and tried to undermine them. It is both similar to and quite different from the situation described in this essay.

The Gender Gap in Arab-American Political Engagement

JEN'NAN GHAZAL READ

INTRODUCTION

Research on gender differences in political attitudes and behavior has flourished over the past two decades in response to rapid changes in women's degree of participation in the political arena. Women caught up to men in U.S. voting rates in 1980 and have surpassed them in every subsequent election.[1] Because women are a higher proportion of the population than men, vote at higher rates, and are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates, there has been considerable interest in the gender gap in party identification and presidential candidate support. However, there has been far less attention paid to factors in the foundations of such gender differences (e.g., political consciousness, policy attitudes, political activity), and this is especially true for Middle Eastern origin groups such as Arab Americans. Stereotypes of Arab-American women depict them as oppressed, backward, uneducated, and disengaged from the political realm, yet no study to date has produced empirical evidence to corroborate or challenge these assumptions.

This study is therefore among the first to examine Arab-American women's levels of political participation and assess the extent to which they differ from their male counterparts. Arab Americans are an interesting case because, on the one hand, they are a well-educated and politically active ethnic population but, on the other, they are a group that originates from countries that have relatively low rates of female political participation.[2] This suggests competing possibilities for Arab-American women's political engagement in the U.S. context, where female participation rates are at an all-time high. The picture is further complicated by the fact that Arab Americans are diverse with respect to religious affiliation (Muslim and Christian), social class (ranging from professional to working class), and nativity (newer immigrants to third generation), all of which may affect political attitudes and behavior.

Using the most extensive national data on Arab-American political activity currently available, this study examines gender differences in political consciousness and activity and assesses the degree to which socio-demographic and religious differences between men and women contribute to observed differences in their attitudes and behaviors. The data derive from two national telephone surveys of Muslim Americans administered by Zogby International in conjunction with Georgetown University's Project MAPS: Muslims in American Public Square.[3]

An important caveat is that the data are limited to Muslim Americans, thus excluding Arab Christians from the current analysis. However, a focus on Arab Muslims is particularly appropriate for this study given current national attitudes toward Muslim Americans – Arab Muslims are more visible, more susceptible to stereotyping, racial profiling and discrimination than Arab Christians, many of whom are more integrated into American society. Thus, demonstrating diversity within this subgroup will help correct monolithic images of Muslim Americans. In what follows, I begin

by discussing current perceptions of Muslim-American political engagement to provide some context for research on this understudied group. I then provide an overview of existing theories on minority political incorporation in U.S. society and assess their applicability to the Arab Muslim case. Building on these theories, I develop models for predicting gender differences in Arab Muslim political attitudes and behaviors and test these models with nationally representative data. I conclude with implications for future research on the inclusion of Arab Muslims in American politics and for understanding how gender shapes patterns of political incorporation.

PREDICTORS OF U.S. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: DO MUSLIM AMERICANS HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

The question of Muslim American democratic inclusion is not a new one. Writing for the Carnegie Corporation four years ago, Sam Afridi cautioned:

> [I]t is vital that we as a nation seek a more balanced understanding of the complexities, challenges and opportunities inherent in the emergence of the American Muslim community. To the extent that we can gain greater awareness and confront these issues, their participation will grow and democratic institutions will be strengthened. On the other hand, if American Muslims are neglected or misunderstood, our society as a whole will lose out.[4]

The ensuing years have seen rapid changes in the political participation of the Muslim-American community. Heightened political consciousness after 9/11 facilitated mobilization efforts by Muslim-American organizations to increase their participation in the political process, and the on-going war against terror, interpreted by many as a war against Islam, has ensured that Muslim advocacy groups have an active and vocal base. In 2004, a record high number of American Muslims were elected to public office – nearly 50 percent of the 100 Muslim-American candidates nationwide – and there was an unprecedented shift away from President Bush, with only seven percent of Muslim American voters supporting his candidacy, down from over 40 percent in 2000.[5]

Despite such changes, our awareness and understanding of the dynamics that contribute to American Muslim political participation remains limited, as does our ability to identify factors that may lead to future differences in their political ideologies and behaviors. A primary reason for the ambiguity surrounding Muslim American political integration is the continued misconception that this is a homogeneous population. This monolithic image parallels the mainstream belief among Americans that Islam is a violent religion, that Muslims are anti-American, and that Islam is incompatible with democracy.[6] The image is also compounded by the Iraq war, the lackluster success of Arab countries in instituting democratic regimes in the Middle East, and the belief that this failure reflects individual deficiencies inherent in Muslim societies, rather than structural barriers erected by a history of colonization.[7]

Existing evidence suggests, however, that Muslim Americans are both more diverse and more similar to other U.S. minority groups than these images would imply. As is the case for other immigrants, there are a number of characteristics of Muslim immigrants that distinguish them markedly from Muslims in their countries of origin.[8] On average, they tend to be more highly educated, have greater English language fluency, and greater levels of political consciousness than those in their homelands. Most are

indigenous to the Middle East or Southeast Asia, but a sizeable proportion of the population (perhaps 30 percent) is comprised of African-American, Anglo, and Hispanic converts. Immigrants make up a majority of the indigenous population, but an increasing number are second- and third-generation offspring of earlier immigrant arrivals.[9] The indigenous population is additionally diverse by national origin and ethnicity. In sum, Muslim Americans are characterized by considerable diversity with respect to factors that affect U.S. democratic participation, and thus may be better positioned for political integration than common stereotypes imply.

A final important characteristic to consider when examining Muslim-American political incorporation is degree of religiosity.[10] Muslim Americans include not only the religiously devout and religiously moderate but those who are non-practicing and secular as well: basically Muslim in name only, as are a good proportion of U.S. Christians and Jews. Among the more religiously devout, there is a sharp distinction between being a good Muslim and being an Islamic fundamentalist. Indeed, many Muslim Americans emigrated from countries in the Middle East in part so as to practice their religion more freely in the United States. However, the evidence on how religious identity affects political participation is mixed. Some find that Islamic beliefs discourage participation in American politics,[11] while others find that religious involvement is positively associated to political participation for Arab Muslims but less so for South Asian and African-American Muslims.[12] A lack of quality measures on religious identity contributes to these mixed findings – which dimensions of Muslim identity affect political participation and in what direction?[13] The following addresses this question.

THEORETICAL MODELS OF MINORITY DEMOCRATIC INCLUSION: BRINGING MUSLIMS IN

The diversity that characterizes Muslim Americans is central to contemporary explanations for differences in U.S. political incorporation, particularly for examining differences between and within U.S. racial and ethnic groups.[14] The leading theories include the socioeconomic status model, group identity model, and cultural adaptation model: persons with higher levels of educational attainment and income, greater levels of group consciousness, and longer duration of U.S. residency tend to be more politically active than are those without these characteristics. Underpinning each of these arguments is the idea that individuals with more at stake in political outcomes are more motivated to try to influence such outcomes.

These models are not mutually exclusive, nor do they operate in a vacuum. They interact with each other and with demographic characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, national origin, age, and gender, to affect civic engagement. More recent immigrant arrivals, for example, typically have stronger ties to their ethnic identities and, on arrival in the United States, they may live in ethnic enclaves to maximize social and economic support. They may also experience greater levels of discrimination which, in turn, strengthens their group consciousness and affects their decisions to participate in the political process (interaction of the cultural adaptation, group identity, and group conflict models). Empirical analysis allows researchers to test the degree of overlap between these models and tease out their independent and joint effects on political engagement. Taken together, these theoretical models account for much of the variation in political activity between and within U.S. racial/ethnic groups, such as whites, blacks, and Latinos.[15]

To date, however, this body of literature has been largely divorced from assessments of Muslim-American political participation. The dearth of knowledge about this group is evidenced in several recent scholarly publications on U.S. immigrant political integration, none of which contain a single reference to Muslims, Arabs, or Middle Easterners in their indices.[16] One exception to this general pattern is Amaney Jamal's case study of the effects of mosque involvement on Muslim-American political incorporation in the New York City area.[17] This study provides important insights into differences in Muslim-American political and civic participation, but it is limited to the New York area, based on a total of 335 interviews, and contains no information on citizenship, duration of U.S. residency, and other important predictors of political integration. Thus, the ability to make broader generalizations to the U.S. Muslim population or make comparisons to other U.S. minority groups remains limited.

A final missing piece of the puzzle on Muslim-American political engagement is the gender question, or the degree to which women participate in the political realm. The gender question is an important one because current theoretical models suggest mixed outcomes for women's involvement. On the one hand, we might expect fairly low levels of political activity among Arab Muslim women, especially immigrant women, because women's participation rates in the Middle East are relatively low and may translate to the U.S. context.[18] Second, women of all ethnicities are more tied to the domestic sphere than men, and political activity is inherently a public pursuit, often linked to participation in the paid labor force.[19] The literature here points to differences in men's and women's educational attainments, employment, and occupational status as reasons for the gender gap in political activity.

In contrast, there are numerous reasons to expect fairly high levels of political activity among Arab Muslim women. Immigrants are not randomly selected from their countries of origin, but rather are often more highly educated and progressive than the population at large. This has been the case for Arab immigrants to the United States, many of whom arrived in the late twentieth century as highly skilled laborers or who came to earn their degrees in American universities and never returned.[20] Thus, Arab immigrant women to the United States may be more politically active than their counterparts in the Middle East, particularly in a context that promotes women's participation. A second possible factor that might contribute to similarities in Arab men's and women's political engagement is the role of religion. There is a large and growing body of work that links religious participation to minority political involvement – being actively involved in a community of believers stimulates both political consciousness and activity to remedy perceived inequalities.[21] For Arab Muslims, being involved in mosque activities may create a sense of communal identity that fosters political activity to address concerns in the post 9/11 era. While men are considerably more involved than women in mosque activities in the Middle East, their rates of participation are more equivalent in the United States, which may contribute to similar levels of involvement in the political realm.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Given the literature outlined above, this study aims to answer two overarching questions: 1) To what extent are there gender differences in Muslim Arab political engagement? and 2) To what extent are observed differences between men and women mediated by differences in their socioeconomic status, religious group identity, cultural adaptation, and other background characteristics (i.e., contemporary models of minority political inclusion/exclusion)? Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework for these

research questions. The pathways illustrated in Figure 1 are not exhaustive; rather, they show the possible avenues by which gender may operate to influence political engagement. For example, women may have lower levels of political consciousness than men, and this difference may be explained mainly by differences in their socio-economic statuses (dashed arrow). Alternatively, there may be an independent effect of gender such that women remain significantly different from men after accounting for possible mediating mechanisms (solid arrow), suggesting that other factors are influencing their political participation.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model for Potential Pathways to Arab Muslim American Incorporation

Antecedent Factor[1]   Mediating Factors   Political Incorporation
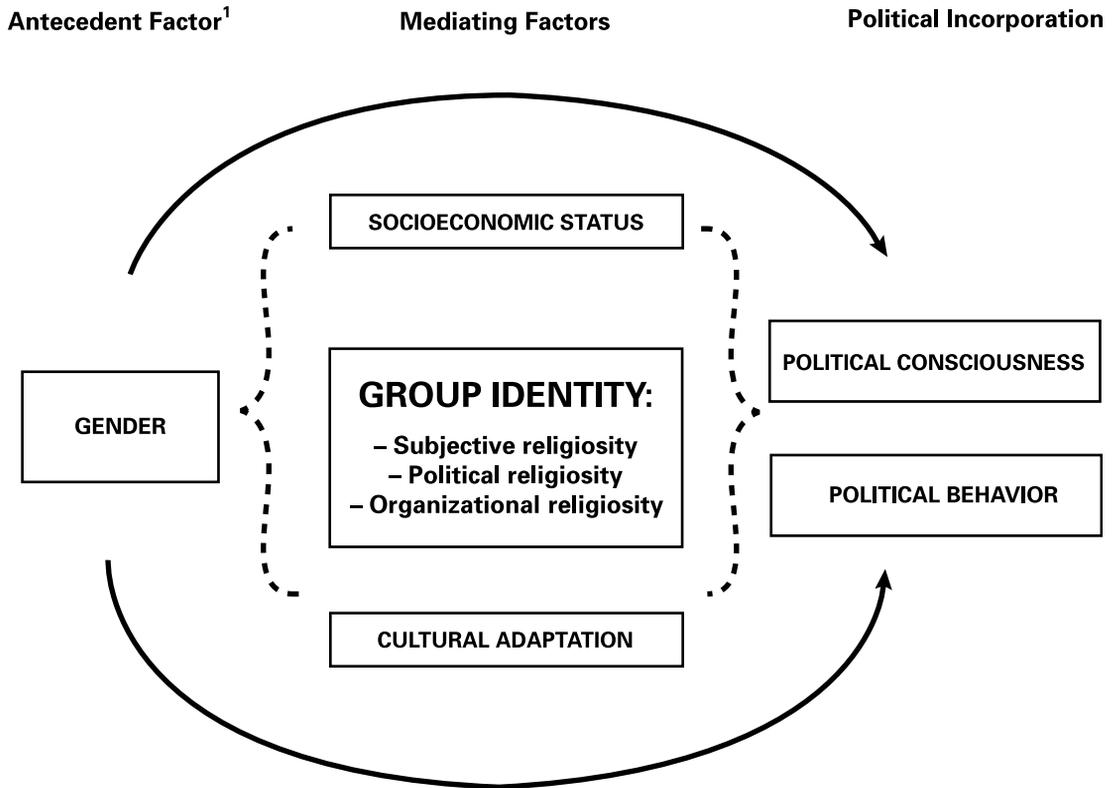
DATA AND METHODS

To examine these questions, this study uses the only national data currently available on Muslim-American political attitudes and behaviors. As noted above, the data consist of two 2001 and 2004 Zogby/Project MAPS telephone surveys. Each of the surveys contains approximately 1,800 adult respondents, and weights were applied based on region, age, and gender to more accurately reflect the population at large. This study focuses specifically on Muslim Arab respondents, who numbered

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[1]*Gender is listed first in the model because, by definition, it precedes all other characteristics.*

514 in the 2001 survey and 642 in the 2004 survey for a combined sample size of 1,156. The margin of sampling error for each survey is +/- 2.5 percent.

There are several advantages to using the survey data. First, they are immensely valuable given the lack of national information on Muslim Americans; most national data sets contain too few Muslims for meaningful analysis (e.g., General Social Survey) or do not contain questions on religion (e.g., Census). The lack of such data has limited our knowledge to case studies of Muslim-American communities which, while useful, have obscured the diversity that characterizes this group because concentrated communities tend to be more homogeneous than the population at large with respect to nativity, religiosity, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics known to influence political and civic engagement. Second, although the survey data have been used to produce informative reports, no study to date has used them to analyze Muslim-American political incorporation systematically.[22]

In addition to being nationally representative, these data contain detailed indicators on the dependent and independent variables of interest for this study. The primary dependent variable is political engagement, which I separate into two distinct components: political consciousness and political activity. Political consciousness is measured with four items that gauge the salience of political participation: 1) importance of participating in politics, 2) importance of children participating in politics, 3) frequency of discussing politics with family and friends, and 4) degree to which government and public affairs are followed. These items are combined into a political consciousness scale ranging from 2 to 10, with high internal validity (Cronbach's alpha =.694), which indicates that the four items all tap into a similar underlying concept (Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1 and anything lower than .50 would suggest that the items measure different ideas and should not be put together in a scale).

Political activity is also a scaled item consisting of six measures: 1) active member of a political party, 2) ever attended a political rally, 3) ever participated in a boycott, 4) ever contributed to or volunteered for a political campaign, 5) ever visited a political website, and 6) ever called or written a politician. The scale ranges from 0 to 6 and has a high internal validity (Cronbach's alpha =.698), again indicating that the items fit together well and measure a similar concept.

The independent variables tap into each of the theoretical models outlined in Figure 1. The socioeconomic status model is captured with questions on education and family income, and the cultural adaptation model is measured with questions on nativity and duration of U.S. residence. The religious identity model is separated into three components. The first component is subjective religious identity, which contains three measures that are scaled from 3 to 13 (importance of religion in daily life, frequency of prayer, and importance of Islam, Cronbach's alpha=.709). The second component is political religious identity, which is gauged with two dummy variables that measure favorability toward mosques expressing political views and toward religious leaders discussing politics and political candidates in the mosque (1 = strongly favor/favor). The final component is religious organizational involvement, also measured with two dummy variables that tap into the degree of mosque participation. The first dummy variable is frequency of mosque attendance (1 = attend mosque once a week or more, 0 = all other responses) and the second is degree of involvement in mosque activities (1 = very involved in mosque activities, 0 = all other

Table 1. Gender Differences in Arab Muslim Political Engagement (n=1156)

	WOMEN	MEN	
	N=445	N=711	X²
POLITICAL ACTIVITY			
Party affiliation			
Democrat	35.7	26.4	★★
Republican	12.4	21.0	★★
Independent	20.9	28.8	★★
Registered voter	78.7	85.1	★★
Voted in 2000 election			
Gore	12.6	14.1	ns
Bush	31.9	40.1	★★
Political activity scale (mean scores, ranges from 0 to 6)	2.06	2.41	★★
Active member of political party	23.1	22.9	ns
Ever attended a political rally	42.0	44.9	ns
Ever participated in a boycott	31.7	36.0	ns
Contributed or volunteered for political campaign	26.7	38.7	★★
Visited political websites	35.3	44.4	★★
Called or wrote to a politician	46.7	54.1	★
POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS			
Political consciousness scale (mean scores, ranges 2–10)	7.61	8.03	★
Very important to participate in politics	42.9	52.9	★★
Very important for children to participate in politics	51.9	57.2	+
Frequently discuss politics with family and friends	42.5	48.8	+
Closely follow government and public affairs	57.5	68.8	★★

NOTE: X2 indicates whether men and women are significantly different from each other on each of the characteristics at various significance levels (+p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01) and "ns" means not significantly different.

responses). Finally, the survey data contain measures of other key variables known to influence democratic engagement, such as age, marital status, and gender.

THE GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTIVITY

The analysis begins by determining the degree to which men and women differ in their political consciousness and activity and then examines possible factors that might explain observed differences. As seen in Table 1, the gender cleavage in party identification among Muslim Arab Americans follows the national trend, with women being more likely than men to affiliate with the Democratic party (35.7 percent compared to 26.4 percent) and less likely to affiliate with the Republican party (12.4 percent compared to 21.0 percent). As prior studies of this group found, a

sizeable proportion of both women and men consider themselves independents (20.9 percent and 28.8 percent respectively). The overwhelming majority of men and women are registered voters (85.1 percent and 78.7 percent), which surpasses the 2004 national average of 72.1 percent.[23] This is somewhat surprising since most of the sample is comprised of immigrants to this country (87.6 percent of men and 73.0 percent of women); however, the national average for naturalized citizens is also fairly high at 61.2 percent.

The gender gap in voting only partly tracks differences in party affiliation. Women were less likely than men to have voted for George Bush in the 2000 elections (31.9 percent compared to 40.1 percent) but there is no significant difference in the likelihood of voting for Al Gore (12.6 percent and 14.1 percent), with both men and women favoring other candidates such as Ralph Nader. There are few gender differences in other measures of political activity. About one-fourth of men and women are active members of a political party, one-third of each group has participated in a boycott, and nearly one-half has attended a political rally. Men are significantly more likely than women to have called or written a politician and to have visited a political website. Overall, both men and women have relatively high levels of political activity, with women having slightly lower levels of engagement (see scale scores).

In terms of political consciousness, women again are slightly less involved than men on each of the dimensions, but the differences are fairly small. Men are more likely to report that it is "very important" to participate in politics (52.9 percent compared to 42.9 percent) and to consider it "very important" for children to participate in the political arena (57.2 percent compared to 51.9 percent). They are also more likely to "closely follow" government and public affairs and to "frequently" discuss politics with family and friends. The story here is twofold: 1) Muslim Arab men have slightly higher levels of political consciousness than Muslim Arab women, but 2) Muslim Arab women have much higher levels than would be expected given extant theory and popular stereotypes of this group.

GENDER CLEAVAGES IN U.S. FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY

We have seen that Arab Muslims have high levels of political involvement, with men being slightly more engaged in the political sphere than women – but what about the nature and direction of their involvement (e.g., conservative vs. liberal ideology)? Table 2 examines this question by comparing women's and men's attitudes on a host of questions regarding U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and domestic social policy. Looking first at foreign policy issues, women are somewhat more critical of U.S. policies than men, with one-third reporting that the United States is fighting a war against Islam rather than terror (compared to 26.6 percent of men) and less than two-thirds feeling that the United States should reduce support to undemocratic Muslim regimes (compared to over three-fourths of men). There are fewer gender differences with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Over 90 percent of both groups feel that the United States should support a Palestinian state and over 80 percent feel that the United States should reduce financial support to Israel.

Arab Muslims as a group look quite similar to other socially conservative and/or socio-economically advantaged U.S. groups when it comes to domestic politics. The majority of men and women favor more cuts in income tax and the death penalty for convicted murderers; on both

Table 2. Gender Differences in Arab Muslim Political Attitudes (n=1156)

	WOMEN N=445	MEN N=711	X^2
ATTITUDES TOWARD DOMESTIC SOCIAL POLICY			
Satisfied with the way things are going in America	42.5	50.8	★★
Favor more cuts in income tax	71.2	77.4	★
Favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder	60.4	76.4	★★
Favor stronger laws to fight terrorism	82.0	76.9	★
Favor eliminating affirmative action programs	43.1	45.0	ns
Favor allowing gays/lesbians to marry	18.9	16.7	ns
Favor allowing schools to display Ten Commandments	60.2	58.4	ns
Favor non-denominational prayers in classrooms	49.7	47.4	ns
ATTITUDES TOWARD U.S. FOREIGN POLICY			
Should reduce support to undemocratic Muslim regimes	62.2	77.4	★★★
Should reduce financial support to Israel	83.1	82.1	ns
Should support a Palestinian state	91.5	94.1	+
U.S. is fighting a war against Islam	32.6	26.6	★
RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY			
Background			
Raised	96.0	98.2	
Converted	4.0	1.8	★
Subjective religiosity scale (ranges 3-13)	11.6	10.6	★★
Pray all five *salahs* daily[1]	59.6	43.9	★★
Religion very important	85.4	68.9	★★
Role of Islam very important in daily life	82.2	71.2	★★
Political religiosity			
Mosques should express views on politics	57.1	60.3	ns
Khatibs[2] should be allowed to discuss politics in mosque	38.4	45.3	★
Mosque involvement			
Attend mosque more than once/week	11.2	23.2	★★
Very involved in mosque activities	9.4	9.6	ns
Not at all involved in mosque activities	35.5	40.5	ns
DEMOGRAPHICS			
Foreign-born	73.0	87.6	★★
Duration of U.S. residency			
Less than 5 yrs	4.1	2.1	ns
5 to 9 yrs	11.3	7.5	ns
10 to 19 yrs	32.6	26.5	ns
20 yrs or more	53.6	63.9	★★
Bachelor's education or higher	51.9	70.7	★★
Family income $75,000 or higher	23.1	38.5	★★
Age in years (mean)	38.5	45.0	★★

NOTE: X2 indicates whether men and women are significantly different from each other on each of the characteristics at various significance levels ($+p<.1$, ★$p<.05$, ★★$p<.01$) and "ns" means not significantly different.

1. *Salah*: One of the five pillars of Islam, denoting a spiritual relationship and communication between the person and the Creator.

2. *Khatibs*: those who lead prayers and deliver sermons on Friday

issues, men are more conservative than women in their beliefs. Counterintuitively, there is over-whelming support for stronger laws to fight terrorism, which may reflect a desire to demonstrate loyalty to the United States or to establish boundaries between average Muslims and Islamic fundamentalists. Men and women are equally conservative with respect to affirmative action programs (over 40 percent of both groups favor their elimination) and gay/lesbian marriage (less than 20 percent support it). Men and women also share similar opinions regarding the role of religion in public life: roughly one-half favor allowing public schools to display the Ten Commandments and one-half favor non-denominational prayers in classrooms.

EXPLAINING THE GENDER GAP

What might account for observed differences in men's and women's political engagement and attitudes? In addition to the standard socio-demographic factors, this study is particularly concerned with examining how religious identity influences political participation. Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of the sample were raised as Muslims (Muslim converts in the United States are typically African American or white), so religious conversion is not a factor in the political mobilization of this group. Women have higher levels of subjective religiosity than men – they pray more frequently and are more likely to consider religion very important in their daily lives – but do not differ in their degree of involvement in mosque activities (roughly 10 percent of both groups say they are "very involved" in mosque activities and over one-third say they are "not at all involved"). In contrast, men are twice as likely to attend the mosque more than once per week (23.2 percent compared to 11.2 percent of women). The results are mixed on the final dimension of religious identity, political religiosity. Here, an equally high proportion of women and men feel that mosques should express their views on politics (57.1 percent and 60.3 percent), but men are much more likely to believe that *khatibs* (those who lead prayers and deliver sermons on Friday) should discuss politics in the mosque (45.3 percent compared to 38.3 percent of women).

Other factors that may contribute to gender cleavages in political engagement include differences in men's and women's socioeconomic status and degree of cultural adaptation. Although men are significantly more likely than women to have a bachelor's degree or higher (70.7 percent compared to 51.9 percent), both groups have much higher levels of educational attainment than the national average. Men are also older and have higher family incomes than women, which may contribute to differences in their political activity. Finally, the vast majority of the immigrants – both men and women – have lived in the United States for five years or more and a greater proportion of men have lived in the United States for 20 years or more (63.9 percent compared to 51.9 percent).

Tables 3 and 4 provide a more detailed examination of the extent to which the aforementioned factors explain the gender gap in political consciousness (Table 3) and activity (Table 4). Model 1 examines the effects of gender, controlling for age, nativity/duration of residence, and U.S. region. Model 2 adds socioeconomic status, and model 3 adds religious identity measures. Changes in the gender coefficient across models will help identify factors that contribute to differences in men's and women's political involvement.

As seen in the tables, women have lower levels of political consciousness and activity than men after controlling for differences in their age, nativity, and duration of residence. Differences in men's and women's socioeconomic positions partly accounts for the gender cleavage (gender gap

Table 3. OLS Regression Coefficients for Gender Differences in Arab Muslims' Political Engagement

ZOGBY SURVEYS 2001 AND 2004 (N=1156)						
	POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS					
	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3	
	B	SIG	B	SIG	B	SIG
Female	–0.345	★★	–0.198	+	–0.098	ns
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS						
Bachelor's degree or higher			0.552	★★	0.479	★★
Family income > $75,000/yr			0.677	★★	0.645	★★
RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS						
Subjective religiosity					–0.025	ns
Mosque involvement						
Attend mosque more than 1/week					0.042	
Very involved in mosque activities					0.458	★★
Mosques should express political views					0.322	★★
Okay for imams to discuss politics in mosque					0.503	★★
BACKGROUND FACTORS						
Nativity (U.S.-born)						
Foreign-born, U.S. resident < 10 yrs	–0.885	★★	–0.795	★★	–0.696	★★
Foreign-born, U.S. resident 10–19 yrs	–0.337	+	–0.326	ns	–0.226	ns
Foreign-born, U.S. resident 20 yrs or more	0.100	ns	0.033	ns	0.097	ns
Western region	0.403	★	0.294	+	0.298	+
Age	0.004	+	–0.002	ns	0.002	ns
Constant	7.916	★★	7.562	★★	7.169	★★
R2	0.048		0.106		0.145	
Adjusted R2	0.043		0.100		0.136	

NOTE: "B" represents Beta coefficients from regression models. Negative numbers means that the characteristic decreases political consciousness and positive numbers means the characteristic increases it. "Sig" represents whether the effect (negative or positive) of each characteristic is significant at various levels of significance (+p < .10, *p< .05, ★★p < .01). "NS" means that the characteristic does not have a significant effect on political consciousness.

diminishes from model 1 to model 2); women, however, remain significantly less engaged in the political realm based on these two measures. It is important to note that these factors operate as expected: newer immigrants have much lower levels of political engagement than do U.S.-born persons, while more established immigrants have levels of involvement that approach those of the native-born population. Those who are better educated and in higher income brackets also have higher levels of involvement than do those with lower socioeconomic statuses.

The most interesting findings in Tables 3 and 4 emerge in model 3, which adds dimensions of religious identity. Subjective religiosity (e.g., frequency of prayer and importance of religion in daily

Table 4. OLS Regression Coefficients for Gender Differences in Arab Muslims' Political Engagement

ZOGBY SURVEYS 2001 AND 2004 (N=1156)						
	POLITICAL ACTIVITY					
	MODEL 1		**MODEL 2**		**MODEL 3**	
	B	**SIG**	**B**	**SIG**	**B**	**SIG**
Female	–0.427	★★	–0.276	★★	–0.141	ns
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS						
Bachelor's degree or higher			0.535	★★	0.464	★★
Family income > $75,000/yr			0.680	★★	0.646	★★
RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS						
Subjective religiosity					–0.040	ns
Mosque involvement						
Attend mosque more than 1/week					0.235	+
Very involved in mosque activities					0.599	★★
Mosques should express political views					0.392	★★
Okay for imams to discuss politics in mosque					0.492	★★
BACKGROUND FACTORS						
Nativity (U.S.-born)						
Foreign-born, U.S. resident < 10 yrs	–1.408	★★	–1.317	★★	–1.192	★★
Foreign-born, U.S. resident 10–19 yrs	–1.100	★★	–1.088	★★	–0.963	★★
Foreign-born, U.S. resident 20 yrs or more	–0.356	★★	–0.422	★★	–0.338	★
Western region	0.498	★★	0.391	★★	0.397	★★
Age	–0.009	★	–0.015	★★	–0.010	★
Constant	3.328	★★	2.980	★★	2.599	★★
R2	0.082		0.143		0.200	
Adjusted R2	0.078		0.137		0.191	

NOTE: "B" represents Beta coefficients from regression models. Negative numbers means that the characteristic decreases political activity and positive numbers means the characteristic increases it. "Sig" represents whether the effect (negative or positive) of each characteristic is significant at various levels of significance (+p < .10, *p< .05, **p < .01). "NS" means that the characteristic does not have a significant effect on political activity.

life) has no significant effect on either dimension of political involvement, which counters popular stereotypes that link Islamic religiosity to political radicalism. Frequent mosque attendance is likewise weakly associated with political engagement, again suggesting distinct dimensions of religious and political identity. In contrast, being "very involved" in mosque activities and support for mosque involvement in the political arena is associated with increased levels of political consciousness and activity. Moreover, the inclusion of these measures reduces the gender gap to non-significance, which suggests that differences in men's and women's religious identity helps explain the gender gap in their political engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite four years of intense media attention on Muslim Americans, we still know surprisingly little about where this group fits in the American political landscape. This study begins to fill that gap by examining the political engagement of Arab Muslims and assessing how gender shapes differences in their political consciousness and activity. The results show that contrary to popular stereotypes, both women and men have high levels of political consciousness and participation, in part reflecting their relatively affluent socioeconomic positions. Like other groups of U.S. women, Arab-American women are more likely to affiliate with the Democratic party and less likely to have voted for Bush in 2000. The gender gap in policy attitudes and political consciousness is much smaller, however, suggesting that collective identity based on ethnicity and religion is more salient than gender in shaping women's attitudes. The most surprising findings are Muslim Arab-American women's high rates of political engagement, both relative to other groups of U.S. women and Arab women in the Middle East.

One of the most important findings of this study concerns the relationship between religious identity and political involvement. A common concern in the American discourse on Muslim integration is whether or not Islam is antithetical to democracy and democratic participation. This study shows this is clearly not the case. Personal aspects of religious identity, such as prayer and salience of religion in daily life, have little or no relationship to political involvement, while active participation in the mosque promotes political consciousness and activity. This finding replicates those of Jamal's 2005 study of immigrant Muslims in Dearborn, Michigan, where women were more politically conscious than men, in part because they were more involved in mosque activities.[24] Although some might interpret this finding as bolstering stereotypes linking Islamic worship with political incitement, closer inspection suggests much less sinister implications. Like other congregations, mosques serve to heighten group consciousness and awareness of issues that need to be addressed through political mobilization (e.g., policies to remedy discrimination). Future research on Muslim Americans should explore the specific mechanisms through which religious involvement encourages political activism.

NOTES

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2. Valentine Moghadam, ed., *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies* (Oxford University Press, 1994); U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population and Housing," op. cit.

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4. Sam Afridi, "Muslims in America: Identity, Diversity, and the Challenge of Understanding," *Carnegie Challenge Paper* (The Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2001).

5. Zogby, "Muslims in the American Public Square: Shifting Political Winds," op. cit.

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8. Yvonne Y. Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and John L. Esposito, eds., *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Experiences in the United States* (Altamira Press, 2003).

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11. M.A. Muqtedar Khan, "Constructing the American Muslim Community," in Haddad et al., *Religion and Immigration*, op. cit., pp. 175-198.

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13. Author's communication with Yvonne Haddad.

14. For examples, *see* Gary Gerstle and John Mollenkopf, eds., *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2001); Jan E. Leighley and Arnold Vedlitz, "Race, Ethnicity, and Political Participation: Competing Models and Contrasting Explanations," 61 *Journal of Politics* (1999), pp. 1092-1114.

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16. For examples, *see* Gerstle and Mollenkopf, op. cit.; Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2001).

17. Jamal, "Political Participation and Engagement," op. cit.

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19. Jen'nan Ghazal Read, *Culture, Class, and Work among Arab-American Women* (LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2004).

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22. For a list of reports, *see* the MAPS Project webpage at www.projectmaps.com.

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Electing Arab Americans to Congress:
An Activist Reflects on Problems and Prospects

ABDEEN JABARA

In addressing the question of whether Arab Americans and Muslim Americans can mount successful bids for representation on the national electoral scene, one must analyze the nature of the American political system and the role that ethnic, religious, class and other interests play in it.

While the United States can be defined as a democratic political system, for most of its history it has contained all of its many societal divisions within two major parties. Third parties have arisen from time to time but their ideas have been co-opted, through adoption of their main platform points by one of the two major parties, or they have been forced to remain on the margins of American political life because of a lack of access to the funds necessary to mount a credible electoral effort. The most recent examples are the Green Party and the short-lived Labor Party.

THE ROLE OF MONEY IN U.S. ELECTORAL POLITICS

As noted above, one reason for the current dominance of the two-party system is the role that money plays in the American political system. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the landmark decision of *Buckley v. Valeo* that the free speech provision of the Constitution's First Amendment protects an individual's right to spend as much of his or her own money as he or she wishes in pursuit of political office.[1] At the same time, in deciding that contributions to candidates for congressional office could be restricted, *Buckley* upheld the Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments of 1974.[2] The Act provides for limits on individual campaign contributions, for the public disclosure of contributions, and for the establishment of political action committees (PACs), each of which is limited in the amount it can give to a campaign. The Act does not, however, limit the amount a wealthy individual can spend on his or her own campaign or on uncoordinated negative advertising against a targeted candidate.

Running for election to Congress requires a great deal of money, which is why wealthy individuals have a substantial advantage over candidates who are not wealthy and who must raise the money they need from individuals or PACs. While both the Supreme Court in *Buckley* and Congress in the Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments emphasized eliminating the appearance of *quid pro quos* in campaign contributions, the fact of the matter is that candidates are supported because of positions they have or have not espoused, and candidates tailor their positions to attract the donations that they need to get elected and, once elected, to stay in office. Since the passage of the 1974 amendments, several scandals, including one involving the Savings and Loan Associations and the more recent Abramoff/Indian casino debacle, have underscored how much, even when things change, they stay the same.[3] While Arab Americans are learning to donate politically, they do not have a well-established and well-oiled apparatus such as the 30-plus pro-Israel PACs that work in various parts of the United States to make certain that Congress maintains a pro-Israel stance, nor do Arab Americans have the level of wealth to match the pro-Israel money that is available in American politics.

Enforcement of the sometimes arcane rules governing campaign financing laws has been delegated to a bipartisan, presidentially-appointed Federal Election Commission that, it can be argued, has generally protected pro-Israel operations in the United States. This assertion is well documented in the filings in *James Akins et al. v. the Federal Election Commission*, a case that reached the United States Supreme Court.[4]

THE ELECTION OF 2006

The congressional election of 2006, in which Democrats hoped to win 15 seats in the House of Representatives that were held by Republicans, illustrates the difficulties challengers have in the electoral process. Democratic Party ambitions faced a circumscribed playing field because of partisan redistricting efforts that put some congressional seats firmly in the hands of Republicans, and because of the enormous advantage that incumbents enjoy because of their greater ability to attract contributions. In the absence of incumbent retirements, any challenger, whether Republican or Democrat, has a Herculean task. In the 2006 elections, only 32 congressional seats were considered competitive while, according to the Cook Political Report, 110 were considered competitive in 1994.[5]

The key question to ask here, however, is "competitive about what?" Are the candidates in any election year competitive over the amount of foreign aid that the United States provides annually to Israel – aid that exceeds more than $1,000 per Israeli, even though Israel is considered an economically developed country? Are they competitive about U.S. support over the years for Israeli settlement building or its lack of criticism about the horrendous conditions of occupation? Would a change in control of Congress in any year signal a difference in the foreign policy that Congress has historically adopted toward the Palestine-Israel conflict, seen at various times when it has weighed in with Sense of Congress Resolutions or special anti-Palestinian and pro-Israel legislation?[6]

ARAB AMERICANS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

Arab-American political organizing is of relatively recent vintage. Indeed, the very denomination of a specific Arab-American ethnic and cultural identity closely parallels this entry into organized political activity.

Two separate yet related events were largely responsible for the emergence of a distinctly Arab-American presence in the United States – a presence forged by events in the Middle East that had very sharp resonance among first, second and, to some extent, third-generation Arab Americans. These events were the devastatingly swift vanquishing of any Arab state military resistance to Israeli occupation during the 1967 war and the subsequent rise of a widely supported popular Palestinian liberation movement. The second event was the 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israel.

There were of course other incidents that contributed to the sharpening of an American-Arab political identity. These included the 1980 FBI sting operation named Operation ABSCAM, the name of which resulted from the FBI's conjunction of the words "Abdul" and "Scam". The program was an attempt by the FBI to entrap corrupt elected officials who might be tempted to accept bribes from wealthy Arabs. As the foil for this sting operation, the Justice Department chose a swarthy FBI agent, and outfitted him with the traditional checkered Arab headdress or *kaffiyah*. He was clandestinely photographed passing money to corrupt members of Congress in exchange for promises of assistance

with an immigration matter. In spite of the outrageous implications that this had for Americans of Arab ancestry, ABSCAM was considered a success by federal officials when several congressmen were arrested and convicted on charges of conspiracy to violate federal laws prohibiting the receipt of bribes. The fact that no apologies to Arab Americans were forthcoming from the Justice Department helped galvanize them to organize politically across the United States. Of course, ABSCAM and more recent examples of financial corruption among elected members of both political parties only highlights the role of money in politics, which federal law seeks to regulate but not to eliminate.

Arab Americans have served and are currently serving in Congress. Four – James Abdnor, James Abourezk, Spencer Abraham and George Mitchell – have served in the Senate. As of 2006, John E. Sununu, is a member of the Senate and Ray LaHood, Nick Rahall, Charles Boustany and Darrell Issa sit in the House of Representatives. Some of these members of Congress have been supportive of Arab-American issues and concerns and others have not. Some, such as Senator George Mitchell, have been close to or mindful of the power of the pro-Israel lobby. None of them, save Senator Mitchell and Representative LaHood, rose to prominence and influence in the chamber in which they served. None, to the best of this author's knowledge, sought to use their elected positions pro-actively to promote a counterweight to the dominance of the pro-Israel discourse in Congress. In fact, Arab Americans have received as much if not more support for their causes from some of the African-American and other progressive non-Arab-American members of Congress.

This is completely understandable. With the exception of those in leadership positions in the two chambers, or those who have important committee memberships, an individual congressperson generally has very little power or influence over any individual issue. The members' main concern is to maintain their standing with their constituent base and undertake fundraising for their periodic reelection campaigns. Indeed, because of the high cost of election campaigns, much of a member of Congress' time is spent cultivating and developing new contributors. Even an incumbent needs to build up a campaign "war chest" to fend off would-be challengers, or to run his or her own PAC that can contribute to the campaigns of other candidates in order to gain their support. For most congresspersons, these funds come from sources outside the state or congressional district from which they were elected. Much if not the bulk of such support comes from corporate PACs and corporate officers.

The average Arab American who is seeking high political office has the additional problem of not being divorced from the general political culture of the larger society. There, issues involving the Middle East, and especially the issue of Palestine, are wrapped in a blanket of widespread ignorance and misinformation.

The one instance where an Arab-American member of Congress took up the principal and most burning issue of Arab Americans today – the issue of peace in the Middle East and the dominance of a pro-Israel discourse in the United States – involved James Abourezk, an Arab American from South Dakota, who had completed one term in the House and one in the Senate by the time he took on the issue. After deciding not to seek a second term in the Senate, Abourezk founded the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in 1980. He sought to organize a nascent Arab-American community to defend itself against a rising crescendo of anti-Arab racism and to protest the exclusion of Arab Americans who voiced pro-Palestinian views from American political life. The organization was destined to have only a modicum of success on the

political front, given the limited resources it had in comparison with the tens of millions of dollars that were spent promoting Israel.

This writer served as ADC's national president from 1986 to 1990, at a critical time in its organizational existence. ADC's regional director in Southern California had been assassinated by a bomb that had been placed in ADC's office, and a mysterious fire had occurred at its national office in Washington, D.C.[7] During the fours years that I steered ADC during that tumultuous period, we engaged in numerous campaigns on issues of stereotyping and defamation with advertisers, toy manufacturers, and media columnists. All of these campaigns sought to mobilize Arab Americans and their supporters in all walks of life behind mass action.

The situation of physical attacks and threats against pro-Palestinian activists became so serious that ADC was compelled to request that a sympathetic member of Congress hold hearings on this subject. Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) convened the hearings but they were poorly attended and received little media coverage.

Efforts to take the issue of Palestinian rights to Congress were, however, hobbled by the generally inhospitable environment for this issue on Capitol Hill. The Arab-American community had been successful in getting some support from Michigan congressmen George Crockett and John Conyers, both of whom had Arab Americans on the staffs of their District offices. After the beginning of the first Palestinian *intifada* in 1988 and media accounts of the Israeli policy of breaking the arms of stone throwers, Congressman Crockett contacted ADC and scheduled unofficial hearings on the atrocities of the Israel Defense Forces soldiers in the Occupied Territories. The hearings had no official status but were covered by C-SPAN.

On another occasion, ADC was able to schedule an official briefing on the Palestine issue for interested members of Congress and staff. Only staffers attended the briefing but ADC was pleased to have been able to schedule anything at all.

ADC also addressed the problem of some congressional candidates refusing individual political contributions from Arab Americans by exposing such acts in the media. Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-MA), whose campaign had refused to accept a $100 contribution from James Abourezk, appeared at an ADC function on Capitol Hill and apologized.

During my tenure with ADC and in the years since, ADC has organized lobbying visits with members of Congress and their staffs during its annual national convention in the Washington, D.C. area. A special day for congressional visits is scheduled before the beginning of each convention. ADC members from congressional districts around the country are encouraged to include a visit to their congressperson's Washington office, thereby giving Arab Americans and their issues a presence in the mind of congressional representatives.

Another tool that ADC employed so as better to acquaint Arab Americans with the legislative process involved placing summer interns in the offices of members of Congress, either in their district or national offices. Each of the applicants for the internship program, from colleges and universities throughout the United States, was screened. The program lasted for only a short time but while it did, interns got a wide range of experience in Congress and some went on to work for the congresspersons after they completed their education. For me, this was a particularly satisfying program as we sought to build a new generation of knowledgeable young Arab Americans dedicated to working for the good of the larger community.

Over the past decade, Arab Americans in Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Michigan, states where they constitute a sizable part of the population, have been more actively involved in supporting congressional candidates and in seeking public office. Some of these are people who identified with their Arab American communities and looked to them, among others, for support; others entered political life with no previous publicly identifiable involvement with Arab Americans.

Spencer Abraham, an Arab American from Grand Rapids, Michigan served one term in the Senate but had little relationship to Arab-American issues, possibly because he saw them as a liability for his political career. When George W. Bush campaigned in Michigan in 2000, however, it was Abraham who advised Bush to come out against the use of secret evidence in immigration proceedings. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had used secret evidence in more than three dozen deportation cases around the United States. As all of the cases involved Arab Muslims, the federal government's use of this tactic was an issue of great concern in both the Arab-American and the Muslim-American communities. Unfortunately, many Arab Americans were deceived, as were many other Americans, by Bush's promise to end the practice.

9/11 has of course had an enormous impact on the process of Arab-American political empowerment. Much of the community turned inward as a racist backlash grew. There was a general feeling that the difficulty of making inroads in the American political system would be increased by a factor of four, since both the 9/11 hijackers and the Bush administration had led the public to associate everything Middle Eastern with terrorism and threats to American national security. Some religious leaders such as evangelist Franklin Graham did not hesitate to fan the flames of anti–Arab and anti–Muslim xenophobia.[8] Major newspapers such as the *International Herald Tribune* published a stream of articles depicting the Arab and Muslim residents and citizens of European countries as being culturally alienated and unable to assimilate.[9] The political fear-mongering took its toll on Arab-American political activism, as many community activists were thrust into a defensive posture in an attempt to ward off attacks. The seriousness of the anti–Arab sentiment in American society became all the more clear in February 2006, when both Democratic and Republican politicians used it to undo an agreement by President George W. Bush to let a United Arab Emirates-based company manage some U.S. seaports.

An incident in Passaic County, New Jersey in the middle of March, 2006 indicates how high the hurdles have become for Arab Americans. The 2000 Census reported that New Jersey had some 71,000 Arab Americans, although community leaders say the number is at least double that.[10] An Arab-American businessman, Sami Merhi, was chosen by Passaic County Democrats to run for freeholder. After learning of comments Merhi had made in 2002 that some interpreted as sympathetic to Palestinian suicide bombers, Governor Jon S. Corzine and Senator Robert Menéndez of New Jersey both came out against the Merhi candidacy, and he was removed from the ticket. Merhi claimed he had said only that Palestinian suicide bombers cannot be compared to the 9/11 hijackers because they do not attack the United States and do not kill thousands.[11]

The point here is that the 9/11 attack on the United States erased any distinction between Palestinians struggling to be free and non-Palestinian Islamists who have targeted the United States, and a candidate for public office cannot challenge that blurring without being accused of being soft on terrorism. Aref Assaf, president of the Arab American Forum in Patterson, New Jersey put it very well:

As a besieged community, we must resign ourselves to the reality that Arab-Americans are now facing a three-headed monster called profiling. One followed the tragic and horrible attacks of 9/11, when a community of 9 million Arab and Muslim citizens became the subject of intense and unconstitutional racial profiling. The second phase manifested itself in the economic profiling of Arabs as happened in the Dubai port deal, when Sen. Frank Lautenberg compared transferring port management to Dubai to transferring it to the "devil."

Now, when Arab-American citizens wish to serve their community and their country, we take their money and then expediently offer them as sacrifice for the "good" of the party.[12]

In 1996, this writer was invited to address the annual banquet of the Detroit chapter of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Having practiced law in Detroit for twenty years and being intimately familiar with the growth of the Arab-American community in Michigan since I began my law practice there in 1966, I chose the political empowerment of that community as the topic of my speech. I recounted how Arab Americans in Michigan began to organize after 1967 so that they could voice a variety of issues with their elected leaders. I recalled the numerous demonstrations, sit-ins, and petition drives; how the community reached out to African-American members of Congress such as George Crockett and John Conyers; and the ways in which powerful congressmen like John Dingell could occasionally be brought on board to support Arab-American causes. I stated that I thought that Arab Americans in Michigan had reached such numbers and had achieved such economic wherewithal that the election of an Arab American to Congress from Michigan was just a matter of time.

It is now clear, however, that it will take some time – years, not months – until other Americans can learn to listen to what Arab-American and Muslim-American communities have to say, and accept what they have to contribute. Much will depend on what type of leadership Americans choose and to what extent politicians believe that they can gain advantage by distancing themselves from association with Arab American causes. Another factor will be the fate of the small debate that is beginning about the role of the Israel lobby in the United States in fashioning American policies and whether American political power can be wrested away from corporate interests.

In the last analysis, what happens to these causes does not depend on the election or non-election of Arab Americans to Congress but rather on a serious change in the political culture in the United States, and thus in Congress. This is, perhaps, an impossible dream. As indicated by the halting steps to talk about the Israel lobby, however, America's intelligentsia may recognize that they must begin discussing these issues. The United States' increasing foreign entanglements in the aftermath of the Cold War just may open a window for the discussion.

NOTES

1. *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976).
2. Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974, P.L. 93-443.
3. In 2005, a number of lobbyists were investigated for taking an estimated $85 million in fees from Indian casino gambling interests and using some of the money to violate the law by giving gifts and

campaign donations to legislators in return for their support of casino interests. *See*, e.g., Susan Schmidt and James V. Grimaldi, "Abramoff Pleads Guilty to 3 Counts," *Washington Post*, Jan. 4, 2006, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/03/AR2006010300474_pf.html.

4. *Federal Election Commission v. Akins*, 524 U.S. 11 (1998) involved a complaint filed by voters whose views often opposed those of AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee). It sought to compel the Federal Election Commission to find that AIPAC had violated the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 by working as an unregistered and non-reporting political action committee. Organizations that are not PACs are not subject to the same reporting requirements. The FEC took no action on the complaint until legal proceedings were begun and then held that while AIPAC's communications did not meet the actions permitted by non-PACs under the 1971 Act, AIPAC was not a PAC because its major purpose was not the nomination or election of candidates.

5. Adam Nagourney, "For Democrats, Lots of Verses, But No Chorus," *The New York Times,* Mar. 6, 2006.

6. An example of such a congressional resolution was the one passed in 2004 condemning the International Court of Justice for its ruling that the wall Israel was constructing in part on land it occupied in 1967 violated international law. U.S. House of Representatives, *Deploring Misuse Of International Court Of Justice by United Nations General Assembly for Political Purpose*, House Resolution 713, 108th Congress, 2nd session, 150 *Congressional Record* (July 15, 2004).

7. On October 11, 1985, the regional director of the ADC Southern California office, Alex Odeh, was killed when a bomb exploded outside the front door of his office; two months later, the ADC office in Washington, D.C. was firebombed. Steve Lerner, "Terror Against Arabs in America: No More Looking the Other Way," *New Republic*, July 28, 1986; Thomas Lerner, "Cover Story Language, incidents increasingly [sic]," *United Press International*, Dec. 15, 1985.

8. Shortly after 9/11, Rev. Franklin Graham told NBC News, "The God of Islam is not the same God of the Christian or the Judeo-Christian faith. It is a different God, and I believe a very evil and a very wicked religion." *See* "Franklin Graham talks about Islam, draws fire - news - inflammatory statements*," Christian Century*, Dec. 12, 2001, available at http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_34_118/ai_81221892. *See also* Council on American-Islamic Relations, "Franklin Graham Smears Islam Again; Evangelist Says Quran Preaches Violence, Terrorism," Aug. 6, 2002, available at http://www.commondreams.org/news2002/0806-08.htm.

9. *See*, e.g., John Vinocur, "Blunt talk on migration from Dutch and Danes," *International Herald Tribune,* Feb. 14, 2006.

10. G. Patricia de la Cruz and Angela Brittingham, "The Arab Population: 2000" (U.S. Census Bureau, December 2003), available at http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-23.pdf. In 2003, James Zogby estimated the New Jersey Arab population at 240,000. Arab American Institute, "New Jersey," available at http://aai.bluestatedigital.com/page/file/0396de8685f3cdaaf3_geimvyqja.pdf/NJdemographics.pdf.

11. Wayne Parry, "Dems Dump Arab American Candidate Over Terror Comments," Associated Press, Mar. 25, 2006.

12. Aref Assaf, "Action against Merhi is a Political Lynching," *The Record* (North Jersey), Mar. 28, 2006.

On Being Palestinian in a Nation Fixated on Israel

KATHLEEN CHRISTISON

At an early stage in the February 2006 controversy over the proposed United Arab Emirates' involvement in managing six major U.S. ports, an angry caller to C-SPAN's daily *Washington Journal* program expressed outrage that the United States had allowed this arrangement with an Arab government. Arabs, he complained, are the people we most cannot trust.

The caller expressed in blunt terms a broad-ranging anti-Arab racism that is shared, although usually not enunciated quite so explicitly, by large segments of the American public and the political elite. Although his remark was directed at Arabs in general, and the bigotry it expresses is felt in the United States by Arab Americans in general, Palestinians in the United States face a double hostility from Americans – arising from the hostility directed at all Arabs, as well as from a special political ostracism that is thrust particularly on Palestinian Americans because of the United States' strong identification with Israel.

The degree of political participation by Palestinian Americans is directly affected by negative American attitudes toward their native land. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has generated increasing levels of antipathy toward Palestinians as, over the years, the U.S. political and emotional attachment to Israel has intensified.

Recent opinion polls showing sharp increases in negative perceptions of and personal bias against Muslims and Arabs bear out the belief that anti-Arab racism, often indistinguishable from anti-Muslim bigotry, has long been widespread throughout the United States and is a growing phenomenon.[1] A recent Gallup poll indicates that favorable views of Palestinians, never high, have dropped even lower, and are now "among the worst Gallup has ever measured." The poll also shows a gap between favorable views of Israel and of the Palestinians that Gallup characterizes as "one of the most lopsided margins in favor of the Israelis ever recorded."[2] This hostile atmosphere, made even more hostile by the danger since September 11, 2001 of detention and harassment by the U.S. government, renders Palestinian-American political participation and activism extremely difficult, from both a psychological and a practical standpoint.

The close U.S. tie to Israel is not a new phenomenon, but its intimacy has increased dramatically in the almost six years since the collapse of the Oslo peace process and the start of the second Palestinian *intifada*. Scholars of various political inclinations have long remarked on the unique nature of the United States' bond with Israel at all levels of American society. In *Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy*, Palestinian scholar Camille Mansour observed that Israel takes part in the very "being" of the United States. Americans feel such a deep cultural identification with Israel, Mansour wrote, that it can be said that Israel participates in America's "integrity and its defense."[3] In *Israel in the Mind of America*, Peter Grose wrote that "Americans and Israelis are bonded together like no two other sovereign peoples….Each, the United States and Israel, grafted the heritage of the other onto itself."[4]

Most recently, in an indication of the growth of the U.S.–Israeli symbiosis, political scientists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt wrote about the power and influence of the pro-Israel lobby, which they defined broadly as a loose coalition of individuals and organizations that work actively to steer U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israeli direction. They described the U.S. tie to Israel as the centerpiece of U.S. Middle East policy – a uniquely intimate relationship unmatched by any other past or current U.S. alliance in its durability and in the level of its material and diplomatic support.[5]

The bond with Israel is indeed unlike any other, and any description of the realities Palestinians face in the United States must start from this fact. Although with the start of the peace process in the early 1990s Palestinians began to be accepted as having some national legitimacy, the collapse of that process in July 2000 and the start of the *intifada* exposed an undercurrent of anti-Palestinian animosity among ordinary Americans, media organs, and political leaders. With only a few exceptions, major commentators began immediately after the collapse to engage in anti-Palestinian rhetoric, repeating their belief that the Palestinians rejected an Israeli offer of incredible generosity.[6] The media ultimately create and sustain the atmosphere in which everyone, including political leaders and policymakers, forms their most basic impressions, and commentators have continued the anti-Palestinian drumbeat virtually unabated over the last six years.[7]

Numerous political leaders have repeated the erroneous notion that Palestinian classrooms teach incitement and hatred of Israel.[8] The widespread view, rarely countered in the media, is that through their resort to armed resistance, Palestinians have demonstrated a deep-seated hatred for Jews, unmitigated by any legitimate grievances.[9]

The events of September 11, 2001 have intensified the negative discourse that now confronts Palestinian Americans. The concerted effort, led primarily by Israel and its supporters, to link Palestinians to the actions of Islamic radicals and to promote anti-Islamic propaganda about the "clash of civilizations" has played into the widespread failure of Americans to differentiate Arabs from Muslims and Muslims from the small core of Muslim terrorists.[10] What appears to be American inconsistency in the effort to spread democracy throughout the Middle East is also a factor that hurts and alienates Palestinian Americans: at a time when the United States promotes democratic elections in Iraq as the path to freedom and provides facilities for Iraqi Americans to vote in Iraqi elections, it has denied similar voting privileges to Palestinian Americans in recent Palestinian presidential and legislative elections and, because the January 2006 election of Hamas did not please U.S. policymakers, has sought to intimidate the democratically elected government.[11]

In this atmosphere of virtually total American support for Israel and its anti-Palestinian actions, it is impossible for many, perhaps most, Palestinians to feel comfortable identifying as Americans. In a country widely recognized to be so closely linked to Israel that Israel is "grafted" to it as part of its very "being," many Palestinian Americans cannot but feel at least ambivalent about their attachment to the United States and, more likely, deeply alienated.

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There are no accurate census figures for the Palestinian population in the United States, which dates back to the late nineteenth century. Estimates, usually based on informed guesswork, range from 200,000 to approximately 400,000; the true figure is probably somewhere near the midpoint

between these two figures.[12] Palestinians are dispersed throughout the United States, primarily in large urban centers. The largest concentrations reside in San Francisco and the Bay area, Chicago, Detroit, the New York/New Jersey area, and the Washington, D.C. area.

Although Palestinian Americans are represented widely in the professions and in academia, substantial numbers live and work together in neighborhood clusters, often according to town of origin in Palestine – a phenomenon that frequently has the effect both of shielding them from direct ethnic and religious discrimination and of preventing social or political integration in U.S. society. Many came to the United States as part of a chain migration that has brought generation after generation of young men and families from the same town, and many of these individuals, particularly in past decades, grew up in neighborhoods and social networks so insulated that they never experienced ethnic prejudice until they left home to attend college or to work outside the home neighborhood.

Although this degree of insularity is less true today with the maturing of second- and third-generation Palestinian Americans, the town associations that the chain immigrants formed remain a strong force for keeping Palestinians together, preserving the culture, and shutting out American culture and society. These town groups have inevitably aroused some antagonism among other Palestinian Americans for their clannishness and the perceived damage they do to the national Palestinian cause. There is no question that the most clannish, the most inclined to live together in neighborhood clusters, are chain immigrants, whether Muslim or Christian. At the same time, despite the fear that the insularity of these town clusters works against Palestinian unity and any effort to advance a national Palestinian cause, there is an argument for clan and town ties as precisely the way a stateless population scattered throughout the world preserves its heritage. The barriers to social and political integration in American society, however, are the same no matter where any Palestinian originally came from or how he or she lives.[13]

The diversity among Palestinian Americans is immense. There are social, political, and attitudinal differences between those who are immigrants and the American-born, between Muslims and Christians, between secular and conservative Muslims, between those from pre-1948 Palestine whose homes and lands became part of Israel and those from the West Bank and Gaza, between supporters of opposing Palestinian political factions, between the educated and the uneducated, between small store owners and those in the professions, between those who live among and associate only with others from their Palestinian hometown and those who live and work independently in American society, and between Arabic speakers and non-Arabic speakers. As a determinant of political participation, the difference between the educated, who are more politically conscious, and the uneducated, who more often avoid politics, is perhaps most significant.

Just as easy categorization of Palestinian Americans is impossible, generalizations about the degree of their "Americanness" are also impossible. There is wide variation in the level of adjustment to American society, in the extent to which Palestinians feel they belong to and are comfortable in the United States, and in the way they react to the alienation caused by the ethnic and political prejudice of American society.

Palestinian Americans react differently to evidence of personal prejudice, to media misrepresentations of the Palestinian cause, and to official U.S. policy. Some can separate their policy differences with the U.S. government from other aspects of their Americanness; others cannot. Some are

sensitive to political discrimination, to being automatically associated with terrorism simply because they are Palestinian; others can shrug it off as of little consequence to their integration in American society. Nabeel Abraham, a scholar of the Arab-American community, has aptly described the community in general, caught between two worlds, as living in a "persistent in-betweenness."[14]

I first interviewed Palestinians in the United States almost twenty years ago to discover their political thinking, principally on the issue of negotiating peace with Israel and on living and integrating in the United States. The time period was the late 1980s, at the height of the first *intifada*. Palestinians here and in Palestine were feeling a surge of pride and optimism: pride because a non-violent popular uprising against Israel's occupation was showing the Palestinians to be a determined, resilient people able after decades of passivity to stand up for themselves in a legitimate struggle for independence, and optimism over the expectation that long-denied Palestinian human and national rights would soon be fulfilled through establishment of an independent state in part of Palestine.[15]

The range of opinion about their integration and comfort in American society was almost as broad and varied as the numbers in the interview sample, but this writer's overriding impression from listening to Palestinians discuss their lives in the United States was that they were uncomfortable to some degree. The feeling of alienation, even at this period of considerable optimism, was great. Developments since that time – the first Gulf war, the beginning and ultimate collapse of the peace process, the second Palestinian *intifada* and Israeli attempts to repress it, the terror attacks of September 11, the rash of detentions that followed, the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, and the growing tendency of some to define U.S. national strategy in terms of a "clash of civilizations" pitting the United States and the West against Islam, despite White House rejections of that notion – have combined to make Palestinian Americans increasingly uncomfortable.

As one Palestinian intellectual put it even in the late 1980s, Palestinian Americans feel as though they live in "enemy territory."[16] That sense has been heightened in the wake of the second *intifada* and September 11. Pro-Israeli organizations have increased anti-Palestinian propaganda and harassment; local and national security services have investigated and detained Palestinian activists; Arab and Muslim charities have been closed and political contributions by Arabs returned; Arab political candidates expressing any sympathy or understanding for Palestinians have been forced to withdraw their candidacies; and Congress has repeatedly voted to support harsh Israeli measures in the occupied territories, and the majority of congresspersons have explicitly endorsed Israel's actions.[17]

The result has been to cast a pall on Palestinian political activity in the United States. Many activists have been silenced. In April 2002, for instance, demonstrations critical of Israel and supporting Palestinians that brought out 2,000 protesters in the Boston area and tens of thousands in Washington, D.C. dwindled to a few hundred after demonstration leaders were detained and/or deported. Activists fear harassment by government agents. Very few Palestinian Americans expect support for any Palestinian issue from politicians who appear eager at every turn to declare their solidarity with Israel and the occupation.

Palestinian discomfort in the United States is almost entirely due to political factors. The intensity of the Palestinians' attachment to the land of Palestine – and, for a great many, the feeling of deprivation and distress in exile – cannot be overemphasized. Many Palestinians feel an almost palpable sense of oneness with the land – the particular land of Palestine and only that land – that

cannot be satisfied anywhere else. Even among the urbane and the well educated, the feeling that the land represents a cultural identity uniquely Palestinian is strong – a feeling probably arising in large measure precisely because they have been forcibly excluded from the land and forcibly separated from the culture. Many Palestinians who are well-integrated in American society speak of feeling that their hearts remain in Palestine. Two-thirds of Palestinian Americans polled in the late 1980s said they would return to live in a Palestinian state if one were created.[18] Exile, particularly the uniquely stateless exile of Palestinians, arouses a range of emotions, from anger to grief, to a rootless feeling of being in limbo. This sense of dislocation tends to reinforce Palestinians' identification with their origins. The condition of homelessness and exile, in the words of one expert, "is offset by finding refuge in one's ethnic setting."[19] With only some exceptions, this applies as well to most second-generation Palestinian Americans.

The exclusion and alienation Palestinian Americans see as having been imposed upon them by other Americans are also a cause of great discomfort. Those who want to integrate often find the barriers erected by non-Palestinian Americans insurmountable. One man, a 1948 exile living in the United States since the late 1950s, complained that, although he was a veteran, had voted, had served on juries, "yet I'm not accepted by the society. I want to assimilate, but I can't." A woman said that she felt it a privilege to live in the United States, where she is free to express her opinions, but she believes all Palestinian Americans have the sense that they are "living with people who don't like us and who help Israel against the Palestinians. When I pay my tax money, I feel that I am paying this money to kill my people." This bitter impression that they are treated as the enemies of Israel, and therefore the enemies of the United States, is not uncommon.[20]

Samir Ashrawi, a Palestinian Christian who is the brother-in-law of Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi and who was living in Texas, lamented as long ago as the late 1980s that he would have liked to advertise his ethnicity, but he felt a constant need to compete with Israel for the respect and affections of Americans. "Your word is suspect," he complained. "It's labeled. The government, the movies, the papers, the lobbyists, the [Christian] fundamentalist groups, all those put together, [create] a kind of conspiracy of sentiment…that puts you in your place, so to speak." The issue with Americans, in Ashrawi's view, is never how loyal a Palestinian is to the United States but how well he measures up on America's pro-Israeli yardstick. This is "thrust upon us as a litmus test. It's not an American litmus test; it's not a question of whether we know the Constitution or can recite the Pledge of Allegiance with comfort. I'm sure we could all do that. It's a foreign policy test."[21]

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How do these views, this experience of connectedness to events in Palestine and perception of discrimination from fellow Americans because of Palestinian Americans' political identity, affect Palestinian political participation in the United States? Again, Palestinian Americans react differently, some by attempting to work more vigorously in the American political system, the majority by clinging more firmly to, and in a sense retreating into identification with, their ethnicity and their cultural heritage. Even for Palestinian Americans who choose the first, more active path, it remains the case that for many, their prime interest and the chief objective of their political activity is advancement of the Palestinian cause.

One woman interviewed in the Washington, D.C. area in 1989 explained that she reconciled her ambivalence about the United States and the duality of her political identity by not fully committing to the United States in any political sense despite working within the system to try to advance the Palestinian cause. The absence of a Palestinian state was the critical factor for her. Perhaps, she said, if she were from an established state she could comfortably commit to the United States because she would have a recognized ethnic and national identity, but "I feel I cannot identify with any other part of the world until I get my full identity first as a Palestinian." Nonetheless, she considered it vital for Palestinian Americans to work within the American system for the Palestinian cause. She worked for Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign and served on the national board of Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. "If I cannot go home, at least I try to make people more aware. I try to kind of soften the fact that I'm here, to use my presence by doing something for the cause….Otherwise, it would be a double exile."[22]

Although by the end of World War II the Arab-American community had assimilated quite well into American society, developments in the Middle East over succeeding decades – primarily the dispossession and displacement of the Palestinian population that resulted from the creation of Israel – served to raise political consciousness in the community.[23] This was a slow process until the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, in which Israel captured large swaths of territory from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, including Palestinian territories in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. For Palestinian Americans, as for all Arab Americans, the war was a great awakener and a great impetus to solidarity. The Arab defeat, and in particular the enthusiasm with which American public opinion greeted Israel's sweeping victory over Arab armies, shocked the Arab-American community into a much stronger political consciousness.

The late Palestinian-American intellectual Edward Said, having left Jerusalem at the age of 12 and the Middle East at age 15, had always regarded the Arab world as a place he went to for vacations, but it did not provide a political identity for him until 1967. The war and the U.S. reaction were, he has said, "a shattering experience for me." With the almost simultaneous reemergence of a Palestinian national movement, he began to identify strongly with his Palestinian roots.[24] The sudden rediscovery of roots, a heritage, an identity – both as Palestinians and more broadly as Arabs – was the same for most Palestinian Americans.

The anti-Arab hostility they discerned in their fellow Americans' reaction had a strong personal and emotional impact on Palestinian Americans who thought they had comfortably integrated into American society. Another Palestinian-American intellectual described feeling a sense of shock and isolation because of the American reaction – a feeling intensified because he had been in the United States at that point for over a decade and felt at ease among Americans. "In terms of official America, the United States government, in terms of the media, and in terms of the people you meet on an individual level – what was shocking was the partisanship that appeared to me," he recalled with bitterness. "It was a 'we-Americans-beat-out-these-Arabs' sort of thing, via Israel. It's not merely pro-Israeli for whatever reason, but it was as if it was a personal victory for America. I recall that very vividly because I was really startled by it. Why do they feel that we Palestinians and Arabs are their enemies?"[25]

The 1967 awakening, combined with a gradually increasing political consciousness fostered by newer, and generally better educated and more politically conscious, immigrants from the Arab

world, led to a growth in the Arab community's identification with the broad Arab cause rather than with narrower communities such as Lebanese or Syrian. In late 1967, spurred by this greater political consciousness, a core of Arab-American leaders, including Palestinian Americans in numbers disproportionate to their size within the broader Arab community, formed the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) to try to educate the Arab community and the American public both about the Arab world and about U.S. policies toward the Middle East. Palestinian Americans were also involved to varying degrees in organizing and running other Arab-American groups formed over the next two decades: the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) in 1972, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in 1980, and the Arab-American Institute (AAI) in 1985.[26]

The Arab community in the United States experienced a period of relatively intense political activity in the late 1980s. Many Palestinian Americans, energized by the 1988 presidential candidacy of Jesse Jackson, who promised support for Palestinian rights, and by the political success of the first *intifada*, believed they could work for issues important to Palestinians through greater participation in U.S. politics. The 1988 election was the first time Arabs in the United States joined together to use the political system to advance community interests.[27] In the period leading up to the primaries and the party conventions, the AAI launched a concerted campaign to register Arab-American voters and advance issues of importance to the community. A survey clearly revealed that Middle East issues, particularly the Palestinians' right to self-determination, were of the highest priority for most Arab voters. Hundreds of Arab Americans ran for delegate positions at the Democratic and Republican conventions. Eight delegates and over 40 other alternates and permanent committee members, a high proportion of them Palestinian and the vast majority committed to Jackson because of his stand on the Palestinian issue, attended the Democratic convention.[28]

Polls conducted in this period and in the years after 1988 showed a considerably higher than usual level of political interest and political activity among Palestinians and Arabs in the United States. A poll of Palestinian Americans conducted in 1988 – the first scientific in-depth survey of opinion in this community – showed a strong identification with Palestinian nationalism and a high degree of organizational participation.[29] A striking 41 percent of respondents said they belonged to a Palestinian organization that provided relief to Palestinians and political support to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and nearly 77 percent had donated money to various organizations. Fifty-eight percent of naturalized citizens among the respondents voted in U.S. elections, a higher percentage than the 53 percent turnout for the U.S. public in general.[30] A later poll of politically active Arab Americans, conducted in the early 1990s, indicated that most of these respondents had continued their interest in political activity beyond the 1988 election.[31]

It is important to emphasize the relatively self-absorbed nature of Arab political participation in this period of greater activity, as well as the external nature of the impetus to participate. The principal reason for greater participation in the first place was the perception among Arab Americans in general, and Palestinian Americans in particular, that at long last a national politician, in the person of Jesse Jackson, understood Palestinian concerns and would work for a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Even when Jackson repudiated the PLO and said he would not deal with it, Palestinian Americans continued to support him in the belief that he at least understood the

substance of their grievances, and remained the only politician who did. The willingness to work for Jackson, and the belief that, unlike any previous political campaign in U.S. history, this one might produce some political help for the Palestinians, was further spurred by external developments, particularly optimism over the successes of the first *intifada* and the belief that the uprising was finally bringing the Palestinian plight to greater attention in the media and among the American public.[32]

The enthusiasm died a few years later, again most probably because of factors external to the Palestinian community. Somewhat paradoxically, the Oslo peace process that began in 1993 served to discourage some Palestinian-American political involvement. Palestinian Americans, particularly the intellectual community, had been closely involved when the peace process began with the Madrid conference in October 1991 – the first time any Palestinians were accepted as having a role in peace negotiations. Several leaders in the Palestinian-American community served as advisers to the Palestinian delegation to the conference and to the bilateral Palestinian-Israeli negotiations that followed. In addition, a small number of Palestinians from the United States held seats on the Palestine National Council (PNC), the legislative arm of the PLO. This relationship with the PLO, through the PNC and the direct ties between Palestinian-American leaders and the PLO leadership, had always been a two-way street that served both to keep the Palestinian community in the United States abreast of PLO thinking and to bring Palestinian-American concerns and advice to the PLO leadership.

The sense of involvement and connectedness that Palestinian Americans gained from these ties was shattered, however, when it was revealed that the PLO leadership had been negotiating separately with Israel in a secret process mediated by Norway. As these negotiations unfolded – first with the Oslo agreement signed on the White House lawn in September 1993 and later with the interim agreements that followed in 1994 and 1995 – many Palestinian Americans felt twice betrayed: by the fact that the PLO leadership had acted without reference to them or to any other Palestinian community, but primarily because there was deep concern that the PLO had conceded too much, agreeing to a long-term process that allowed Israel to consolidate its control over the occupied territories without securing any commitment to Israeli withdrawal or any guarantee of Palestinian independence and statehood in any part of Palestine. Palestinian Americans had supported the PLO's decision in 1988 to recognize Israel and accept the two-state formula, which would have given the Palestinians a sovereign, independent state in the one-quarter of original Palestine that the occupied territories constitute, but the Oslo agreement was widely seen as ultimately precluding the establishment of such a state.[33]

The Oslo agreement tended to undermine Palestinian solidarity inside the United States, as well as the community's solidarity with the PLO – something that has minimized Palestinian-American political participation. The PLO and the Palestinian Authority (PA), the self-governing body established by the Oslo agreement, are by most accounts no longer interested in cultivating relations with the Palestinian diaspora. The PNC has been disbanded as a body representing Palestinian communities throughout the world, in favor of the Palestinian Legislative Council, which represents Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Palestinian-American scholar Fouad Moughrabi believes that the Oslo process has been translated into an effort to depoliticize the Palestinian community here and elsewhere. Although this depoliticization and disconnection with the diaspora may have been an inadvertent consequence of PA concentration on governing in the occupied territories, Moughrabi believes it may also have been a

deliberate effort to fend off criticism of the concessions made in order to reach the Oslo agreement. This process of pulling away from the diaspora has had an inevitable effect on Palestinian-American political activity. For years, Moughrabi notes, there was a central focus to the Palestinian struggle; even when total consensus among Palestinian Americans about what should be done was lacking, the struggle itself provided a general direction for their thinking and their activities. Following the Oslo agreement, however, the perceived abandonment by the PLO and the PA of longstanding Palestinian goals left the community in the United States with no direction and little focus.[34]

For several decades after the 1967 war and the start of the Israeli occupation, Palestinian Americans were led by a dedicated core of intellectuals who provided inspiration and a voice for the community, but this source of guidance has dissipated as well. Four leading intellectuals – Edward Said, Hisham Sharabi, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, and Samih Farsoun – have died in the last few years. The others have grown older and, discouraged by the estrangement from the PLO, as well as by the frustrations of getting through to the American public, now generally play a much-diminished leadership role. A younger generation of Palestinian-American intellectuals is emerging but faces the same frustrations and has not as yet established the credibility of the older intellectuals. A Palestinian think tank, the Palestine Center in Washington, D.C., provides a forum for the dissemination of Palestinian and pro-Palestinian policy analysis, but it is one of a kind and does not have the resources of its competitors among Washington think tanks.

The character of Arab-American political organizations has changed as well. Michael Suleiman, who was among the founders of the AAUG in 1967, has noted that "U.S. hostility to Arabs and the concept of Arabism was so extreme and so widespread among both policymakers and the general public that the AAUG considered it practically useless to attempt to have an impact on the political process or public policy."[35] The pessimism proved to be prophetic. For all intents and purposes, the AAUG has ceased to exist, and the NAAA has merged with the ADC. Although there has been no diminution of political interest among Palestinians and Arabs since the heyday of Arab-American organizing, the perceived futility of their mission of bringing greater understanding of the Palestinian and Arab viewpoint to American society and the U.S. political scene has caused a turn inward by much of the community.

The ADC and the AAI, along with a few newly formed Palestinian-American organizations,[36] remain vigorous in their efforts to educate the public and politicians. But, as Suleiman lamented about an earlier period, U.S. hostility today to Arabs, to the concept of Arabism, to the Palestinian viewpoint, to any exposition of Palestinian grievances, and to Muslims in general is so pervasive that these organizations' hopes of having any impact on the media or on policy are virtually nil without a dramatic change in American public opinion and political discourse. Arrayed against the huge political strength, the wide grassroots appeal, the great emotional pull, and the enormous financial resources of the several pro-Israeli organizations in the United States, the strength of the Arab-American organizations is minimal.

Profiles of three Palestinian-American communities give a broad illustration of the general decline in Palestinian political activity and solidarity throughout the country. Each community is slightly different in composition, and each has reacted to events of recent years differently, but all find themselves in crisis to some degree – without adequate unified guidance either from community leaders

in the United States or from the Palestinian Authority, and living fearfully in the face of rising hostility from American society and from the U.S. government.

Chicago is home to what is probably the largest Palestinian-American community. By some estimates, Palestinian Americans – large numbers of them chain immigrants from West Bank towns – make up nearly 60 percent of the more than 150,000 Arab Americans in the Chicago area. Over the years, as the community grew and clustered in its own ethnic neighborhoods and as anti-Arab discrimination rose throughout the United States, particularly in the wake of Israel's victory in the 1967 war, the Chicago community became increasingly insular. In the words of sociologist Louise Cainkar, "As they were cut off from participation in mainstream institutions, they also withdrew from aspiring to be part of them….[T]he Palestinian community became more Palestinian, not more American."[37]

This solidarity, buttressed by the formation of new Palestinian political organizations, endured through the late 1980s, but the community's cohesiveness, along with its interest in any political participation, began to disintegrate in the 1990s, particularly in the wake of the first Gulf war and later of the Oslo agreement. Palestinian community centers in Chicago closed, political organizations collapsed, middle-class Palestinian Americans began to move to the suburbs, and a downturn in some sectors of the Chicago economy left Palestinian Americans remaining in the city more economically vulnerable. These developments combined to remove the safety net from under the community, leaving most Palestinian Americans without a social welfare network and without a unified political focus. In the wake of the anti-Palestinian hostility that has accompanied the second Palestinian *intifada*, as well as the events of September 11 and the increased immigration restrictions, government raids, detentions, and profiling that have resulted, the level of fear and alienation in the community has risen to a point never previously seen.[38]

Detroit, where Palestinian Americans make up a small minority of the total Arab-American population of over 200,000, has seen a disintegration of community solidarity similar to Chicago's. Experts describe a Palestinian population that feels betrayed by external events, by Palestinian and Arab leaders, and by non-Palestinian Americans. As a result, the community has become more introverted and is politically paralyzed and inactive. May Seikaly, who surveyed Detroit Palestinian Americans in the mid-1990s, described a community that even then felt confused and anguished about the future of the Palestinian people in general: "This community, which has bound its identity with the fate of its homeland, has been on a roller coaster of euphoria, expectations, and disappointments….The Palestinian community of Detroit seems to be undergoing a crisis accelerated by events within it and political conditions beyond it that ultimately mold its identity."[39]

Palestinian Americans in San Francisco and the Bay area, another sizable community, are grappling with problems of a different nature but originating from the same feeling of confusion and siege. San Francisco has a large population of Palestinian Christians from Ramallah, all members of the large town association representing Ramallah's old Christian clans, now mostly dispersed outside Ramallah. Some Bay area experts estimate that more than half the area's Palestinian Americans are Christian. In the wake of September 11, the Christian community began to pull away from Muslim Palestinian Americans out of fear of being identified as Muslim and becoming the target of racist attacks and government harassment. The split in what was once a highly politicized community became evident in both political and cultural arenas, as Christians refused to participate in

demonstrations organized by Muslims and Muslims stopped participating in cultural events organized by the Ramallah Christians. Christians began wearing ostentatious crosses in the hope of not being identified as Muslim or even Arab.

One expert estimates that political activity, even by Muslims, who themselves now show up at antiwar demonstrations in dwindling numbers, has been cut by as much as 75 percent. A small core group of politically oriented Muslims and Christians still works together to bring Palestinian art and cultural events, such as *dabkeh* folk dance groups, to San Francisco and to bring a Palestinian consciousness to young American-born Palestinians on campuses – attempting, in the words of one expert, to advance a political agenda without calling it political. But this is a small effort of one or two hundred activists in a large, otherwise seriously split community, and in general the community lives in fear of each other, of the other Americans, and of the government, and has retreated into itself.[40]

This somber picture is an accurate reflection of the uncertainty that confronts the Palestinian community throughout the United States.

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Because there is no Palestinian state, because of the common experience of dispossession and exile that Palestinian Americans share with Palestinians throughout the world, because of the United States' alliance with their dispossessor and the oppressor of their kinsmen in Palestine, Palestinians in the United States feel a political nationalism that is unusual among immigrant communities. They are acutely conscious of the fact that the political situation in Palestine-Israel sets them apart from other Americans. This political consciousness inevitably affects the degree of political acculturation that Palestinians achieve in the United States. For a great many Palestinian Americans, the submergence of their political identity required to become wholly "American" in the sense demanded of all immigrants has been impossible.

The rising tide of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States in the last five years has guaranteed that this feeling will not change. Large numbers of Palestinian Americans tend to be here not by political choice but simply because there is nowhere else to go. Becoming American for these people is not a choice made enthusiastically but a passive act, taken because there is no other or no better alternative. Because there has been no satisfactory resolution of the issue of who should control the land that they consider theirs, because they have no country that bears their name, many Palestinian Americans experience a sense of incompleteness in the adoption of any other homeland and a sense of something still to come that maintains before them the vision of a foreign homeland and thus differentiates them from most other immigrant Americans. Like the woman who cannot identify with the United States until there is a state called Palestine that can satisfy her national longing, Palestinian Americans in general will remain alienated until U.S. policy and American attitudes toward the Palestinian-Israeli situation change.

NOTES

1. *See* in particular the results of a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll described in Claudia Deane and Darryl Fears, "Negative Perception of Islam Increasing: Poll Numbers in U.S. Higher Than in 2001," *Washington Post*, March 9, 2006.

2. For results of this Gallup Poll on World Affairs, conducted Feb. 6-9, 2006, *see* Jeffrey M. Jones, "Expectations of Middle East Peace Drop Following Hamas Victory: Growing sympathy toward Israelis evident," at http://poll.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=21406, Feb. 13, 2006.

3. Camille Mansour, *Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy*, tr. James A. Cohen (Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 277-278.

4. Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (Knopf, 1983), p. 316.

5. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, John F. Kennedy School of Government (Harvard) Faculty Research Working Paper Series, No. RWP06-011, available at http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP06-011 (March 13, 2006).

6. *See*, e.g., Lee Hockstader, "'Unique Opportunity' Lost At Camp David," *Washington Post*, July 30, 2000, which described Arafat as having "walked away" from a set of U.S. proposals Hockstader characterized as "stunningly far-reaching," "breathtakingly ambitious and wide-ranging," and "extraordinarily far-reaching." *Also see* Marc Lacey and David E. Sanger, "The American President: With Legacy in Mind, Clinton Tried, Tried and Tried Again, to Bitter End," *The New York Times*, July 26, 2000. President Clinton gave an interview to Israeli television two days after the summit collapsed in which he blamed Arafat for having rejected compromise and attempted to "completely defeat the interest of the other side" on the issue of Jerusalem. "Interview of the President by Israeli Television," July 27, 2000, transcript of interview released by the White House on July 28, 2000. Other administration officials also blamed Arafat in discussions with the media. *See,* e.g., Jane Perlez, "Clinton Ends Peace Summit Saying It Is Deadlocked," *The New York Times*, July 26, 2000, in which National Security Adviser Samuel Berger is quoted as saying, "Barak was far more willing to think out of the box…to consider…solutions that could have broken the logjam. Arafat, on the other hand,…was not prepared at this point to crack open his traditional positions." Washington Institute for Near East Policy analyst David Makovsky wrote in an op-ed that Arafat was unwilling to make "the concessions necessary for an agreement" because he was a leader who had filled his public with "unrealistic expectations" and had not adequately prepared the public for concessions. Makovsky, "Arafat: A Leader Who Did Not Lead," *Washington Post,* July 26, 2000. Columnist Richard Cohen characterized Barak as having made "stunning concessions…concession after concession," whereas Arafat showed "recalcitrance." Cohen, "Time to Talk Penalties," *Washington Post*, July 27, 2000. *Also see* Jim Hoagland, "Arab Autocracy," *Washington Post*, July 30, 2000.

There were rare exceptions to the anti-Palestinian commentary. Former Secretary of State James Baker expressed some understanding for both Barak and Arafat and the domestic constraints on them, but criticized the Clinton administration for expecting success from a two-week summit after seven years of diplomatic inaction. Baker, "Peace, One Step at a Time," *The New York Times*, July 27, 2000. Former President Jimmy Carter also urged caution in expecting either side to move rapidly on fundamental issues long in dispute and indirectly criticized the Clinton team for issuing "accolades for one side and condemnation of the other." Carter, "A Jerusalem Settlement Everyone Can Live With," *The New York Times*, Aug. 6, 2000. For a study of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* commentary during the last three months of 2000, following the outbreak of the *intifada*, that details the general tenor of opinion and describes the relatively few commentaries that are sympathetic to the Palestinian viewpoint, *see* Ali Abunimah and Hussein Ibish, "The US Media and the New Intifada," in Roane Carey, ed., *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (Verso, 2001), pp. 233-256.

7. *See* Hussein Ibish, "'They Are Absolutely Obsessed with Us': Anti-Arab Bias in American Discourse and Policy," in Curtis Stokes et al., eds., *Race in 21st Century America* (Michigan State University Press, 2001), pp. 119-141. Alison Weir, "The Coverage – and Non-Coverage – of Israel-Palestine," 38 *Link* (July-August 2005), pp.1-13, provides a statistical study of comparative media coverage of Palestinian and Israeli casualties during two extended periods: the first year of the second *intifada*, September 29, 2000 through September 28, 2001, and the entire year 2004. In both periods, Palestinian casualties, although far more numerous than Israeli casualties, are notably minimized. A

thorough study of British television coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict since the *intifada* and the impact of this coverage on audience views provides a good example of the way in which the media mold public opinion and public knowledge in the United States as well. *See* Greg Philo and Mike Berry, *Bad News from Israel* (Pluto Press, 2004).

8. In his last major speech before leaving the presidency, for example, President Clinton referred to "the tolerance of violence and incitement of hatred in classrooms and the media in the Palestinian communities" and later accused the Palestinians of fostering a "culture of violence and the culture of incitement" in which "[y]oung children still are being educated to believe in confrontation with Israel." "Remarks by the President at Israel Policy Forum Gala," Jan. 7, 2001. A joint statement issued by Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton in the summer of 2001 accused Arafat of instructing "the young people of Palestine to hate the Jews in a way not unlike what the Germans did in the '30s." *See* James J. Zogby, "A Campaign Against 'Incitement'," *Electronic Intifada*, http://electronicintifada. net/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/ 4/2230, July 9, 2001. The Zogby article contains a refutation of allegations that Palestinian textbooks teach hatred of Jews. For an additional detailed refutation by a Palestinian education expert, citing the Clinton and Schumer/Clinton statements and describing studies of Palestinian textbooks by both Israeli and Palestinian scholars, *see* Fouad Moughrabi, "Battle of the Books in Palestine," *The Nation*, Oct. 1, 2001. For a general review of the way in which perceptions and misperceptions of the Palestinians have influenced policymakers and affected the formulation of U.S. policy over the last century, *see* Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their Influence on U.S. Middle East Policy* (University of California Press, 2001).

9. Columnist Thomas Friedman wrote in *The New York Times* that Palestinian grievances were no more than "all the old complaints about the brutality of the continued Israeli occupation and settlement-building" and contended that Yasir Arafat rejected the "dignified exit" from these problems that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak had given him at Camp David. Friedman, "Arafat's War," *The New York Times,* Oct. 13, 2000. *Time* magazine characterized Palestinian actions in the *intifada* as motivated by "hate." *See*, e.g., "The Fires of Hate" and a picture captioned "Ancient Hatreds Reignited," *Time*, Oct. 23, 2000; Matt Rees, "At the Speed of Hate," *Time*, Nov. 13, 2000. Many commentators wrote about what they saw as the Palestinian desire to destroy Israel. *See,* e.g., George F. Will, "A Feast of Retreats," *Washington Post*, Oct. 11, 2000; Bernard Lewis, "The Middle East Must Make Its Own Peace," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct.16, 2000; and Charles Krauthammer, "Arafat's Strategy," *Washington Post*, Oct. 20, 2000. Several other commentators addressed what they perceived to be fundamental flaws in the Palestinian character. Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger stated in an op-ed that Israeli concessions were "never enough to satisfy the Palestinians." Eagleburger, "A Failure With Many Fathers," *The New York Times*, Oct. 11, 2000. Henry Kissinger, in "The Peace Paradox," *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 4, 2000, wrote that there was a "philosophical gulf" between the U.S.-Israeli conception of peace and that of the Palestinians and alleged that Palestinians regarded Israel as an "intrusion" in Arab territory and viewed territorial concessions as "amputations of their cultural and theological patrimony." Richard Cohen questioned the very "nature" and "culture" of the Palestinians and concluded that the killing of Palestinians was more justifiable than the killing of Israelis because most of those Palestinians whom Israel killed "knew they ran [a] risk when they picked up a rock and hurled it at an armed soldier." Cohen, "Israel's Answer to Arafat," *Washington Post*, Feb. 8, 2001.

10. Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster, 1996) postulated an inevitable clash between Muslim nations and the democratic Western world.

11. For articles detailing U.S. administration efforts to undermine the Hamas government, *see,* e.g., Kevin Sullivan, "Rice Rules Out Aiding Hamas-Led Government: Secretary to Map Strategy With U.N., Europeans," *Washington Post*, Jan. 30, 2006; Ori Nir, "Israelis Scrambling To Harden Bush on Hamas," *Forward*, Feb. 3, 2006; Glenn Kessler, "Egypt Rejects Appeal by Rice," *Washington Post*,

Feb. 22, 2006; Harvey Morris, "US tells moderates to stay out of Hamas cabinet," *Financial Times*, Mar. 10, 2006; and the U.S. Treasury Department statement forbidding U.S. citizens from dealing with the Palestinian Authority (PA) because Hamas, designated a terrorist organization, is part of the PA: U.S. Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/actions/20060412.shtml (Apr. 12, 2006). Former President Jimmy Carter, who was among the international monitors of the Palestinian election, has written about the need to give Hamas a chance. CNN.com, "Jimmy Carter: Give Hamas a Chance," Feb. 6, 2006, http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/02/01/carter.hamas/.

12. The Arab-American Institute and the Zogby International polling organization, based on an extrapolation of figures from the 2000 census, calculate that Palestinians make up only six percent of the total estimated Arab-American population of approximately 3.5 million – yielding a total of 210,000. *See* the Arab-American Institute website for a breakdown of the estimated Arab-American population, http://www.aaiusa.org/demographics.htm. This figure is undoubtedly low, in view of the fact that most estimates ten to 15 years ago centered on the same figure. Other estimates range higher than the AAI-Zogby estimate. For example, May Seikaly puts the Palestinian-American population at 12-15 percent of a total of three million Arab Americans, or 360,000-450,000. *See* May Seikaly, "Attachment and Identity: The Palestinian Community of Detroit," in Michael W. Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Temple University Press, 1999), p. 26. In addition, Afif Safieh, the newly-appointed Palestinian ambassador to the United States, recently told C-SPAN that the number is 400,000.

13. *See* Kathleen Christison, *The Wound of Dispossession: Telling the Palestinian Story* (Sunlit Hills Press and Ocean Tree Books, 2002), ch. 5, for a discussion of the chain immigrants, their town clusters, and the problems of clannishness.

14. Andrew Shryock and Nabeel Abraham, "On Margins and Mainstreams," in Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Wayne State University Press, 2000), p. 20.

15. *See* Christison, *The Wound of Dispossession*, op. cit., ch. 10, for expressions of pride in the first *intifada* by several Palestinian Americans. *See also* pp. 70-71, 89, 96, 120-121, 144-146 for similar statements and for expressions by Palestinian Americans of their readiness to live in peace with Israel under a two-state formula. For a full range of Palestinian-American views on making peace with Israel, *see* ch. 7.

16. Op. cit., p. 242.

17. Representative congressional resolutions in recent years strongly endorsing Israel's actions in the occupied territories include H.R. 460, which endorsed President Bush's letter of April 14, 2004 to Israel's then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The letter altered previous U.S. policy positions by supporting Israel's annexation of major Israeli settlement blocs in the West Bank and indicating that Palestinian refugees would not be permitted to return to their homes in Israeli territory – both of which alter previous U.S. policy positions. On June 23, 2004, the House of Representatives voted 407-9 in favor of the resolution, with three voting "present." *See* Shirl McArthur, "Some Members of Congress Vote to Restore Civil Rights, America's Honor," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Sept. 2004, pp. 27-28. On July 15, 2004, the House voted 361-45, with 13 voting "present," for H.R. 713, which supported Israel's construction of a separation wall inside the West Bank and condemned the International Court of Justice at the Hague for its judgment several days earlier that the wall violated international law. *See* Shirl McArthur, "Congress Acts on Appropriations Bills Before Summer Recess," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Oct. 2004, pp. 24-25. On May 23, 2006, the House voted overwhelmingly – 361-37, with nine voting "present" – for H.R. 4681, which cut off direct U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority, designated the territory of the PA as a "terrorist sanctuary," and denied entry to the United States for any official or member of the PA or any PA component. *See* Vicki Allen, Reuters, "Defying Bush, House Backs Limits on Palestinian Aid," *Washington Post*, May 23, 2006.

18. Fouad Moughrabi and Pat El-Nazer, "What Do Palestinian Americans Think? Results of a Public Opinion Survey," 72 *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Summer 1989), pp. 91-101.

19. Seikaly, "Attachment and Identity," op. cit., p. 31.

20. Christison, *The Wound of Dispossession*, op. cit., pp. 78, 81.

21. Op. cit., p. 79.

22. Op. cit., pp. 82-83.

23. For a discussion of the development of Arab-American political consciousness, *see* Michael W. Suleiman, "Arab-Americans and the Political Process," in Ernest McCarus, ed., *The Development of Arab-American Identity* (University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 37-60.

24. Christison, *The Wound of Dispossession*, op. cit., p. 226.

25. Op. cit., p. 77.

26. Lawrence Davidson, "Debating Palestine: Arab-American Challenges to Zionism 1917-1932," in Suleiman, *Arabs in America*, op. cit., pp. 227-240, describes the lobbying effort over a 15-year period by a small Arab-American organization that opposed U.S. support for Zionist plans to turn Palestine into a Jewish land, supplanting the native Palestinian Arab population. The organization, the Palestine Antizionism Society, later renamed the Palestine National League, was led by a Palestinian-American physician and a Lebanese-American poet and essayist and appears to have remained very small throughout its existence, sustained largely by the exertions of these two men, who lobbied policymakers and congressmen for Palestinian self-determination. On one occasion, one of these men testified before Congress, and a delegation from the organization went with a set of resolutions in favor of self-determination to the post-World War I Paris Peace Conference. The activities and ultimate failure of this organization were a harbinger for the Arab-American organizations of the 1960s through the present.

27. For a detailed description of Arab-American involvement in this election year, *see* Helen Hatab Samhan, "Arab Americans and the Elections of 1988: A Constituency Come of Age," 11 *Arab Studies Quarterly* (Spring/Summer 1989), pp. 227-250.

28. Op. cit., pp. 228-231, 241.

29. Moughrabi and El-Nazer, "What Do Palestinian Americans Think?," op. cit.

30. Op. cit., pp. 93-94.

31. Suleiman, "Arab-Americans and the Political Process," op. cit., pp. 49-50.

32. For a description of the way in which Jesse Jackson's candidacy energized the Arab-American, including the Palestinian-American, community, *see* Samhan, "Arab Americans and the Elections of 1988," op. cit., and Suad Joseph, "Against the Grain of the Nation – The Arab–," in Suleiman, *Arabs in America*, op. cit., pp. 257-271. In addition, the author spent the year 1988 interviewing Palestinians and gained a clear sense from them that Jackson's candidacy, in combination with the first *intifada*, was a strong force motivating them to greater political activity.

33. For Palestinian and Palestinian-American commentators who expressed the belief that the Oslo peace process was in actuality simply a means of perpetuating the Israeli occupation under another guise, *see*, e.g., Edward W. Said, *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994* (Pantheon, 1994), particularly pp. xxxiv-xlviii; Naseer H. Aruri, *The Obstruction of Peace: The U.S., Israel and the Palestinians* (Common Courage Press, 1995); Hanan Ashrawi, *This Side of Peace: A Personal Account* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), pp. 11-14, and chs. 15 and 16; Samih K. Farsoun and Christina E. Zacharia, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Westview Press, 1997), particularly chs. 7 and 8; Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 202-203; and Hisham Sharabi, "The Palestinians: Fifty Years Later," Distinguished Lecture Series, Number 1, The Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine (now The Palestine Center), pp. 10-11. Although the authors are not all Palestinian, *see* also George Giacaman and Dag Jørund Lønning, eds., *After Oslo: New Realities, Old Problems* (Pluto Press, 1998).

34. Author's telephone interview with Fouad Moughrabi, Feb. 21, 2006.

35. Suleiman, "Arab-Americans and the Political Process," op. cit., p. 47.

36. The American Task Force on Palestine, established in Washington, D.C., in 2003, is the most active organization concentrating on advocacy on behalf of the Palestinian cause. Other organizations, of varying scope and effectiveness, include the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and *Al-Awda* (The Return).

37. For a study of the condition of Chicago's Palestinian-American community as of the late 1990s, *see* Louise Cainkar, "The Deteriorating Ethnic Safety Net Among Arab Immigrants in Chicago," in Suleiman, *Arabs in America*, op. cit., pp. 192–206. The quote is at p. 197.

38. Cainkar, op. cit., pp. 197–203. *See also* Louise Cainkar, "No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion After September 11," 224 *Middle East Report* (Fall 2002), pp. 22-29.

39. *See* Seikaly, "Attachment and Identity," op. cit., pp. 25–38.

40. Author's telephone interview with Nabila Mango, a Palestinian therapist and counselor employed by the city of San Francisco and working with the Palestinian community, April 15, 2006.

Arab-American Political Activism and Civil Liberties in the Post 9/11 Era

JANICE J. TERRY

The civil liberties of all American citizens and residents have been jeopardized in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, but Arab Americans, whether Christian or Muslim, have been particularly vulnerable to the erosions of legal guarantees of liberty and human rights. Historically, Arab Americans have been a marginalized and sometimes embattled minority, especially vulnerable whenever crises erupted in the Middle East. After the 1967 and 1973 Arab Israeli wars, Arab Americans found themselves ill-equipped to battle the flood of anti–Arab racism that came from both the media and much of American society. The attacks were primarily societal in nature: Arab-bashing, ethnic intimidation, racial stereotyping and, occasionally, physical assaults.

Threatening as they were, however, these societal attacks were not as dangerous as the systemic official attacks on civil liberties and protections that followed the events of 9/11. Arab Americans and Muslims found themselves caught by a rising tide of anti-Arabism and anti-Islamic prejudice in many sectors of American society at the same time that systemic changes to laws and law enforcement imperiled their civil liberties. The spate of new laws and legal limitations on civil liberties institutionalized the threats to the status of Arab Americans and Muslims, bringing to bear the weight of the government's array of surveillance and security agencies. Novelist John le Carré movingly placed the erosions to civil liberties within an historical context:

> The reaction to 9/11 is beyond anything Osama bin Laden could have hoped for in his nastiest dreams. As in McCarthy times, the freedoms that have made America the envy of the world are being systematically eroded. The combination of compliant US [sic] media and vested corporate interests is once more ensuring that a debate that should be ringing out in every town square is confined to the loftiest columns of the East coast press.[1]

Over 50 percent of Arab Muslims surveyed by Zogby International after 9/11 reported their belief that the community had experienced an increase of discrimination, with verbal abuse cited as the most frequent problem.[2] The FBI reported that "anti-Islamic" crimes jumped from 28 in 2000 to 481 in 2001, an increase of 1600 percent. Hate crimes based on ethnicity or country of origin increased from 911 to 2,098 during the same time period.[3] Although these constituted fewer crimes than those reported against African Americans (almost 3,000), Jews (1,043) or homosexuals (1,400), the FBI also noted that the true figures regarding hate crimes against Muslims were undoubtedly far higher because many Muslims in the United States did not report attacks.[4] The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported that 1,019 incidents of hate crimes against Muslims (not necessarily of Arab ethnicity) occurred in 2003.[5]

As hate crimes increased, particularly in states such as Michigan, New York and California that have large, visible Arab and Muslim minorities, Congress and the White House implemented measures that undercut civil liberty protections. Barely six weeks after the September attacks, Congress hurriedly enacted the USA PATRIOT Act by votes of 98-1 in the Senate and 356-66 in the House, and President George W. Bush signed the act into law on October 26, 2001. Running to some 342 pages, the bill vastly enlarged the powers of the executive branch and curtailed or limited a wide range of civil liberties.[6] It limited political dissent, expanded surveillance through, e.g., wiretapping and eavesdropping on lawyers; permitted "sneak and peek" searches; permitted the tracking of Internet usage; deprived immigrants of some previously held rights; and tightened financial regulations on businesses.[7]

Some state legislatures reacted to the terrorist threat by curtailing civil liberties. The New York state legislature, for example, passed a statute providing for long prison terms (20 years to life) for "hindering [the] prosecution of terrorism."[8] Other states introduced legislation to widen the application of the death penalty.[9]

In 2003, the Department of Justice sought to expand these laws with new draft legislation (the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003) that further diminished personal privacy by enabling the government to initiate surveillance and wiretapping. The draft also provided for increased governmental secret access to financial records, including credit reports, without judicial process.[10] It included a wide array of provisions limiting immigrants' access to the judicial process, and both encouraged neighbors to spy on neighbors and encouraged businesses to report terrorism "tips" even if these were "taken with reckless disregard for the truth."[11] The bill elicited widespread opposition among human rights groups and some politicians and, as of summer 2006, had not been enacted. Parts of the bill, however, were folded into the reauthorized PATRIOT Act I in 2006.[12]

Courts subsequently upheld portions of the 2001 PATRIOT Act with regard to surveillance and wiretapping. On November 18, 2002, the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review, a special three-judge panel, ruled that the Department of Justice had broad discretion in the use of wiretaps and the surveillance of suspected terrorists and foreign agents. This ruling overturned the May 17, 2002 opinion by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court that found that the FBI had misled the Court in 75 cases in which it had applied for warrants under the Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). The Supreme Court refused a further review sought by the ACLU.[13]

A new cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security was created under the Homeland Security Act of 2002 enacted on November 25, 2002, and Thomas Ridge, governor of Pennsylvania, became the first Secretary of Homeland Security.[14]

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, many Muslims and Arabs, and even some Sikhs and Israelis, were taken into custody. Immigrants, including those with long residencies or green cards, were vulnerable. In November 2001, only weeks after the terrorist attacks, the government revealed that it had detained 1,182 people.[15] Because the government did not release exact figures after that time, there are only estimates of how many people were directly affected by the wave of arrests. Georgetown University law professor David Cole estimated that as of May 2003, over 5,000 persons had been detained.[16] Some were held in so-called Special Housing Units, which actually denoted solitary confinement, with no access to counsel or to their families. Under these conditions, some agreed to immediate deportation; some adjudicated, and some continued to be held

incommunicado. None of these detainees was charged with involvement in the terror attacks of 9/11 or any other act of terrorism.[17]

The number of arrests, government reluctance to supply information, and lack of indictments indicated a post-9/11 pattern of targeting Arabs, Muslims, and Arab Americans.[18] In the summer of 2002, the Justice Department announced that under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), it would begin enforcing a 60-year old law requiring non-citizens, including green card holders (legal permanent residents), to report a change of address to the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) within 10 days of moving.[19] On November 6, 2002, the Justice Department announced that men over sixteen years of age from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan or Syria who entered the United States after the September attacks had to meet for special registration procedures with the INS.[20] This also applied to those holding dual nationality. Of the thousands interviewed, some 1,200 were detained, most for overstaying their visas or for improper documentation.[21] These individuals also faced deportation, often with no charges made and no access to counsel. A second round of interviews was enlarged to include immigrants or those with dual nationality from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Men from Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia were subsequently added to the list.

The interview process was mired in confusion, bureaucracy, and inefficiency, with no clear-cut standards for either the application of the program or detention of specific individuals. The new programs of surveillance and information-gathering caused widespread fear and uncertainty within immigrant communities, particularly among Arab Americans and Muslim Americans. When a broad coalition of civil liberties groups brought suit against the mass arrests and subsequent lack of due process for those under detention, the Justice Department told a three-member judicial panel that "disclosing the names of hundreds of people arrested on immigration charges after the September 2001 attacks would help terrorists of Al Qaeda figure out how the government was conducting its antiterrorist campaign."[22] Attorneys for the plaintiffs responded that First Amendment rights protected the accused and that the government had misinterpreted the Freedom of Information Act as licensing a "scheme of secret arrests."[23] Although the government was ordered to disclose the names, the order was stayed pending the appeals process.[24]

University police forces were also recruited to track individual students and associations.[25] The government began to monitor both Iraqi citizens in the United States and Iraqi-Americans with dual citizenship. Arab Americans were interviewed by federal authorities and asked to report on Iraqi and Iraqi-American activities.[26] These efforts raised concerns about infringements of the rights of speech and association. The singling out of Iraqis and Iraqi Americans was implemented under the rubric of the "war on terror," in spite of the fact that no Iraqis were involved in the September attacks and intelligence officials were quoted in the press as admitting that there was "no evidence that Iraq has become involved in Qaeda terrorist operations, and the Bush administration has never found hard evidence that Iraq played any role in the Sept. 11 attacks."[27]

Government legislation that infringed on civil liberties created an atmosphere in which corporations and other businesses felt free to increase racial profiling in their hiring practices. In 2004 the Discrimination Research Center reported notable hiring disparities based on the ethnic identity suggested by the names of job applicants. In a test case, the same résumé bearing different ethnic

names was submitted for jobs at a number of different businesses. The job applications that bore Arab or South Asian–sounding names received the lowest number of positive responses.[28]

The application of racial profiling to U.S. citizens met with significant opposition.[29] Arab Americans nonetheless remained particularly vulnerable to racial profiling. A poll sponsored by CAIR in 2004 found that one in four Americans held anti-Muslim views.[30] Surveys by CAIR and the *Washington Post*-ABC News in 2006 showed that fewer than 50 percent of Americans have a positive view of Islam, something of an increase from previous polls. Forty-six percent had negative views, an increase from previous polls.[31] While it is impossible in a brief discussion to list or describe all of the reported cases or allegations of racial profiling against Arab Americans, a brief sampling of cases suggests the problem.

After 2001, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) reported a notable increase of incidents in which police officers stopped cars driven by Arab Americans, apparently on the basis of racial profiling criteria.[32] The use of racial profiling was also apparent in the airline industry, where the problem of what the ADC called "blatant discrimination" was particularly pervasive.[33] From October 2001 to June 2002, the ADC received over "60 reports involving more than 100 Arab Americans, or those perceived to be Arab Americans, being expelled from aircraft during or after the boarding process because of their perceived ethnicity."[34] Passengers, many of whom were U.S. citizens or long-term residents in the United States, were removed from their seats after having cleared security checks and boarded.[35] The ADC and ACLU ultimately filed suit against United, Continental, and American Airlines on behalf of five male passengers who had been removed from their flights.[36]

The practice of racial profiling by airlines and airport officials had a ripple effect and was also applied to non-Arab non-U.S. citizens transiting through the United States. In one notable case, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officials at O'Hare Airport in Chicago accused a Canadian citizen of Indian ethnicity of having a forged passport.[37] Officials voided both her Canadian and Indian passports and "removed" her to a flight, not to Canada, but to India. After four days, and with the assistance of Kuwaiti Airlines and Canadian officials in Dubai, she was able to return to Canada. In a similar case, a Canadian of Pakistani ethnicity traveling to Washington, D.C. to attend a meeting at Georgetown University's Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding was detained for extensive questioning. After he exercised his option not to be fingerprinted, he returned to his home base in Edmonton, Canada, arriving some fourteen hours after he had left.[38] He was given an immigration and customs brochure regarding regulations for those seeking entry into the United States, which said,

> If you decide that you do not want to or cannot follow the special registration procedures, you may be allowed to withdraw your application for admission into the United States, but you may still be fingerprinted, photographed, and interviewed by the INS inspecting officer as part of the withdrawal process.[39]

The brochure noted that individuals must register with the INS if they stay more than 30 days, report their departure to the INS, and report if they travel to different places in the United States.[40] These regulations applied only to individuals from nations on the aforementioned lists being tracked by the INS and, presumably, by other U.S. government agencies.

There were instances of racial stereotyping by individual Americans and local law enforcement officials as well. In one case, three Florida medical students of Arab, Iranian and Pakistani descent were detained and held by the police for 17 hours on a highway that was shut down amid the general fear and anxiety following the September attacks. Initially, the police asserted that the men had sped through a toll-booth without paying but a videotape showed that they had stopped and paid. The police then admitted that they had acted on a tip received from a woman who had seen the men eating and talking in a diner in neighboring Georgia and thought they might be planning a terrorist attack.[41]

A wide array of government agencies expanded their surveillance and control over financial matters and charitable contributions. In one case, the FBI investigated and seized documents of the high-tech Quincy, Massachusetts business Ptech, co-founded and chaired by a Lebanese American, after allegations of links with Al Qaeda. Unsurprisingly, the government investigation and surrounding media publicity had a deleterious impact on the business and its employees. Employees received hate mail and a bank closed the accounts of several Muslim Ptech employees.[42]

Similarly, an Arab American businessman in Orlando, Florida was arrested for allegedly donating large sums of money to "terrorist organizations." Although none of the allegations was proven, the story attracted a barrage of negative media attention. Further investigations proved that his contributions had not been to organizations identified as terrorist ones by the U.S. government. The legal abuses in the case appeared so blatant that the presiding judge, U.S. Magistrate David A. Baker, refused to order the accused be held without bond (although a high bail was set) and criticized the prosecution in the following terms:

> There is a great danger that connections and associations can be used to paint with a very broad brush. Simply because someone meets or knows someone…or shares the same characteristics, does not make him responsible for somebody else's actions.[43]

The government similarly failed to prove the charges brought against a number of other defendants in the aftermath of 9/11. The arrest and trial of Sami Al-Arian, a professor in Florida, and three co-defendants, was one of the most well-publicized of such cases. Al-Arian, who is not a U.S. citizen, had been a vocal critic of U.S. policies and a well-known supporter of the Palestinian cause. The charges against the four men included immigration violations, perjury, supporting terrorism, racketeering conspiracy, and conspiracy to murder. A number of community organizations rallied behind Al-Arian and provided him with extensive public support. After a protracted judicial procedure and trial, Al-Arian was found not guilty on the most serious charges late in 2005.[44] In 2006, F.B.I. officials admitted that most of the information received through eavesdropping, computer searches, and phone conversations after 9/11 was of little use.[45]

Arab Americans and Muslim Americans were vocal in opposing government policies that endangered the well-being of their communities. When the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict resulted in hostile feelings against American Arabs and Muslims, there were almost no nationwide Arab-American or Muslim-American organizations with adequate knowledge of the way minority groups can exercise their rights in the American political arena and with access to the media and other means of publicity. Feeling beleaguered and threatened, the few church or village-based organizations were ineffective

in articulating the Arab case or in taking active steps to protect their communities. The Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG) was formed in the aftermath of the 1967 war. By the time of the 1973 Arab-Israeli crisis, it was a nationwide organization with an extensive list of publications on Middle East politics and a lively annual conference featuring scholarly debates on the role of the United States in the Middle East, but it lacked major clout in the corridors of power in Washington and access to most major media sources.

The reaction to governmental and societal actions against Arab Americans and Muslims in the months and years following the 9/11 attacks was quite different. A wide array of Arab-American and Muslim-American organizations, with nationwide support and grass roots membership, took proactive measures on a number of different fronts. They sought to protect their communities by initiating legal action, contacting politicians on local, state, and national levels, and organizing educational outreach programs for the general public. Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and immigrants generally were informed of their legal rights and provided with legal assistance whenever possible. ADC, based in Washington, D.C. but with offices across the country, issued alerts and advisory statements, maintained a website, and published newsletters and other informational material, including an ongoing and regularly updated *Report on Hate Crimes and Discrimination Against Arab Americans*.[46]

The organizations continued such activities in the years following 9/11. At its annual summer convention in Washington, D.C. in 2005, for example, ADC organized a lobbying day during which members spoke with their Members of Congress. ADC and organizations representing the Muslim, South Asian, and Sikh communities met with Attorney General Alberto Gonzales in 2005 to urge him to end the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System. ADC also screened films such as "Syriana" and "Munich" for possible racist depictions of Arabs and Muslims and in 2005 successfully fought the posting of racist billboards in North Carolina.[47]

Proactive attempts were also taken by Arab-American and Muslim-American organizations to end government infringement of privacy and limit surveillance. In 2006, the ADC joined with the ACLU and other civil rights organizations, including the NAACP and the Japanese American Citizens League, in a lawsuit challenging the National Security Agency's domestic spying program. The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of Michigan, sought a court order that the NSA spying was illegal and had to cease immediately.[48] At the same time ADC, with numerous other organizations, sent letters to the Senate Judiciary Committee opposing warrantless domestic wiretapping by the NSA.[49]

Recognizing the possible implications of changes in immigration laws and enforcement for new Arab immigrants, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans, ADC also took an active role in the debate on immigration reform in 2006, endorsing the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 sponsored by Senators Edward Kennedy and John McCain and Representatives Jim Kolbe, Jeff Flake and Luis Guiterrez, which called for establishment of a path to citizenship for undocumented workers.[50]

The National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), ADC and the Arab American Institute (AAI), among others, also contacted members of Congress and engaged in lobbying activities in Washington on behalf of Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and others who were adversely affected by federal policies after 9/11. In one of the first suits regarding the detention of the unknown number and names of detainees taken into custody post 9/11, ADC and AAI, a Washington D.C.–based

organization with an active program designed to involve Arab Americans in the political process, joined the ACLU and numerous other civil rights organizations in *Center for National Security Studies, et. al., v. Department of Justice*. The lawsuit sought to require the government to disclose the detainees' names, location, dates of arrest and release and the nature and disposition of charges.[51]

The Council on American-Islamic Relations launched a major publicity and educational campaign, running a series of 52 advertisements about Islam in *The New York Times*.[52] The ads put a human face on Muslims in the United States and emphasized the diversity of the population both within the United States and globally. At the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) convention in December 2002, members voted to call on the INS to end the selective immigration registration program and to disclose the names and locations of those being detained. Similarly, AAI and over 60 other organizations, including the Alliance of Iranian Americans and the National Council of Pakistani Americans, signed a public letter to President Bush detailing their concerns about new INS policies.[53] Subsequently, CAIR and ten other Muslim organizations created the American Muslim Taskforce for Civil Rights and Elections (AMT) to coordinate their efforts.

The attacks on civil liberties and on individual Arab Americans and Muslims in the post-9/11 era demonstrated the importance of having well-established community organizations in place to fight prejudice, stereotyping, and abuses whenever they occurred. In this regard, the experience of the Arab-American community in the metropolitan Detroit, Michigan area is instructive. As one of the largest Arab-American communities in the United States, this population might well have expected to receive the brunt of the anti-Arab, anti-Muslim backlash by U.S. citizens and the federal government immediately after the September attacks. Although individual Arabs and Muslims and organizations received hate mail and felt threatened, they were able to work effectively with local law enforcement officials and the media to prevent a major backlash. In 2004, the University of Michigan's *Detroit Arab American Study* found that 15 percent of Arab Americans in the Detroit area had experienced some form of harassment based on ethnic identity, but a far greater number, one-third, had received positive support.[54]

Human Rights Watch, a national human rights group, recognized these efforts in praising the Dearborn police for preventing a major backlash against Arab Americans. In its November 2002 report, Human Rights Watch noted:

> [L]ong before September 11, officials within the Dearborn Police Department were familiar with communities and areas vulnerable to backlash violence…and aware of the possibility that it might occur in the future.[55]

"Open lines of communication" and a "relationship of trust" were credited with having created the appropriate atmosphere for proper and effective responses to protect the community.[56] This atmosphere of mutual respect and awareness would not have existed without the educational and outreach programs sponsored and developed by Arab Americans over several decades. Officials of the local ADC office met with the Detroit Border Patrol regarding random checkpoints in southeast Michigan. During 2002, federal law enforcement officials spoke with local Arab-American and Muslim-American groups to explain new federal regulations, answer questions, and establish firsthand contact with the community.

Another reason for the successful prevention of attacks that might have erupted into violence was the existence of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), based in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn. Since its founding in 1970, ACCESS and other community groups had developed important educational outreach programs and contacts with local officials and the media. ACCESS's successful building campaign in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 demonstrated its power in Michigan. The campaign attracted major corporate as well as private funding and led to the construction and 2005 opening of the Arab American National Museum, the first such museum in the United States. An endowment fund was established to ensure the long-term success of the museum. In 2006, ACCESS hosted an annual Arab-American community conference that brought together a wide network of grassroots organizations from around the nation, encouraging the exchange of information and the coordination of efforts.

In its first year, the Arab American National Museum became a major venue for a wide array of cultural events including concerts, dance performances, poetry readings, and authors' book signings. After 9/11, cultural events sponsored and created by a new generation of Arab Americans were held around many other parts of the country as well. Although the members of this generation of Arab Americans were proud of their Arab identities, they were not impeded by language problems or cultural differences. Reflecting their growing assimilation and comfort within the larger society, Arab-American playwrights and comedians were able to highlight issues of concern to Arabs through a wide variety of popular, artistic means, and to reach out to other parts of the American community.

The importance of establishing lines of communication and alliances with other ethnic groups and their cultural and social welfare organizations was perhaps best demonstrated by the support Japanese Americans gave to Arab Americans in the aftermath of 9/11. In the years immediately preceding 9/11, Japanese Americans had helped advise ACCESS during the creation of the first Arab-American museum.[57] In addition to other cooperative efforts, ACCESS and the Japanese American Museum staff also cosponsored a summer 2002 conference on the Japanese-American experience, with particular emphasis on the World War II era.

Japanese Americans were aware of and sympathized with the vulnerability of Arab Americans after 9/11. On February 4, 2003, Representative Howard Coble (R–NC), chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security, responded to discussions of the possible internment of Arab Americans by comparing such a move to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Rep. Coble stated on a radio broadcast:

> We were at war. They (Japanese Americans) were an endangered species. For many of the Japanese Americans, it wasn't safe for them to be on the street. Some probably were intent on doing harm to us, just as some of the Arab Americans are probably intent on doing harm to us.[58]

Japanese Americans promptly repudiated Coble's assertions and called for his resignation as chair of the subcommittee. Karen Narasaki, executive director of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC), stated:

Our country must create policies to defend our national security without violating the Constitutional rights of whole communities solely based on race, national origin and religion. Representative Coble's words act to justify discrimination.

Representative Coble's defense of internment of Japanese Americans is ridiculous. The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Citizens found that the internment was a product of wartime hysteria and failure of leadership. In 1988, then–President Reagan and Congress acknowledged President Roosevelt's error and stated it was a fundamental injustice. The guards in the guard tower had their guns pointed in at the internees. They were not there to protect them.[59]

Unfortunately, these positive developments largely failed to contravene the negative aspects of post 9/11 developments. Although President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell attempted to defuse anti–Muslim sentiment with positive public statements about Islam and with occasional meetings with Muslim leaders, the Bush administration maintained political and ideological alliances with many of the same forces that demonstrated an anti–Arab and anti–Muslim bias. While Bush and Powell publicly rejected the statements by groups or individuals that sought to "demonize Islam,"[60] the administration's domestic and foreign policies belied many of these sentiments.

The events of 9/11 have had a chilling effect on individual Arab Americans and Muslim Americans, making them feel increasingly vulnerable and embattled within their own country. There has also been a noticeable decline in the willingness of politicians to engage with the community. No national politician appeared at the 30,000-strong convention of the Islamic Society of North America in 2002, for example, even though it was held in Washington, D.C.[61] Hussam Ayloush of CAIR described the problem succinctly. "On the political scene, we are back to square one," he said. "In general, there is a fear that associating too closely with Muslims could be a liability."[62] Other Muslim Americans blamed a "troika of evangelical Christians, right-wing conservatives and the pro-Israel lobby."[63]

While the "troika" represented a daunting array of opponents, the long-term legal ramifications of new federal laws limiting and infringing on civil liberties posed the most dangerous threat not only to the Arab-American and Muslim-American communities but to the larger American public as well. Negative reaction to infringements from a wide sector of the American public resulted in a political backlash by 2005. In December 2005 the Senate declined to reauthorize the USA PATRIOT Act, agreeing only to a six-month extension. The House shortened the extension period to five weeks. In March 2006, however, the Act was reauthorized with minimal changes, making all but three of its provisions permanent.[64]

The wire-tapping and other privacy infringements on an unknown number of Americans, whatever their ethnic backgrounds, also created something of a groundswell against further legal limitations on the civil and privacy rights of American citizens. The public was increasingly aware that if these laws were to become more firmly embedded in the system, dismantling them, or making the necessary systemic changes, would be difficult, costly, and time consuming. However, in a climate of warmongering, the ongoing conflict in Iraq, the seemingly endless war against terrorism, and the unresolved Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the social and political climate for Arab Americans and Muslims in the United States remained highly volatile and uncertain.

NOTES

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Losing the Battle:
How Political Activism Guarantees Ethnic Integration (In Spite of Defeats Along the Way)

HELEN HATAB SAMHAN

Immigrants from the Arabic-speaking world have been settling in the United States for over 120 years. The experience of these immigrants and their descendants in American political life over the generations has varied from avoidance to enthusiasm, from apathy to full-blown campaign fever. Like many citizens, Arab Americans have a love-hate relationship with the American political system, where incentives and disincentives coexist and lead voters, volunteers and candidates either to fight or to quit.

This essay examines the recent history of Arab-American political involvement, identifying trends in participation, sources of motivation, and obstacles placed along the road to political empowerment. The specific focus is on setbacks experienced by Arab-American activists and political players and on an exploration of the ways in which the setbacks can produce their own momentum for positive change.

ARENAS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY

It is useful first to define the arenas of political activity examined for this discussion. Over the past two decades, Arab Americans have engaged in four broad areas of American political involvement. The first relates to individuals elected or appointed to public office. While Arab Americans have held office throughout their history, the number has grown through the efforts to organize an Arab-American political constituency that attracts both political figures who are of Arab descent and enjoy the camaraderie of ethnic colleagues, and those who are recruited and trained from within organized, self-identified ethnic political efforts. The tendency for successful ethnic constituencies to leverage their visibility in campaigns with appointments and patronage jobs is one reason for the rapid increase in the boards and governmental commissions populated by Arab Americans.

The second arena is one where Arab Americans engage as voters, volunteers and campaign operatives. This sector is the arena in which the largest number of Arab Americans participate, taking part in campaigns and elections along a spectrum that ranges from voting on Election Day or volunteering for a few hours to help get out the vote to being hired to work full-time for a candidate.

The third arena is directly related to the first two and involves activity in the major parties at the local, state and national levels. Principal areas of party work include joining a party committee; serving as a precinct captain; and running as a delegate to county, congressional district, state or national conventions, at which platform debates allow for the introduction of resolutions on local, national or international issues. While platform plank debates have lost their edge in the 1990s, they have served as opportunities for raising questions and developing compromises on even the most controversial policy matters.

The final arena of political activity involves shaping and reacting to executive branch policies and to legislation at all levels of government. In this arena, organized Arab-American involvement has tended to be focused on federal rather than state policy, with some exceptions in states such as

Michigan. Arab-American policy work has evolved from reactive and crisis-driven efforts to those that are more strategic and coalition-driven. The sheer magnitude of policy issues of direct concern to the welfare and safety of Arabs in the United States since September 11, 2001, however, has challenged groups dedicated to advocacy work, and created more need for damage control at the expense of time, resources and energy available for proactive work. Post-9/11 demands have also resulted in such an asymmetry of attention and capacity that the equally heavy agenda of Middle East-related policy issues on the national stage has either generated Arab-American responses that are more modest than in the past or rerouted them to more indirect responses such as anti-war coalitions, protests and other forms of political expression.

TRENDS IN AND MOTIVATION FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY ARAB AMERICANS

Motivations for involvement have varied with the historical moment. For the pioneer Arab immigrants who came to the United States as Ottoman subjects, the attainment of citizenship itself was a dominant motivation, and it acquired even greater currency in the first two decades of the twentieth century when racial eligibility questions about Syrian immigrants to the U.S. placed legal barriers in the way of some naturalization procedures.[1] While the same racial attitudes and some political discrimination existed in the American South in the 1920s and 1930s,[2] the decades prior to World War II were for the most part characterized by economic and cultural integration, with little evidence that the first wave of Arab immigrants and their children formed the political blocs typical of other, larger and more urbanized immigrant communities.

The intensely patriotic climate of World War II, when the majority of second generation males served in the armed forces, created opportunities for Arab Americans to solidify their American civic identity. Post-war veteran benefits, programs, and loans helped economic mobility, and wartime connections and military service provided the American-born children of the pioneer Arab immigrants with access to such assets as job networks. These became motivators to increase civic awareness, civic responsibilities and political connectivity.

By the 1960s and 1970s, a new wave of immigrants arrived, with a background of direct experience with post-colonial Arab national identity. Their experience, coupled with the decidedly anti-Arab political climate in the United States that stemmed in large part from a powerful pro-Israel establishment, altered the political environment for Arab Americans of all generations. Arab-born elites who had been educated and were now living in the United States, working with the American-born descendants of the pioneer Arab immigrants, established institutions and ad hoc groups to respond to anti-Arab opinion in this country. Israel's supporters mounted efforts that peaked in the early 1990s to discredit organized political, cultural or educational activity by Arabs or Arab Americans and to characterize those groups as pro-PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), supporters of terrorism, and generally un-American. An era of racism motivated by anti-Palestinian political ideology led Arab Americans to solidify national pan-ethnic institutions such as the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the Arab American Institute (AAI), which in turn created foundations designed to serve a pan-ethnic identity and political constituency.

The politically active institutions created in the 1970s and 1980s helped forge a multi-generational and secular pan-ethnic identity that was a necessary ingredient of an Arab-American national

constituency. The emergence of organized electoral activism, supported by the formation of AAI and its mission to train and empower Arab Americans in political life, took contentious issues of Arab political and human rights beyond academia and the very limited lobbying efforts by Arab governments and into the arena of local and state party politics. This effort culminated in the campaign to support Palestinian statehood at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, the first time a Middle East policy issue was shaped by Arab–American activists in the limelight of U.S. presidential politics. Post-1988 attempts at various state party conventions to raise issues about Middle East peace, such as those at the Texas Democratic Convention of 1990 and the progressive alliances built through the Jesse Jackson campaign of 1988, prompted pro-Israel political organizations to recognize this nascent challenge to their hegemony in Democratic party positions and refocus some strategic attention and energy away from Washington and into the county and state party arenas.

The confluence of dramatic international events and demographic changes in the Arab-American community from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s caused a shift in the capacity and identity of institutions serving Arab-American political aspirations. Crises like the first Palestinian *intifada* of 1987, the first Gulf War of 1991, the attacks on Qana[3] and the Oslo Accords of 1993 served both to energize and divide segments of the political community as Middle East issues were thrust to the forefront of American public discourse. In this period, Arab-American institutions were facing additional capacity and identity challenges as Muslim activists expanded the network of political, academic and charitable institutions organized not around Arab ethnicity but around the pan-ethnic identity of American Islam. The emergence of Muslim-American organizations provided a new voice on international, civil rights and integration issues that was often, but not always, in harmony with the older ethnic organizations that had depended on non-sectarian political discourse and identity to keep the constituency from fracturing along religious lines.

Throughout the same period, Arab-American community activism was decentralized in order to meet the needs of record numbers of Arab immigrants and refugees settling in U.S. cities, as well as the desire among business, professional and country-specific communities to maintain contact and resist the pull of American assimilation. By the turn of the twenty-first century, scores of organizations were in place to serve the social service, media, religious, charitable, fraternal and professional needs of Arab Americans. This period also saw the dissolution or downsizing of a number of national policy organizations, among them the NAAA and the Association of Arab American University Graduates, two of the pioneer organizations that had been created to stimulate and propagate an Arab-American identity. This diversification and decentralization provided both a challenge and a resource for ADC and AAI, the two remaining national secular, pan–Arab multi–issue organizations: a challenge for funds and leadership, but a resource in providing organized networks that could be plugged into national strategies and campaigns.

While the period of political "détente" with the Jewish community surrounding the Oslo Accords may have dissipated with the deterioration of the peace process, the course of Arab-American access to government was now irreversible, and precedents in American political discourse were set that few pioneer activists could have envisioned two decades earlier. The historic significance of the handshake on the White House lawn,[4] however fleeting, was matched by the unprecedented exposure and participation of Arab-American community leaders in parity with their Jewish-American

counterparts. In that short, heady period, proponents of a Palestinian state were permitted to move from the margins. Federal officials in Washington found themselves in the unusual position of receiving PLO Chairman Arafat not as a terrorist but as a statesman; and those who supported Palestinian aspirations were treated not as discredited or suspect, but as legitimate partisans in an historic peace breakthrough. Although this Arab-Jewish-American détente could not survive the post-Oslo disappointments, the second *intifada*, or the post-9/11 anti-terror rhetoric, the engagement of Arab Americans in the policy debate throughout the 1990s succeeded in shattering political taboos – not permanently, but sufficiently to change the dynamics of the discourse.

The seismic impact of the September 11 terror attacks still affects the American political sphere and continues to be reflected in the popular culture, and its dramatic impact on Arab-American political activity and cohesion continues to unfold. Like most catastrophic events, 9/11 generated both damaging and empowering political reactions. It led to a period of non-stop challenges that include fighting backlash, discrimination, and federal policies. The challenges, however, were accompanied by coalition-building, inter-faith and community outreach, and the process of making Arab- and Muslim-American community needs visible to the philanthropic community and to federal granting agencies.

DISINCENTIVES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS: THE HEAVY HAND OF MIDDLE EAST POLITICS

The two principal types of disincentives that confront Arab Americans as individuals or groups are Arab-baiting and the frustrating art of political compromise. The first is reflected in efforts by candidates to distance themselves from Arab-American support (indirect disincentive) or efforts by others to discredit or marginalize a candidate or activist based on his or her ethnic affiliation (direct disincentive). The second is the tortuous road to incremental political change, which requires sacrifices and discipline that are sometimes at odds with the culture or ideology of Arab-American activists.

Arab-baiting is a scare tactic used to create a climate of fear by manipulating anti-Arab biases prevalent in the United States.[5] Its principal aim is to discredit organized Arab-American electoral activity by alleging ties to terrorism, and in the process it uses anti-Arab fears in order to scare legislators into voting in particular ways or elicit money from the Jewish-American community. In many cases, it depends on a zero-sum view of politics that assumes that if Arab Americans are involved in a campaign, Jewish-American support will be lost.

The decade of the 1980s produced the most egregious instances of Arab-baiting, particularly during the election cycle of 1986, the year after AAI was founded. In that period, Arab-American money was returned (as "pro-PLO" and therefore untouchable), congressional offices were warned not to work with AAI, and candidates whose positions challenged prevailing pro-Israel policy were reminded of "what happened to Senator Charles Percy" in 1984.[6]

These indirect forms of Arab-baiting effectively excluded Arab-American voices from political discourse and stifled debate about American policy in the Middle East. The principal tools in the pro-Israel arsenal were money and influence, either to be withheld from candidates who strayed or, in the worst case, to be used to defeat those deemed not to be supporters of Israel. The "Arab connection" and charges of anti-Semitism have been particularly pronounced in the case of African-American candidates. Rev. Jesse Jackson's inclusion of then-ADC executive director James Zogby in Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign and in his trips to the Middle East resulted in criticism

throughout the 1980s. Candidates for office who favored a balanced policy, showed sympathy for Palestinian rights or employed Arab Americans in their campaign were targeted. This was particularly true of candidates for Congress.[7] "Loyalty oaths" in the form of statements presented to candidates that reaffirmed support for Israel and condemned the PLO were commonplace.[8]

It is not surprising, in a climate where the "Arab connection" was considered lethal, that candidates of Arab ancestry would experience election year Arab-baiting. This more direct form of political intimidation frequently sought to discredit candidates not on their expressed positions but on their ethnic backgrounds, which were assumed to indicate that they would take "unsatisfactory" positions.

The targets of Arab-baiting have come from both major political parties. When Sarkis (Joe) Khoury ran for the Republican nomination in California's 43rd congressional district in 1998 his opponent ran a paid advertisement that featured a list of Khoury campaign contributors outside the district, most of whom had Arabic surnames.[9] Khoury lost the primary to Ken Calvert. During Spencer Abraham's unsuccessful campaign for reelection to the U.S. Senate in 2000, the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) took out an advertisement with the candidate's picture next to one of Osama bin Laden.[10]

In some cases, Arab-baiters have been called to task. This happened in the June 1990 southern California primary race during which Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham attacked his Egyptian-born opponent, former U.S. Ambassador Joseph Ghougassian, for the time he "lived outside the district." The Cunningham campaign distributed a mailer depicting Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, a Saudi Arabian prince, and an oil barrel dripping dollars, and asserted, "We don't need a congressman bought and paid for by these special interests."[11] At the urging of the Arab American Institute, Edward J. Rollins, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, expressed his disapproval in writing.[12] (Cunningham won the primary, outvoting four opponents). It is harder to deal with an anonymous taunt, as happened during the 1991 race of Jacksonville Mayor Tommy Hazouri. He discovered one morning that posters had been printed with his picture augmented with a heavy black moustache and the slogan "Wanted! Saddam Hazouri/Dead or Alive (Preferably dead)." Hazouri lost the race with 49.6 percent of the vote.[13]

Arab ethnicity occasionally emerged as a campaign issue in the aftermath of September 11, but the baiting was quickly repudiated, indicating a new trend. During the elections of 2002, an Arab-American candidate for state assembly in New York was baited by his opponent for accepting "Arab money." That prompted major organizations in his community of Westchester, including the NAACP, to denounce the smear.[14] When Teresa Isaac ran for Mayor of Lexington, Kentucky that same year, some detractors leafleted an event she spoke at denouncing her for Palestinian ties. In that case, even the local Jewish-American leadership spoke out in her defense.[15] In some ways, the sensitivity to the post 9/11 anti-Arab backlash extended into the arena of ethnic politics.

The need to accept political compromise has perhaps been the most direct challenge to Arab-American political engagement, especially for activists who focus on a pro-Palestinian agenda. Such activists are faced with the tedious and delicate process of changing politicians' and opinion makers' attitudes about issues of Middle East peace, frustration over the slow pace of chipping away at the existing political narrative that has been drafted by organized pro-Israel organizations, and the comments of other activists who label participants in this process as "sellouts."

One prominent case of hitting the limits of contemporary political discourse was the platform debate during the 1988 Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. A two-year campaign to support statehood for Palestinians, initiated by AAI in 1987, culminated on the floor of the convention. With the endorsement of the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign, a minority plank in favor of statehood for Palestinians that garnered the support of 1,300 convention delegates was submitted to the platform committee.[16] Intense negotiations between the Jackson and Michael Dukakis campaigns (Dukakis was the front-runner and eventual nominee) erupted over this plank. Jackson vice-chair James Zogby was at the epicenter of the push for the plank, while the Dukakis camp pushed for it to be dropped. Some Arab-American delegates wanted a floor vote, but in the end a compromise was struck whereby the plank would be debated on the floor but withdrawn before a vote. The floor debate itself, during which Zogby spoke in favor of the plank, was an historic first in the discourse about U.S. Middle East policy, but the eleventh hour compromise was still a bitter pill for many.

At party conventions for the next sixteen years, Arab-American party activists crafting platform language about Middle East issues were forced to learn the art of compromise. While driven by the same core principles that lead to the denunciation of racism and oppression and support for national liberation and human rights, those who fought inside the party committees quickly learned some simple rules:

- If you are not at the table, regressive and gratuitously anti-Arab positions will be proffered.
- If you are at the table, you will spend most of your time moderating the language to make it less regressive and gratuitous, but it will probably not be as critical of Israeli policy as you think it should.

The politics of compromise prevail in virtually every other arena where policy is debated, especially in the U.S. Congress. It is no secret that the influence of forces not prone to support Palestinian rights is paramount both in the electoral campaigns that bring members to Congress and in the resolutions or legislation on which they are called to vote. As noted above, challengers in congressional races are targeted to take the pro-Israel "pledge" in exchange for financial backing or simply to avoid the fate of Paul Findley.[17] Members of Congress, including members of Arab descent, are regularly expected to accede to the positions of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) or suffer the consequences. Whatever Arab-American lobby exists is often relegated to protecting its friends from the most damaging of these anti-Arab initiatives. There are times when even friends succumb, and the next struggle is to keep Arab Americans, as constituents or donors, from walking away angry.

Compromise in the arena of Middle East politics has been a hard pill to swallow for some, but in many ways it has been the price to pay for building coalitions and gaining access. As discussed below, progress and visibility in political discourse are made possible, and even promoted, by this imperfect process.

MAPPING PROGRESS IN SPITE (OR BECAUSE) OF SETBACKS

During the past three decades, Arab-American political activity has resulted in undeniable benefits.

- *Local visibility and support breed respect and build relationships.*

When Arab Americans, with their ethnic agenda, come together as political actors, they are typically rewarded with attention and respect. As they host and attend fundraising events and organize candidate forums and town halls, they create a core of Arab Americans who are viewed as able to deliver volunteers, votes and money. In some areas, Arab Americans have become model organizers. Most local and state candidates are pleased to get 50 voters out for a meeting, so when, as they have in northern Virginia, Michigan and New Jersey, Arab Americans organize forums that attract hundreds of constituents who assemble to enjoy Arabic food and meet and greet the candidates, the political establishment pays attention. The exposure of candidates and party leaders to their Arab-American constituents is extremely important to them. When gubernatorial campaigns in Virginia and New Jersey were contacted in the wake of the 9/11 attacks about Arab American Institute forums scheduled for later that month, the Democratic and Republican candidates in each state encouraged AAI not to cancel. In addition, the forums became the first time all the candidates for governor attended in person, and that sent strong bipartisan messages against anti-Arab backlash and in support of the Arab-American community.[18]

- *Showing up and staying involved promotes access to leadership opportunities.*

While some Arab Americans have scant patience with local political parties, those who dedicate even a little time to party work will be rewarded. The experience of a small group of activists in northern Virginia is illustrative. After local elections in 1985 and 1987, when the Arab-American community in northern Virginia held the first of what would become annual bipartisan Candidate Night *Hafli* ("celebration") events in Tysons Corner, the presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson in 1988 motivated several local Arab American Democrats to run for delegate to the congressional district, state and national conventions. For most, it was a first experience with a party caucus, normally the domain of the party faithful and a well-kept secret. As newcomers with foreign-sounding names, and as Jackson delegate candidates in a state party apparatus backing Dukakis, the Arab Americans were eyed with suspicion. By the end of the primary process, however, the party leadership recognized that the new blood and their supporters would be useful in November.

After those elections, several who ran for delegate were appointed to state or county boards and commissions, including the Board of Commerce, the Virginia Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Board for Aging, the Human Rights Commission, and the Civil Service Board. It did not take long for Arab-American Democrats in Virginia to rise to leadership positions on party committees. Similar experiences took place as a result of Arab-American efforts in Michigan, Ohio, California, Texas and Pennsylvania and other states where organized efforts in 1988 were noticed.

- *Political sophistication is not born of deeper knowledge of the issues but of more experience with the process of political decision-making and with alliances that impact decision-making.*

AAI held a founding meeting in Chicago in 1985. At the behest of AAI's leadership, mayor-elect Harold Washington was invited to address his Arab-American constituents and to announce the

formation of an advisory committee on Arab-American affairs. What was memorable about the evening was the disconnect between some activists in the largely Palestinian-American audience and their understanding of what mayors do. Instead of questioning the new chief executive about schools, city services, jobs, or the advisory committee, members of the audience asked Mr. Washington what he planned to do about anti-Palestinian cartoons in the local paper, or about Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. AAI's leadership reminded the gathering that Mr. Washington was neither the editor of the paper nor the secretary of state but was there to help Chicago's Arab-American constituency get greater access to city services and resources.

Fortunately, the growing sophistication of the past two decades makes that awkward exchange in Chicago a relic of our political past. Many Arab immigrants still view political action through the lens of the Arab-Israeli conflict or as an endless rhetorical battle between an enlightened Arab narrative and an uninformed, Zionized American political discourse. Nonetheless, the last two decades have seen the emergence of a cadre of political actors who have learned both the process and limits of political decision-making, from their own experiences on the campaign trail to the seats of power.

- *For most acts of anti-Arab baiting or discrimination, the potential exists for political redress or retribution.*

Another benefit of remaining at the table of American politics in spite of setbacks is that once relationships are made, most political allies will defend us against acts of bias, baiting or injustice. The Arab-baiting of Ambassador Ghougassian and the formal reprimand for ethnic smear tactics that came from the chair of the Republican National Committee at the request of AAI's Republican chairman of the board, discussed earlier, is one example. When gatekeepers at the 1992 Clinton-Gore campaign were nervous about providing Arab-American Democrats with access to their campaign, a conversation between AAI President James Zogby and Senator Joseph Lieberman resulted in a phone call to campaign manager George Stephanopoulos, who arranged for Zogby to be invited to Little Rock to discuss Arab-American Democratic involvement in the pre-election months. Without having already earned his credentials as someone of proven party loyalty and the ability to energize a constituency, it is doubtful Zogby would have been able to push past the gatekeepers.

Similarly, when the National Democratic Ethnic Coordinating Council (NDECC) was organized in the early 1990s to recapture lost support for the party among "white ethnics," Arab Americans helped lead the effort.[19] That leadership, and the relationships with Democratic activists of Italian, Greek, Polish, Armenian and Irish descent, resulted in alliances that expanded the number and clout of coalition partners ready to respond to Arab-American priorities such as immigrant rights, census inclusion, and action against ethnic-baiting. That leadership also resulted in a seat for Zogby on the executive committee of the Democratic National Committee in 2001. The respect and recognition implicit in the appointment extended to the community. When AAI hosted its pre-presidential leadership conference in Michigan during the fall of 2003, every primary campaign was represented, an unprecedented event that would have been a coup for even larger and older constituency organizations.[20]

- *Political alliances enhance protection of civil rights*

The ability to make and sustain both national and local political alliances, especially in progressive circles, has resulted in the positioning of Arab Americans on the continuum of American civil rights advocacy and history. Particularly after anti-Arab backlash jolted the nation in the years following 9/11, the visibility of and empathy for Arab Americans grew. The racialized treatment of Arabs and Muslims under counter-terrorism policies after 9/11 forged a brotherhood of targets of oppression with other minority communities. Asian, Black and Hispanic advocates recognized the ugliness of racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims and spoke out against it. In the *quid pro quo* of political alliances, it was not surprising that during the heated Supreme Court debate over minority admission policies at the University of Michigan, Arab-American voices from the community's progressive wing were raised on behalf of affirmative action, even though the community does not benefit directly from such policies.[21]

Another example of allies coming to the defense of the community in time of need occurred in the summer of 2004, when it was discovered that in 2002 and 2003 the Department of Homeland Security had requested and received data on Arab ancestry from the U.S. Census Bureau. Not only did an AAI letter of concern about the propriety of such data-sharing gather the immediate support of more than 60 organizations, scholars and community leaders, but the regularly scheduled meeting of the Bureau's national advisory committees that fall was devoted to a discussion of Bureau privacy procedures and how to repair damage to public perceptions. Organizations that took a leading role and drafted resolutions demanding action by the Bureau included the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, the Asian American Justice Center and the American Civil Liberties Union.[22]

- *Don't be too hard on your friends when they disappoint you – you never know when you will need them.*

The temptation to expect consistent and loyal support on issues from elected officials is strong, especially when they are co-ethnics. In the give and take of the political arena, however, the office holder who agrees with one on every issue is rare, and even Arab-American politicians will disappoint. Some voters and donors in the community have a low tolerance for bad votes or lukewarm support. The reality is that even Arab-American members of Congress will not always vote favorably on issues, but their friendship and access can be critical in unexpected and often quiet ways. When victims of airline profiling needed to make their case in the aftermath of 9/11, it was the Arab-American members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Aviation Subcommittee who facilitated congressional hearings and follow-up with the administration.[23]

- *Crises can open doors for agents of change and promote relationships with strange bedfellows.*

The peripheral contacts that existed between Arab Americans and departments of the U.S. administration prior to 9/11 underwent a dramatic shift in scope and depth as a result of the anti-Arab/Muslim backlash. Initial outreach efforts by the FBI and the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division became formal working groups where community grievances, evidence of hate crimes, and public information campaigns were discussed and response strategies coordinated. The civil rights

divisions of virtually every federal agency opened their doors to Arab and Muslim NGOs, eager to find partners with which to tackle the challenges of discrimination and backlash. Arab-American leaders with ties to the Bush White House were instrumental in opening doors to the Department of Treasury, where grievances by Muslim-American charities that were disparately impacted by new anti-terror financial guidelines could be aired.

Discriminatory behavior towards Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 was brought to light and addressed more consistently due, in large measure, to the presence of Arab-American political actors in positions of influence. A team of Arab- and Muslim-American civil rights attorneys at the Department of Justice took the lead both in educating the community about its rights and in pursuing cases brought to the department's attention. At the local and state levels, Arab-American members of civil and human rights commissions became emissaries between their boards and people experiencing discrimination. In one case in 2002, the Fairfax County (Virginia) Human Rights Commission added Middle Eastern ethnicity as an impermissible basis for the denial of housing, in part because of the relationships built with an Arab-American commissioner.

A final observation about the realities of political integration and alliances affecting Arab Americans is related to the institutional endurance of U.S. civil society, where allies and defenders can be found even if they do not agree with all the priorities of the Arab-American community. There was a time in the political development of Arab Americans that activists resided at the margins of American politics, more as protesters than as participants. Their alliances were often with other marginalized players whose positions on issues tended to be as pure as they were disconnected from the views of the general U.S. electorate.

In the course of the political maturation process, alliances have also matured, expanded and diversified due to the experiences outlined above. What is evident is that alliances developed under the bright light of the public policy debate are no longer universal. Arab-American organizations agree to disagree with or even be on the opposing sides of some coalition partners on certain issues. In the intense debate over civil liberties after 9/11, groups like the American Conservative Union, the Cato Institute and the Privacy Coalition lent their support, whether or not they agreed with Arab-American positions in support of immigrant rights. Similarly, partners may support Arab Americans in civil rights and political inclusion issues but that partnership does not extend to support for Arab-Americans' positions on Middle East policy. In fact, Arab Americans probably have more in common with progressive Jewish-American organizations on Middle East policy issues than with most members of the mainstream civil rights community. Groups like Americans for Peace Now routinely use their access and experience to help Arab Americans tamp down the excesses of congressional legislation.

REALITIES, BOUNDARIES AND TRENDS THAT IMPACT ARAB-AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Several aspects of the political climate in which we live suggest trends that would discourage political activity by Arab Americans. The cumulative effect of the excesses of anti-Arab discourse in political and popular culture, security policies that continue to target people on the basis of ethnicity or religion, and the rhetoric of the war on terror create a climate in which the civic and political confidence of Arab Americans, particularly the foreign-born, can be eroded. Individuals who believe their rights are in jeopardy are more apt to experience distrust and apathy, to be less willing to accept

compromise, and to have less respect for government institutions and what they can deliver or protect. The post–9/11 climate of suspicion discourages some Arab Americans from making themselves visible by voting, donating money, or being willing otherwise to risk controversy or embarrassment. The U.S. government's approach to promoting democracy in the Middle East, especially with the invasion of Iraq and perceived anti-Palestinian actions by the Bush administration, have inadvertently encouraged cynicism about, and devaluation of, the benefits of the democratic process.

Another trend that may impact the participation of Arab Americans as a constituency has to do with different messages and identities that compete for Arab-American attention and allegiance. Although a diversity of opinion and ideology among Americans of Arabic-speaking descent has existed for years, most Arab-American organizations have also shared a general consensus about basic domestic and international policy matters: an end to Israeli occupation of Arab land, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon, improved U.S. investment and trade with the Arab world, and so on.

What is apparent in recent years are new voices representing sub- or supra-Arab issues of identity that challenge, or at least dilute, the efforts to project a common political agenda based on consensus positions. Examples include the Lebanese-Americans who have organized around an anti-Syrian agenda and do not relate to an overall Arab-American agenda. Another trend in the post-9/11 climate is an attempt to replace or co-opt the Arab-American identity through meetings and forums, some organized by Department of State appointees, which emphasize an identity as Middle Eastern Americans.[24]

While "Middle Eastern" as an organizing parameter that encompasses both Arab and non-Arab entities is not new and had existed in academic circles and area studies programs, the onset of this identity in the political sphere appears to challenge the pan-Arab identity and ideology of mainstream organizations. Organizing as Middle Eastern Americans offers a different umbrella for Arab minority groups that do not easily adapt to Arab-American identity as well as for non-Arab exile communities such as Afghans and Kurds whose ancestral causes moved to center stage in the Administration's post-9/11 regional offensive.

The Christian identity of organized sub-groups such as Assyrians, Chaldeans and some Copts and Maronites has long distinguished them from the Arab-American fold, as they have preferred to embrace their sectarian roots rather than to join pan-ethnic alliances. While these separate identities prevailed well before 9/11, the backlash and its ugly anti-Arab/Muslim sentiments pushed some Christian minority groups further away. In a formal letter to AAI in October 2001, the Coalition for American Assyrians and Maronites formally requested that their populations be removed from AAI's demographic estimates of Christians from the Arab world living in the United States.[25] Shortly thereafter an online campaign launched by an Assyrian advocacy organization resulted in over 3,000 emails to the AAI mailbox stating simply, "Assyrians are not Arabs."

Another example of shifting boundaries and competing voices is the rise of Muslim-American leaders and organizations whose multi-ethnic constituencies have engendered a separate track on political strategies that, while often intersecting with secular Arab Americans and supported by them, also includes agenda items unique to Muslims. The Muslim-American effort at constituent support, outreach and advocacy has grown exponentially since 9/11. Ironically, some political actors have been more comfortable with interlocutors who organize as Muslims rather than Arabs. This is the

case, for example, with the Anti-Defamation League's outreach efforts on religious tolerance issues, and with the Bush White House, whose Office of Public Liaison outreach has been anchored not in ethnic but in faith-based alliances.

In spite of factors that have recently discouraged individual citizens from trusting the political process, or even the voices competing for their allegiance in the arena of ethnic identity, there remains a momentum inherent to politics that continues to attract and motivate Arab Americans. For some, the adversity of the post-9/11 backlash itself nurtured a desire to fight back against anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry and to be a part of the healing process. It has been a period in which parents have spoken at their children's schools about culture and religion and heritage. Community activists have cooperated with local officials to organize Arab-American heritage celebrations, and social service centers and mosques have been more likely to expand the reach of their charitable programs to benefit the community at large. In places like New York, Dearborn and northern Virginia, public safety officers of Arab descent have become important symbols of protection for vulnerable immigrant communities as well as cultural ambassadors to local governments and the broader community.

The cultural and political wakeup call of 9/11 was enough to motivate some individuals to step into the public square to seek elected or appointed office, even if they had no pre-9/11 inclination to serve. There are, in fact, more Americans of Arab descent filing as candidates today than ever before. Whatever their motivation, the impact of these candidacies on broader community participation and their ability to bring new players into politics is complex. Every candidate who files, forms a campaign committee, holds a fundraiser or speaks at a forum has probably mobilized a cadre of friends and relatives to support the effort. In communities like Dearborn, the field of political candidates has perhaps grown faster than the capacity of the constituency to support them. An example of campaign overkill occurred in the 2004 school board election in that city, when at least three Arab-American candidates were on the ballot but none garnered enough votes to win.

Another reality confronting the Arab American political scene is the "impulsive candidate syndrome," whereby activists leap-frog over the accepted route to candidacy and decide to run for U.S. Congress, without holding local office or earning local party credentials. Such premature campaigns run the risk of sapping scarce resources at best and embarrassing the community at worst. Even failing campaigns can be useful, however, in getting the attention of political players and opening doors for future, more attainable aspirations.

Perhaps the most optimistic reality about American political participation is the cumulative impact of engagement, training and volunteerism. Party politics is an arena perpetually in search of people who are loyal and willing to donate time and money, and those who play by the rules can anticipate protection, mobility and access. While there is the burnout factor in all political circles, there is also the reality that local and state parties are hungry for volunteers, and the often tedious work of party politics provides opportunities for leadership, support and promotion.

CONCLUSION

The experience of Arab Americans who organize around an ethnic agenda in American politics has been shaped by the challenges of bigotry and pro-Israel bias, but also by the protection and support of parties and allies that come with direct engagement in the process. In every arena of political

life, Arab-American activists have developed skills and alliances that guarantee their inclusion in the decision-making process as party members, candidates, elected officials, commissioners and volunteers. The learning curve for local community leaders, once they are exposed to the process and rewards of political life, is shrinking, as is the gap among ideology, policy expectations and strategies for change.

The long-term benefits of political activism and campaign experience include relationships with those in government or civil society who can assist the community in times of crisis and help to fill needs or redress injustice. The compromises reached over controversial policy issues, while painful for some, are stepping stones to change and the key to building coalitions both among co-ethnics of differing political stripes or among partners in other constituencies who share common interests. While the identity and boundaries that shape Arab Americans will continue to be fluid and even disruptive at times, consistent strategies to promote and sustain a secular Arab-American political presence will prove irreversible.

NOTES

1. In 1870, Congress amended naturalization requirements and limited eligibility to "aliens being free white persons, and to aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent" (Act of July 14, 1870 [amending §2169 Rev. Statutes]). The Chinese Exclusion Act of May 6, 1882, §14 (22 Stat. 58) was the first of a number of laws excluding Asian immigrants from citizenship. The question arose of whether Arab immigrants (generally referred to then as "Syrians") should be classified as white and therefore eligible for citizenship, or as Asian and therefore ineligible. Some lower court judges held in 1913 and 1914 that Syrians were not white. *See Ex parte Shahid*, 205 F. 812 (E.D.S.C. 1913); *In re Dow*, 213 F. 355 (E.D.S.C. 1914); *Ex parte Dow* 211 F. 486 (E.D.S.C. 1914). A federal appeals court ruled in 1915 that Syrians were white. *Dow v. United States*, 226 F. 145 (4th Cir. 1915). For a short account of the history of racial classifications in the citizenship area, *see* Marian L. Smith, **"**INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898," 34 *Prologue Magazine* (Summer 2002), at http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2002/summer/immigration-law-1.html.

2. Alan Dehmer, "Birmingham, Alabama: The Politics of Survival" in James Zogby, ed., *Taking Root/ Bearing Fruit: The Arab-American Experience* (American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1984), pp. 32-39, at 38-39.

3. On April 18, 1996, Israeli artillery guns positioned on the Lebanese-Israeli border fired shells into the U.N. compound in Qana, Lebanon, killing over 100 civilian refugees. Barbara Crosette, "U.N. Report Suggests Israeli Attack Was Not a Mistake," *The New York Times*, May 7, 1996; Thomas L. Friedman, "Foreign Affairs: Lebanon's Aftermath," *The New York Times*, May 15, 1996.

4. On September 13, 1993, President Bill Clinton looked on while Chairman Yasir Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands for the first time and signed a "Declaration of Principles" for peace.

5. *See* James Zogby and Helen Hatab Samhan, "The Politics of Exclusion: A Report on Arab-Baiting in the 1986 Elections" (Arab American Institute, 1986).

6. During the 1983 Philadelphia mayoral race, candidate Wilson Goode returned money raised at the home of a Palestinian-American constituent after being baited by his opponent for taking "Arab money." In the 1984 presidential race, Walter Mondale returned contributions by Lebanese-American businessmen. Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois, who had served in the Senate since 1967, lost his race for reelection that year. AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee), which backed the campaign of challenger Paul Simon, claimed that Percy's support for U.S. sales of the AWACS airborne surveillance system to Saudi Arabia had mobilized the pro-Israel vote and was responsible for Simon's

victory. For a different analysis of the election results, *see* James Zogby, "Washington Watch," Aug. 16, 1993, available at http://www.aaiusa.org/wwatch_archives/081693.htm.

7. Zogby and Samhan, "The Politics of Exclusion," op. cit., pp. 9-14.

8. One example involves the 1986 candidacy of Faye Williams for Louisiana's 8th congressional district. The Louisianans for American Security Political Action Committee's chair Sheldon Beychok wrote to the candidate asking that she clarify her Middle East position by signing a statement that reaffirmed her support for keeping Israel as the only U.S. ally in the region, opposing negotiations with the PLO, calling the PLO a "terrorist organization that murders women and children," supporting moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and rejecting a Palestinian state on the "so-called 'West Bank.'" (Letter from Sheldon Beychok to Faye Williams, Oct. 14, 1986). *See* Helen Hatab Samhan, "Politics of Exclusion: The Arab American Experience," 16 *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Winter, 1987), pp. 11-28, at pp. 24-25.

9. James Zogby, "Still vulnerable in America," *Al-Ahram Weekly On-line*, July 16-22, 1998, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1998/386/in3.htm.

10. The ad, entitled "Why Is a U.S. Senator Trying to Make It Easy to Export Terrorism to the U.S.?" is available at http://www.americanpatrol.com/WAR-TERRORISM/BinLadenSpencerFAIRAd1999.html.

11. The mailing noted that Ghougassian "was born and raised in the Middle East and has been out of the United States for the last eight years in Arab countries. He only returned nine months ago to run for Congress and has been influenced by Arab oil interests." Ghougassian had served as Peace Corps Director in Yemen, 1982-1985, and as U.S. Ambassador to Qatar from 1985 to 1989. Robert B. Gunnison, "Toward the Next Election," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 2, 1990; Barry M. Horstman, "Campaigns; Mud Flies in Final Days of Campaigns," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1990.

12. Rollins wrote a letter to Ghougassian saying, "I can only tell you how appalled I was to learn of the mailer used against you by your primary opponent." Ralph Z. Hallow, "Arab-baiting 'appalls' GOP campaign chief," *The Washington Times*, June 4, 1990.

13. Allison Stevens, "Arab-Americans Fear Bias," *The Hill*, Oct. 10, 2001. A copy of the flyer is in the files of the Arab American Institute.

14. Tony Sayegh, the son of Lebanese immigrants, ran against Amy Paulin for State Assembly in Westchester County. Paulin reportedly urged a reporter to "take a look" at the names on Sayegh's campaign filing, noting that "fifty percent are Arab names." Robert George, "Westchester Race War?," *New York Post*, Nov. 4, 2002.

15. Michelle Ku, "Isaac Supporters Deny Claims of Anti-Semitism Fliers Placed on Cars During Sabbath Services," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, Nov. 4, 2002. Isaac was elected and remains mayor of Lexington as of this writing.

16. The statehood plan, one of 11 submitted by the Jackson campaign and accepted by the platform committee, was one of four debated on the floor. Some 1,200 Jackson delegates and 100 Simon and Dukakis delegates signed a floor petition circulated by statehood supporters. *See* Sally Ethelston, "[Palestinian] Self-Determination Debated at Democratic Convention," *Sada Al-Watan*, July 23-29, 1988; Arab American Institute, *Ending the Deadly Silence: Opening an American Debate on Palestinian Rights* (1990).

17. U.S. Rep. Paul Findley (R-IL), the target of a national campaign by pro-Israel forces who were alarmed by his positions on U.S. Middle East policy, was defeated in his bid for reelection to Congress in 1982. *See* Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* (Lawrence Hills Books, 2003).

18. Ralph Siegel, "Schundler, McGreevey pitch their candidacies at Arab American conference," Associated Press, Sept. 23, 2001; Matthew Mosk et al., "METRO, In Brief," *Washington Post*, Oct. 1, 2001.

19. James Zogby was elected as co-convener of the NDECC in 1995, and in 2001 he was elected to the Executive Committee of the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

20. *See* Report of AAI's National Leadership Conference, Oct. 17, 2003, at http://www.aaiusa.org/ PDF/NLC04report.pdf. Press coverage of the candidates' attendance is also available at http://www. aaiusa.org/conference.htm.

21. The cases were *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 244 (2003) and *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003). Persons of Arab descent are classified by the federal government as white and therefore ineligible for minority set-aside programs. *See* Helen Hatab Samhan, "Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab-American Experience," in Michael W. Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Temple University Press, 1999).

22. *See* AAI Foundation letter to Charles Louis Kincannon, Director of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Aug. 12, 2004, available at http://www.aaiusa.org/census_letter.htm; U.S. Census Bureau, "U.S. Census Bureau Announces Policy Regarding Sensitive Data," Press Release, Aug. 30, 2004, available at http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/directors_corner/ 002491.html; Secretary of Commerce's Advisory Committee on the Decennial Census, "Resolution by the Secretary of Commerce's Advisory Committee on the Decennial Census on special tabulations by the U.S. Census Bureau on racial and ethnic groups for other federal agencies," Nov. 10, 2004, available at http://www. olemiss.edu/depts/population_studies/ WorkingPapers/CensusHomlandSecurity_WORKINGPAPER. pdf, p. 30.

23. John Elias Baldacci (D-ME) and Nick J. Rahall II (D-WV).

24. One example, the Middle Eastern American Convention for Freedom and Democracy in the Middle East (MEAC), convened in Washington, D.C. on October 1, 2004 under the sponsorship of the Lebanese Christian, Coptic, and Assyrian (also known as Chaldean and Syriac) communities, including organizations such as the American Lebanese Coalition, U.S. Copts, and the Assyrian American National Federation (AANF).

25. Letter to Helen Samhan, Arab American Institute, Oct. 25, 2001, from the Coalition of American Assyrians and Maronites. *See* Assyrian International News Agency, "Coalition of American Assyrians and Maronites Rebukes Arab American Institute," available at http://www.aina.org/releases/caamletter.htm.

Being Part of the Solution*

JOHN H. SUNUNU

The United States has become a very different place for Palestinian Americans during the last few decades. Let me illustrate with an anecdote. In 1980 there was an open U.S. senatorial race in New Hampshire. Senator John Durkin, who had been elected in 1974 in the post-Watergate swing to the Democratic Party, was up for reelection, and it looked as if a Republican might have a good chance to beat him. I was an engineer, loved my profession, and had never been seriously involved in politics, but I always liked to experiment, and so I entered the Republican primary. I lost to New Hampshire Attorney General Warren Rudman by a few thousand votes and then worked extremely hard to help him win the election – which he did.

Later I came to Washington and spoke to all of the consultants, those wise heads who know how to run campaigns, and they told me, "New Hampshire is a Yankee state; there is no way an Arab-American can win an election in a Yankee state like New Hampshire." Up until that time, no one whose last name ended in a vowel (except for a couple of people whose names ended in a silent "e") had ever been elected to the governorship of New Hampshire. I ran for governor in 1982 anyway, and I was elected.

Twenty years later, in 2002, my son ran for the United States Senate. He had to defeat the incumbent U.S. senator in the Republican primary, but he ran an amazing campaign and won. He then ran another amazing campaign in the general election and defeated the incumbent governor, who was then running for the Senate. The press, however, didn't give him credit for his fine campaigns. Instead, the journalists' comment was, "Well, of course, the only reason he won in New Hampshire is that his name was Sununu."

There is much in that anecdote that suggests how Arab Americans can do things right. The first thing to remember is that the American political system is absolutely receptive to what we would like to do – to what we have to do. No group in the United States, however, has handled the political process worse or been less effective for over half a century than Arab Americans. We must change. We have to do things right.

A little bit of our history will help tell us where we are and point to some of the things we have to do and undo so that we can move forward in a way that is constructive and effective. First of all, we must understand what the American system is all about. Unfortunately, most of us learn the system well in grade school and high school, and then make the mistake of reading the newspapers. The American media has absolutely no understanding of what the American political system is all about. It is popular today to attack the process in Washington, for example, because of gridlock. That is a favorite theme of the press, and this issue suggests the way the press imposes its ignorance upon us through repetition. When I went to school, it was not called gridlock. It was called checks and

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This is a lightly edited version of Governor Sununu's extemporaneous remarks at the conference.

balances, and it was considered good. It is, in fact, a fundamental strength that the system demands debate, discussion and argument, not in twenty minutes, not in twenty days or twenty months, but over a long period of time so that real coalitions are formed, real edges are worked off policies, and the policies that are ultimately adopted meet the challenges of the day.

As an engineer, the hardest thing for me to understand when I became governor was that gridlock and the lack of efficiency in the process of changing policy was one of its fundamental strengths. The press will never understand it. In that context, I am often asked whether Dan Rather and colleagues are biased or ignorant, and my answer is always the same: yes. They know not and care not.

I emphasize this because when we talk about political involvement, we are talking about lobbying. The press, which has decided that lobbying is bad, attaches every pejorative word there is to lobby-ists. What the press does not know is that the system was designed to be lobbied.

This is a democracy, in which those we elect are elected to listen to us. They listen to us whether we are individuals, or organizations, or institutions. The only thing wrong about lobbying is failing to do it. I cannot stress too strongly that you fail in your responsibility as a citizen who cares about an issue or a policy if you do not lobby.

Some people lobby very well and we ought to copy what they do. They get attacked for being efficient. We ought not to attack our enemies for being efficient in carrying out their responsibil-ity to lobby; instead, we ought to attack our friends and ourselves for failing to do what we need to do. The American system, which is an amazing process, is designed to hear different opinions and to provide a space for debates in which people challenge each other.

Arab Americans have had a difficult time conveying what we believe in, and then making it part of the policy process. There are a number of reasons for this. Arab Americans are as diverse an ethnic col-lection as you can find, but the challenge for successful participation in the political process is to have a unified message. If we cannot agree about what is right, if we cannot frame our message in ways that we understand and agree with among ourselves, how can we expect it to be sorted out by those whom we ask to help make policy that reflects our goals? It is our responsibility to participate in the political process, and if we choose to fulfill that obligation, we must find a unified message that makes sense.

When I was chief of staff for President George H. W. Bush, I discovered that Arab Americans had never had an opportunity for a formal meeting with the president of the United States. AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) often used to arrange for the Israel lobby to talk to the president, but as of 1989 there had never been a significant meeting of Arab Americans in the White House with a sitting president. I went to President Bush and he agreed to meet with a large group in the Roosevelt Room.

We put the meeting together. We invited an Iraqi American, a Syrian American, Lebanese Americans, a Jordanian American, Orthodox Christians, Maronites, Muslims – about 15 or 17 people whom I had "brilliantly" (and when I finish the story you can decide how "brilliant" it was) selected to come in and talk to the president of the United States. The meeting was set for 3:00 o'clock in the Roosevelt Room. In order to prepare for it, I arranged a lunch beforehand at a hotel across the street from the White House, and I asked the hotel to set a table just as we would find it when we arrived in the Roosevelt Room. I sat everybody down where they would be seated in the White House and said, "We are going to decide on what we are going to tell the president and then we are going to rehearse." We decided

upon a common message. This person was going to speak first, that person was going to comment next, and so on, so that everyone would have a chance to talk. We rehearsed what the first person would say; we rehearsed what the next person would say; we went around and did it two or three times.

When everyone was settled in the Roosevelt Room, I brought the president in from the Oval Office. He was as gracious as always. He had his picture taken with each individual and chatted with everyone. Then we all sat down. After I made some general comments, Gentleman #1 spoke, repeating word for word exactly everything we had rehearsed – except that at the end of his remarks he added a little bit about his own personal concerns on some issue.

Lady #2 presented her point exactly as we had rehearsed – except that she felt obliged to respond to what was added to Gentleman #1's remarks. By the time we got to the fifth or sixth speaker, everyone was arguing with everyone else and the discussion had become rather heated and unfocused. After 45 minutes they left and the president and I went back to the Oval Office.

"John," the president asked, "what was that?"

"Mr. President," I replied, "now you understand the Middle East."

It is a funny story, and a true story, but it is also a tragic story that helps explain why we have had 60 years of the worst, least constructive, most counterproductive involvement in the political process of any group in the United States. That has to change. If we cannot talk among ourselves and decide upon a message, there is no hope.

The one issue that is central for most Arab Americans is the issue of Palestine and Israel. It is a significant issue to coalesce around, both because of its timeliness and, most notably, because it is the single most important Middle East issue affecting the long-term security agenda of the United States. That is the message we must emphasize. That is what we have failed to communicate.

The problems in southern Lebanon will be resolved if a Palestinian state at peace with its neighbor in Israel is established. Most of the rallying cries of the Iraqi extremists will disappear if this issue is resolved. There will be more cooperation from the Saudis and Emirates after the United States establishes credibility on this fundamental issue. Palestine is important as our issue, not only because it is important to us, but because a Palestinian state at peace with Israel is important to the United States. We must talk about it in that context.

In many of the critical areas of the Middle East, the internal differences overwhelm the big issues. The issue in Iraq right now is a confessional issue: the confessional differences among the Kurds, the Sunnis, and Shi'as. Each of these groups seems to want 100 percent of a small cake when it could have 35 or 40 percent of the entire bakery. My friends in Lebanon want us to reconcile the confessional differences before we reconcile the issues associated with geopolitics. This is all counterproductive. I guarantee that the congressman from Iowa or the congresswoman from Kansas could not care less about those confessional differences, but they do care about the strategic interests of the United States. Until we talk to them in that context, until we talk about what their responsibility is in that context, we will not be heard.

We must also speak to each other about the little hyphen that shows up in news articles. The articles never say "Palestinian" but, rather, "Palestinian-terrorist." It is never "Arab American;" it is "Arab-American-extremist." That is because we have failed to understand that terrorism is like pregnancy. There is no such thing as being a little bit pregnant and there is no such thing as just being a little bit

supportive of terrorism. It is all or nothing. When we are asked to condemn terrorism, we agree that it is terrible. We agree that the suicide bombers are terrible. We agree that all those acts of terror are terrible – and then we cannot resist the temptation to say "BUT we understand it," or "BUT it is justified." Until we learn to condemn terrorism without the "BUT," we have no credibility. We cannot be part of the political process if we do not understand that.

A second issue, one that I believe will probably become a major issue as we learn to deal with the issue of terrorism, and the hyphen, and the BUT, is corruption. I am absolutely convinced that the chaos in the election in Palestine was due in great part to the issue of corruption striking home. Once again, we can have no BUT in discussing that issue. Terrorism and corruption are the surrogate issues that can destroy whatever arguments we make on the important geopolitical issues of the time.

So where are we now? We are at a point where we have to commit ourselves to operating intelligently. We have to take the proper position on those ancillary issues that otherwise undermine our credibility and we have to speak of our concerns with a unified message in a context that says, "This message is important to the long- and short-range strategic interests of the United States." If we cannot fit our political agenda into that framework, we will not be successful. American political decision-makers are not interested in the rationalizations and justifications and condemnations of what happened in the past; instead, they need to hear from whomever is lobbying them why what they are being asked to do, as a member of Congress, the President's office, or the State Department, is in the best interest of the United States. They do not need to hear what is fair, what is just, what one group or the other is "owed" or what you have to give our group because you gave concessions to others. The key is that what they are being asked to do is in the best interests of the United States.

Let me describe an agenda for the future. I suggest that our future constructive political involvement requires three intelligent steps. The three steps do not have to be taken sequentially and can be taken simultaneously, but they are all necessary, and they are related to lobbying.

The first has to do with image, which means we must first lobby ourselves to agree about what the message is, and to unify our voices. Remember that whenever there is a division within a group over an issue, the result is to give the opposition the luxury of identifying the fraction of the group with which it agrees and then saying, "We're right because so-and-so says the same thing." Dissenting among ourselves as we debate issues is fine, but when we finish the internal debate we must go out in lockstep or we will not be successful. We have to eliminate our confessional differences and we have to talk as an ethnic group with a specific objective in mind.

The second step is hard. We must lobby the Arab world. Nothing is more destructive than the images of anti-Americanism that are received here. Nothing is more destructive than the threats and the angry rhetoric that we hear. Nothing creates an easier target for our opponents, and we must educate the Arab world to understand that. There is a belief in the Arab world that rhetoric of that kind helps move things forward, but that is wrong. In our system, you must eliminate the negative aspects of issues before you are allowed to present the positive.

When I speak with political and business leaders in the Arab world and the talk turns to the issue of Palestine-Israel, I find them frustrated that we are not as effective as the pro-Israel lobby. They want to know how they can help, and I usually focus on the training of articulate voices.

Every night there are talk shows in the United States. In theory, there are two sides to every issue, but most of the time the programs cannot find a rational voice from the Arab world to fill the chair. Unfortunately, most Arab leaders do not appreciate the impact that something like that can have on this political system. They fail to understand that in political debate the pebble in the shoe is more important than a single bolt of lightning, and that the best lobbying is a pebble that stays in a shoe forever. We need a core of rational voices to provide a visible presence and to debate the issues of Middle East policy constructively.

Those of us who have relationships abroad have to talk to our friends and begin to explain to them that these things are crucial. I am not optimistic about our success in this endeavor, but I think it is as important as anything else. People overseas must begin to invest in the education of young men and women who are articulate enough to go on television and talk about the issues in the way that I have outlined here, so they can successfully communicate with and lobby the American public as well as the American policymakers.

There is another thing we can teach our friends in the Arab world. They think that the big corporations that do business there are going to lobby in their interest. That will never happen. Those companies understand they have too much to lose in other parts of the world, and so they will not risk aggressive lobbying for the Arab world. The Arab world must understand that it should develop relationships with smaller companies, for which doing business over there is almost everything. Paradoxical as it may seem, if a company in Peoria knocks on the door of the congressman or congresswoman from Peoria, it really makes no difference whether the company is Exxon or the hardware store down the street: it will be listened to.

The third point is the one I touched on earlier. We have to begin to lobby Congress in a constructive way, with the message framed around the strategic interests of the United States. We have to talk about it without emotion, in a way that explains why what we are recommending is the best policy for this country.

I am absolutely convinced that today there is no problem of access. The relatively new group called the American Task Force for Palestine, for example, has done a wonderful job. It is now brought in on all the critical discussions on the Palestinian-Israeli issue. It has demonstrated that there are ways of becoming very effective in communicating with the policy leaders if you speak with one voice and focus on what is in the best interest of the United States.

These are critical times. Let me add one last point that I consider crucial. I believe most of the Arab-American organizations are making a mistake by permitting themselves to be distracted by participating in ancillary issues. Let me give you an example. With all due respect to its importance for many of us as individuals, it is a mistake for us to dilute the message by participating in the debate on immigration. It wastes our efforts. It distracts us, it dilutes our basic message and it creates new enemies. We cannot let ancillary issues be the ones that consume most of our time and resources. The geopolitical issues of the region are the ones we should focus on.

Again, these are critical times. They are not the easiest of times to be an Arab American; they are not the easiest of times to be an Arab in the world, or the easiest of times in the Arab world. But it is because they are critical times that we must do things correctly, and we must figure out how to be part of the solution.

Participant Biographies

ISMAEL AHMED co-founded ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) in 1971 and has been its executive director since1983. He was a contributing author of *Arabs in America: Myths and Reality* and is a Founding Member of the Arab American Voter's Registration & Education Committee. Mr. Ahmed is also Vice-Chair of New Detroit, a Trustee of both the Henry Ford Health System and the Dearborn Community Arts Council, and a Board Member of Channel 56 WTVS and of the Dearborn Arab American Council. He founded the Earth Island Orchestra and the Southeast Dearborn Arab Village Street Fair, and was a Founding Board Member of Casa de Unidad, a Southwest Detroit Hispanic arts organization.

KATHLEEN CHRISTISON is a free-lance writer whose work focuses on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. She is the author of *Perceptions of Palestine: Their Influence on U.S. Middle East Policy* and *The Wound of Dispossession: Telling the Palestinian Story*. Ms. Christison was a political analyst for the Central Intel-ligence Agency in Saigon and Washington during the Vietnam War years and later covered the Middle East for that agency. She has published articles in *Foreign Policy*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, the *Washington Post*, the *Baltimore Sun*, *Newsday* and other newspapers and journals, as well as in two encyclopedias on the Middle East.

GARY GERSTLE, professor of history at Vanderbilt University, is the author of *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960*, and *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*. He is coeditor of *Ruling America: A History of Wealth and Power in a Democracy*; *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*; and *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*; and coauthor of two textbooks, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People* and *America Transformed: A History of the United States Since 1900*. He is currently completing *America's Peculiar State: Public Governance from the Revolution to the Present*.

YVONNE YAZBECK HADDAD is professor of the history of Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. Her numerous authored and coauthored books include *Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today*; *Not Quite American? The Shaping of Arab and Muslim Identity in the United States*; *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*; *Daughters of Sarah and Hagar: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*; *Mission to America: Five Muslim Sects in North America*, and *Islamic Values in the United States*. Dr. Haddad is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and former editor of *Muslim World Quarterly*.

ABDEEN M. JABARA, a civil rights attorney, founded the Law Student's Civil Rights Research Council while he was studying at the Wayne State University Law School. During the mid–1970s, he was active in exposing the federal government's "Operation Boulder" program which included deportations,

surveillance and harassment campaigns against Arabs and Arab-Americans, including surveillance of Mr. Jabara himself. An executive committee member of the American–Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee since its founding, and its president in 1986-1990, Mr. Jabara has written numerous articles and lectured extensively at universities about civil rights and foreign policy issues. He was also coeditor of *The Arab World from Nationalism to Revolution*.

JEN'NAN GHAZAL READ, assistant professor of sociology at the University of California, Irvine, is the author of *Culture, Class, and Work among Arab-American Women*. She is guest editor of "The Politics of Veiling in Comparative Perspective: Muslim Integration in the United States and France," a special issue of the *Sociology of Religion* (scheduled 2007). The author of "Family, Religion, and Work among Arab-American Women," Dr. Read's coauthored articles also include "Gender Inequalities in U.S. Adult Health: The Interplay of Race and Ethnicity," "Gender Disparities in Adult Health: An Examination of Three Measures of Morbidity," and "Racial Context of Origin, Black Immigration, and the U.S. Black/White Health Disparity."

HELEN HATAB SAMHAN, Executive Director of the Arab American Institute Foundation and director of its Census Information Center, regularly presents testimony before federal agencies and the U.S. Congress. She served earlier as assistant director of the American–Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Ms. Samhan's articles and book chapters include "Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab American Experience," "Arab American Organizations and Political Activism," "Arab Americans and the Elections of 1988," and "The Politics of Exclusion: the Arab American Experience." She is a member of the U.S. Bureau of the Census' advisory committee for the 2010 Census and of the advisory board of the Arab American National Museum.

RONALD R. STOCKTON is professor of political science at the University of Michigan – Dearborn. His research experience includes positions as co–Principal Investigator of the Detroit Arab American Study, 2002-2003; director, Conflict in Complex Organizations, 1992-1997; director, Intifada Deaths Study, 1988-1992; and director, Palestinian Immigrants Study, 1976. Dr. Stockton is the author of *Decent and in Order: Conflict, Christianity, and Polity in a Presbyterian Congregation* and *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, a curriculum unit for high schools, as well as of articles such as "The Presbyterian Divestiture Vote and the Jewish Response," "A Matter of Honor: An Incident in the Damascus Souk," "The Falwell Core: An Empirical Analysis," and "Ethnic Archetypes and the Arab Image."

PHILIPPA STRUM, Director of the Division of U.S. Studies at the Wilson Center, is a political scientist specializing in U.S. government and constitutional law, civil liberties and human rights, and women, law and politics. A professor emerita of the City University of New York, she has taught and lectured widely in the U.S. and abroad, including in Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt and Palestine. Her books and articles include *The Women Are Marching: The Second Sex in the Palestinian Revolution*; *When the Nazis Came to Skokie: Freedom for the Speech We Hate*; and *Louis D. Brandeis: Justice for the People*. She edited the Wilson Center's *Muslims in the United States: Demography, Beliefs, Institutions* and *Muslims in the United States: Identity, Influence, Innovation*.

MICHAEL W. SULEIMAN is University Distinguished Professor at Kansas State University, where he has taught since 1965. His numerous books include *The Arab-American Experience in the United States and Canada: A Classified Annotated Bibliography*; *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (editor and co-author); *U.S. Policy on Palestine from Wilson to Clinton* (editor and coauthor); *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change* (coeditor and coauthor); *The Arabs in the Mind of America*; *American Images of Middle East Peoples: Impact of the High School*; and *Political Parties in Lebanon: The Challenge of a Fragmented Political Culture*, many of which have been translated into Arabic. Dr. Suleiman is Special Consultant and Historian for the Arab American National Museum and a member of the editorial board of the *Arab Studies Quarterly*.

JOHN H. SUNUNU, President of JHS Associates, Ltd., was Governor of New Hampshire from 1983 to 1989. He became Chief of Staff to the President of the United States in 1989 and served in that position until 1992. Governor Sununu had earlier been Associate Dean of the College of Engineering and Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at MIT, as well as President of JHS Engineering Company and Thermal Research Inc. In 1992-1998, he co-hosted CNN's "Crossfire." A Visiting Professor of Practice in Public Service at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in 2003-2004, Governor Sununu also co-chaired the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board, Nuclear Energy Task Force in 2004.