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What's Going On In the Macomb, Wayne, and Oakland Counties; Is There A Link Between Arab American Acculturation and Perceived Prejudice?

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**What's Going On In the Macomb, Wayne, and Oakland Counties;
Is There A Link Between Arab American Acculturation and
Perceived Prejudice?**

by

Justin Du Mouchel

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree**

of

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

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**Sociology
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What's Going On In the Macomb, Wayne, and Oakland Counties; Is There A Link Between Arab American Acculturation and Perceived Prejudice?

By Justin Du Mouchel

Abstract: *Arab Americans are a growing segment of the U.S. population. Issues like anti-Arab prejudice are becoming more visible, but few studies have considered how the problem might be viewed by an Arab American community member. This study asks the question: does acculturation within the Arab American community have an effect on the amount of perceived prejudice the group senses? Secondary data from the Detroit Arab American Study was used to test for a relationship between perceived prejudice as measured by “American Media Bias”, and acculturation within the Arab American community as measured by “Arab Acts” and “Arab News”. Findings show a positive relationship between acculturation within the Arab American community and the perception of prejudice by the members of the group. The results imply that measurement of perceived prejudice by the use of measuring perceptions of media bias could be a promising way to determine how perceived prejudice is shaped.*

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Introduction

For a lengthy period after the 9-11 attacks, there were numerous reports of people equating Middle Easterners or Arab Americans in the continental U.S. with the perpetrators of the September 11th events, resulting in aggression toward these groups. Much of the aggression involved violence, property crimes, and hateful words toward people perceived to have been Arab or Muslim (http://www.adl.org/terrorism_america/adl_responds.asp). Historically, the targets of anti-Arab aggression tend to be non-Arabs from the Middle East, who become lumped together in a kind of generalized Muslim or Arab identity (Johnson 1992). People who commit anti-Arab acts must not be aware of the diversity in the Middle East. There is also a considerable diversity amongst Arab-Americans. There are roughly 3.5 million Arab Americans in the U.S., and they are one of the more heterogeneous populations in the country. According to the Arab American Institute, the transplants have immigrated to the United States from many countries, with the majority coming from Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Palestine (<http://www.aaiusa.org/arab-americans/22/demographics>). While literature on the shaping of Arab American identity and prejudice against Arab Americans exists, few studies have looked at whether acculturation within the Arab American community is related to group members' sensing prejudice from other groups. Thus, this study's research question is; does acculturation within the Arab American community have an effect on the amount of perceived prejudice the group senses? My hypothesis is that Arab Americans who have undergone more acculturation within their group will perceive more prejudice than those Arab Americans who have undergone less of the process.

Acculturation, Prejudice, and Arab American Identity

The term “Arab American” is more ambiguous than it sounds and spans many different cultures, and generations. In addition to comprising people of many different faiths, the term covers national origins, immigrants, and those who are American citizens. While research exists on Arab Americans,

the content of the research tends mostly to do with Arab American identity, and how that identity is shaped (David 2007; Nagel 2004). For example, a number of studies exist about how political mobilization and participation leads to increased self-identification with the Arab American identity (e.g. Tam Cho, Gimpel & Wu 2006). There are also studies showing how ethnic identity and political participation have come together and augmented over time as communication technologies have improved (Nagel & Staeheli 2004).

The idea that identity is malleable and re-created through social interactions receives much focus in the research. Two literature reviews spent much time showing how the Arab American identity was first created, then continued to change over time. Both Gary David (2007) and Nadine Naber (2000) discuss at length expositions of the evolution of the term “Arab American”. Apparently, earlier Middle Eastern and North African migrants were much more likely to be Christians, and made large efforts to blend in with “average” Americans by downplaying their ethnic culture and background. Some of the immigrants went so far as to make their names more Anglicized in addition to adopting the dominant culture. But the researchers also show how successive waves of immigrants have been less interested in acculturation, and how they have become more Muslim and nationalistic about their countries of origin.

David (2007) addresses the changing priorities of the immigrants by mentioning that earlier groups would tend to immigrate due to financial reasons, and therefore have lower socioeconomic status (SES). To be clear, socioeconomic status is traditionally defined as an individual's level of income, educational achievement, and their occupation. This composite measure is used as an indicator of a person's relative position in society. Later groups were moving to escape political instability, and violence. Both authors make it clear that the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 was a major turning point for relations between Arab Americans and the larger U.S. population. The authors attribute the change to a lot of negative media portrayals of Middle Easterners in news reports and movies (Naber 2000). These

kinds of images of Arab Americans helped to create a monolithic persona, a negative depiction of what Arab Americans are. The monolithic persona is a new identity that willfully erases the distinctions between different Arab Americans by giving them a single identity. Naber (2000) also mentions the idea of neocolonialism as being a process by which Arab Americans were conceptualized as belonging to an out-group that is uniform in culture, language, intent, and is subordinate to the dominant group. An additional study about anti-Arab prejudice uses a similar idea called social identity theory, which describes how people in a dominant group create an opposition group to feel better about their own personal status and self-esteem (Johnson 1992). Since the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, other major military conflicts in the Middle East have only made the problem of negative portrayals of Arab Americans worse (Naber 2000). Even though such negative portrayals exist, individual Arab immigrants still have the option of trying to adopt a host country's culture.

Acculturation is a step in the assimilation process where a person adopts major changes regarding their beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes so they are more like the people of the host country (Faragallah, Schumm & Webb 1997). In other words, someone undergoing acculturation is adopting the culture of another group. Acculturation can be thought of in different ways. Sodowky and Plake (1992) break the acculturation process down into various options an immigrant or other individual has when adopting a new culture. A person can try to assimilate, or adopt the culture of the majority population of the host country. An individual could also try and integrate themselves within the larger society while still retaining their unique culture or ethnic identity (Sodowky & Plake 1992). A prominent study on the assimilation of Arab immigrants into the larger American society is Faragallah, Shumm, and Webb's (1997) study concerning immigrants and how acculturation into the larger US affects happiness with the host country and with personal life. The authors state there are not many studies about Arab Americans and acculturation. For studies that do exist the sample sizes tend to be small (Faragallah, Schumm & Webb 1997).

Other studies regarding assimilation show that the process can be rather lengthy. One example of a long acculturation process is the situation set forth in Hiromi Ono's study about Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans' assimilation processes. In the study, Mexican-origin people and US-born Mexican Americans are compared to see how they identify themselves. The researcher finds that the initial immigrants tend to see themselves and be viewed as being Mexican, although this changes as further generations are born on US soil (Ono 2002). It may not be the case that it takes this long for Arab immigrants' offspring to become a part of mainstream US culture. According to some studies, Arab Americans are likely to assimilate well into the US population at large. The group tend to be highly educated, and many have already been a part of the American middle class for some time (Kulczycki & Lobo 2001). What happens to those who aren't so integrated into the larger society, or who are made out to be seen as outsiders?

Several studies explain the complex interactions between the targets of prejudice and the offenders. One comprehensive theory for understanding this phenomenon is Jimmy Sanders' ethnic boundary theory, from his article, "Ethnic Boundaries and Identity In Plural Societies" (2002). The theory refers to a process by which ethnic boundaries are socially constructed through the interaction between in-groups and out-groups. Each group simultaneously reinforces and helps to create its own identity, and the identity of the other in these transactions. The social constructionist approach is consistent with one of the three theories presented by Gary C. David in his "The Creation of "Arab American": Political Activism and Ethnic (Dis)Unity" literature review. In addition to social constructionism, David (2007) presents two additional theories; the "primordial perspective", and the "structural" or mobilizationist view (2007). The "primordial" view looks at conspicuous similarities amongst people, and how those characteristics define them as an ethnic group. The characteristics can include language, religion, physical liking for one another, and so on (David 2007). This "primordial" theory is useful when reading other studies, such as the Wray-Lake, Syversten, and Flanagan (2008)

study about adolescent Arab-Americans, and the prejudice they felt. In this study, the researchers were looking to measure the social exclusion felt by Arab American youth from three Midwestern public schools. The particular unit of study was the individual student that self-identified as being an Arab American. The purpose of the study was to determine what the student's view of the social contract was, i.e. the idea that a person gives up some liberties to be a part of a society that protects other freedoms. People who have entered into the social contract expect to receive the benefits of doing so. The end result of the study was that many students who self-identified as Arab American felt that the social contract did not apply to them in the same way that it did to other Americans. Many of the affected teens felt they were being singled out due to their style of dress, non-English language, etc. (Wray-Lake, Syversten & Flanagan 2008). The structural, or “mobilizationist” view looks at how discriminatory treatment, or outside pressure, causes group solidarity and people to identify themselves more strongly with their group (David 2007). In her qualitative study of Muslims in America, Lori Peek (2005) interviewed a number of Muslim Arab American college students, and found that outside attacks or threats on the group provide occasions for members to reaffirm or rally around their identity. In her conclusion, Peek invokes C. Smiths' “theory of subcultural identity formation” (p. 237). Peek explains that this theory predicts that increased group solidarity does not only result in members embracing their personal identities, but also emphasizes their group identity. In a related finding, Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Wu (2006) also found that outside threats to a group, including policy shocks such as the passage of the Patriot Act, led to mobilization amongst Arab Americans to get themselves registered as voters. In this case, the group chose to respond to a shock using political means to express solidarity.

There is also some evidence that perceived prejudice is related to acculturation. Sadowsky and Plakes' 1992 study asserts that there is some relationship between the two variables based on how acculturated a minority group member has become to the larger population. The duo looked at students

within a Midwestern university and found that those who had undergone less acculturation perceived more prejudice to exist. A dual possibility of the effects of perceived prejudice is also put forth. Sadowsky and Plake write that perceived prejudice might affect the way a group changes or adopts new cultural elements/values, or that being very culturally traditional might lead to more prejudice due to the differing practices between the minority group and the larger population (1992).

Social capital refers to the social benefits and linkages an individual gains through being a member of a group, or from interacting with groups. An example of social capital is the gaining of trust with a specific group or organization (<http://www.macses.ucsf.edu/Research/Social%20Environment/notebook/capital.html>). Another example is the acquisition of a social network from joining an organization. The benefits of social capital are not necessarily tangible. Sanders (2002) writes about social capital as being a mechanism by which a group or an individual of a group negotiates its day to day dealings with other groups. This idea is similar to the ethnic boundaries concept, except it is more about developing a kind of rapport with the group, or in relation to other groups (2002). An example of this idea would be a group of Arab Americans who have a lot of social capital inside of their group, but less when dealing with other groups. There are also other ways of looking at social capital. Alejandro Portes identifies a number of ways of thinking about social capital theory. One view is that social capital can provide “network-mediate benefits” outside of familial groups. Another is that groups might gain social capital by rallying around their status as being outsiders from the wider society (1998). To put it another way, social capital can be generated by a group who believes they are being oppressed or who feel like they are in opposition to the wider society. Social capital is then created in a way that reinforces group solidarity (Portes 1998).

An additional theme in the literature is that, as noted previously, Arab Americans are a very heterogeneous group, and have always been that way. As immigrants, Arabs come from a number of

different countries, religions, and cultures (Faragallah, Schumm & Webb 1997). Several researchers focusing on transnationalism have shown how Arab American identity has always been complex, and may become more so as communication technologies become better and cheaper (e.g. Nagel & Staeheli 2004; Sanders 2002). Better communication makes it possible to have both local and transnational identities due to participation in various political groups via tools like the Internet (Nagel & Staeheli 2004). But even as Arab American identities are created, the group can become further fragmented. Paradoxically, as Arab Americans create a group identity they sometimes alienate other Arab American individuals who do not live up to particular aspects of that identity. Once this division has been created, it can be maintained and thus an outsider group emerges within the Arab American community (David 2007).

There appears to be some evidence that group identification may be related to the perception of prejudice. When Operario and Fiske (2001) looked at minority members that strongly identified with their group, the researchers observed that more perceived prejudice would be experienced by those individuals. Because identity formation is part of adopting a new culture, or acculturation, it would seem that this study might be an indicator of a relationship between acculturation and perceived prejudice. However, it is possible that there exist intervening variables which are more highly correlated with the perceived prejudice felt by Arab Americans. These variables might include demographic considerations like gender, age, or SES. The foregoing independent variables shall be considered in addition to acculturation during the study. There has been some research involving SES and prejudice. Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Wu's article about SES and political activism was interesting because it found that Arab Americans with higher SES were more likely to perceive threats from the political system, such as the Patriot Act, or prejudice due to the Iraq War (2006). Another study found that the teenage offspring of Arab Americans were more likely to perceive prejudice directed toward them on the condition that their parents were more highly educated (Wray-Lake, Syversten & Flanagan

2008).

There is a lot of social-psychological literature to do with acculturation to a host culture, and the effects this process has on a minority group. Although this literature does not focus on perceived prejudice directly, it does help to contribute to the understanding about how perceived prejudice may be generated. The literature tends to focus on immigrants' attitudes toward the acculturation process, and splits these attitudes into four broad categories. These categories include the marginalization mentality, integration mentality, assimilation attitude, and separation view. The marginalization view is that the immigrant does not wish to adopt a new identity or maintain their current one. The integration mentality means the individual wants to blend their past identity with that of the host country, resulting in the retention of both identities. The assimilation attitude means that the immigrant is willing to adopt the host country's identity and culture to the exclusion of their own. Finally, the separation view is when an immigrant wants to keep their own identity and culture, and to curtail interactions with the host culture (Kurman, Eshel & Sbeit 2005). Other studies on acculturation attitudes support the idea that the more positive a person's attitude is toward the dominant or host group, the better the odds will be of the immigrant's success in acculturation (Zick, Wagner, Dick, & Petzel 2001). Taken together, this literature provides a means for why immigrants' acculturations experiences can influence the way they see themselves and other groups.

In a related field, integrated threat theory has some possible contributing elements to the study of perceived prejudice. The field seems to deal more with perceived threat, but the mechanisms sound like they most certainly could affect the prejudice perceived by a minority group member as well. In fact, there appears to be evidence that the elements of threat are related to prejudice (Rohmann, Florack & Piontkowski 2006). Identifying with an in-group was also found to predict realistic threat in some study populations (Rohmann, Florack & Piontkowski 2006).

Bias in a social setting is when an individual has an attitude strongly in favor or against a

particular thing, act, person, or group. Literature on bias explores the way that it and stereotypes affect one another. Lee, Vue, Seklecki, and Ma's study on stereotypes provides a very useful way of looking at the subject. They break stereotypes into four groups which vary on the accuracy of the stereotype, and whether it is positive. The researchers find that the most controversial or contentious types of stereotypes are those that are both negative, and inaccurate (2007). But stereotypes are a type of bias that people/groups use in day to day situations. Bias is an important shaper of relations both within a group, and between groups. Studies have found that high levels of in-group bias, or a bias for one's own group, can negatively impact a group's perception of out-groups (Tzeng & Jackson 1994; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker & Obdrzalek 2000). Some of the bias literature even suggests that holding these negative views of other groups is actually a beneficial effect for in-groups. These beliefs may increase in-group cohesion (Pitner, Astor, Benbenishty, Haj-Yahia & Zeira 2003). The furthering of in-group bias as a coping mechanism (Greenland & Brown 2005) could then be a mechanism that ratchets up negative views of other groups. This means that a secluded immigrant group could possibly perceive more prejudice partly as a result of their seclusion.

In summary, acculturation is one of the main factors that determine how identities develop, and those individuals who undergo more of it will tend to be happier in the U.S. (Faragallah, Schumm & Webb 1997). Identity is a complex issue that is negotiated between in-groups and out-groups (Sanders 2002), and is socially constructed (David 2007). Politically-active individuals help to shape both in-group characteristics of what it means to be Arab American, and the public's perception of the group. There is some support for the idea that acculturation is linked to perceived prejudice, in that groups who are not well acculturated to the host country's main culture will tend to perceive more prejudice (Sadowsky & Plake 1992). Immigrant attitudes toward acculturation have differing results on their acculturation success (Zick, Wagner, Dick & Petzel 2001). Bias is a part of being an immigrant, and it certainly shapes the way he/she views outside groups (Tzeng & Jackson 1994). There is also evidence

that the intensified identification with an in-group will confer benefits on its members (Pitner, Astor, Benbenishty, Haj-Yahia & Zeira 2003), and it may be a coping mechanism (Greenland & Brown 2005).

Even with significant time spent searching, literature on Arab Americans and acculturation did not produce any studies that tie into the concept of perceived prejudice. Despite there being studies on acculturation and ethnicity, no studies have been located that pay particular attention to the role of acculturation in perceived prejudice among Arab Americans. There were some studies to do with assimilation and experienced prejudice. Jan Pieter Van Oudenhoven, and Anne-Marie Eisses's 1998 study about Jewish Moroccans in Israel and Islamic Moroccans in the Netherlands showed that those individual who had assimilated to the host culture experienced less prejudice. There was no finding of other articles to do with acculturation within a minority group, and the effects on their perceived prejudice. There was, however, no shortage of articles on the interaction between acculturation to a host country, and how this process shapes the perceived prejudice of the minority group member. But there is a crucial distinction between focusing on acculturation within a minority population, such as Arab Americans, and acculturation within the larger host country. The current study is being run to attempt to discover whether there is a relationship between the amount of acculturation an individual has with the Arab American group and the amount of perceived prejudice they sense from those outside the group. Existing studies do have things to say about acculturation into the host society, and how that impacts the perception of prejudice from the standpoint of a minority group member. But as far as I can gather, there are no studies that look at how or whether an individual's process of learning to be and adopting the Arab American culture has an effect on the amount of prejudice they perceive. The current study will investigate this area by looking at media usage, and the way the respondents view media coverage.

Methods

The research question in this study is; does acculturation have an effect on the amount of

perceived prejudice that Arab Americans sense? Acculturation is a process where a person learns and assumes the culture, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of another group. Specifically, we will look at acculturation as it pertains to the Arab American community, and how people become members of said community. Perceived prejudice is how an individual feels like he/she is being treated as an outsider or a member of an outgroup due to sensed hostility from members of other groups. Arab Americans are identified as first generation U.S. citizens, or members of subsequent generations that self-identify themselves using the label.

Acculturation has been measured various ways. In one study the variable was measured by seeing what types of cultural practice/activities members use with each other. One example is to look at whether members use Arabic when talking with each other (Jaber, Brown, Hammad, Zhu & Herman 2003). In other studies, usage of media sources and self-identification were important components of acculturation (Faragallah, Schumm & Webb 1997). I incorporated use of native language as an element of Arab American acculturation, as well as looking at self-identification, and use of Arab-language media. Perceived prejudice is a phenomenon where a member of an in-group senses some measure of discrimination or oppression from an out-group. The perception of prejudice is a process that happens at the individual level, and which has been observed amongst minority groups as they interact with members of other groups. In this study, I look at how individual Arab American respondents perceive themselves as a part of the larger society. Given Arab Americans are a diverse group, and the label so ambiguous (as discussed previously), the most accurate measure of Arab Americans is to examine how those individuals self-identify as being Arab Americans (Nagel & Staeheli 2004).

Data

The data used in this study comes from the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS). My unit of analysis is the individual Arab or Chaldean American. For clarification, the Chaldean American Student Association says that Chaldeans “are the indigenous people of Iraq, religiously Catholic, speak

a form of Aramaic”, and that a preponderance of them can also converse in Arabic

(<http://www.umich.edu/~casa/overview.html>). In the DAAS, the researchers sought out 1000 people 18 years of age and older who had self-identified as being Arab or Chaldean American. The sample of Arab or Chaldean American individuals came from the Macomb, Wayne, and Oakland counties in Michigan. The interview period lasted from July to December 2003. Only respondents living in households were included.

The DAAS researchers used a dual frame sample to find respondents. The first frame was constructed by using an area probability sample consisting of 60 different Census tracts in the aforementioned counties where 10% or more people self-identified as being Arab or Chaldean-American in the 2000 Census. The 60 tracts were then split into 80 primary stage segments. The researchers randomly chose half of the segments, and then ensured the Census addresses were accurate and exhaustive. The second half of the segments were checked for invalid addresses during the screening process, then were designated as being nonsample cases if the address was incorrect.

The second frame was made of lists from 13 different Arab American and Chaldean social, religious, educational, community, and business organizations. Eight of the lists were electronic. The lists were checked to see which households might be candidates for interviews. The lists were then compared with the first frame's area probability sample information. Addresses that were common to the two frames were dropped from the list frame. A random sample was chosen from the list information. Of the 1,389 eligible households identified, 1,016 actually completed the interview. Respondents' demographics are included in Table 1. The Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS), response rates are as follows: 73.7% for the dual frame sample, 73.8% for the area probability sample, and 73.3% for the list frame sample. Such a large rate of completed interviews is desirable, because the results of a test run on such a large sample of data helps to make the findings of a study more generalizable.

Table 1.**Arab American Demographics**

	%	Range
Sex		
Male	46.4	N/A
Female	53.6	N/A
Age		
Mean Age	44	18-88
Household Income		
Less than \$10,000-19,999	23.9	N/A
\$20,000-49,999	27.1	N/A
\$50,000-74,999	14.2	N/A
\$75,000-99,999	10.5	N/A
\$100,000 or more	24.3	N/A
Education		
Some H.S.	25.1	N/A
Completed H.S.	20	N/A
Some College (13 th , 14 th , or 15 th)- Associate Degree	28.4	N/A
Bachelor's Degree	15.3	N/A
Masters/Professional/ Doctorate Degree	11.2	N/A

Some variables have been collapsed. For complete categories, see Appendix A.

Measures

The dependent variable in this study is perceived prejudice. The independent variables include acculturation within the Arab American community. Additional independent variables used are SES, gender, and age. Questions and response categories used are included in Appendix A.

Frey and Sodowsky considered stereotypes, or biases concerning minority groups when measuring perceived prejudice through the use of the American-International Relations Scale. The researchers recognized that perceived prejudice could be measured using questions about how respondents felt isolated from the larger American society (1992). Some studies have also measured perceived prejudice by asking individuals questions to determine whether they felt there was bias against them based on their belonging to a minority ethnicity, or race (Facione & Facione 2007). As indicated in previous research, various media sources have helped to create a monolithic identity for Arabs (Naber 2000). Due to the existence of this persona, one way of determining whether an individual Arab American is perceiving prejudice is to measure his/her attitude toward how the media treats images of Arabs at large. This approach would take the previously discussed bias against minorities, and the use of stereotypes into account. In the literature review there was a discussion about how stereotypes and bias are a part of the way that minority group members negotiate their interactions with each other and the larger society. In-group bias was found to affect perceptions of outside groups (Tzeng & Jackson 1994; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker & Obdrzalek 2000). Naber's discussion shows that media portrayals of Arabs can be very much oversimplified, until they become a parody of the original subject (2000). Included in the public creation of an Arab identity are views toward Israel and Palestine, so these measures are being included in perceived prejudice. Perceived prejudice will be measured as a new variable named "American Media Bias" through the use of responses to these questions.

- Think about American news coverage of religion and religious people. (Do you think

the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?)

- Think about American news coverage of Islam and Muslims. (Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?)

- Think about American news coverage of Arab/Chaldean Americans. (Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?)

- What about American news coverage of Israelis? (Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, or biased against?)

- Next, American news coverage of Palestinians. (Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?)

Two measures of acculturation were created. First, acculturation can be measured by looking at whether or not an individual has adopted characteristics of a certain group. For the purposes of this study, it will be determined whether and to what extent an individual interviewee has undergone acculturation processes particular to joining the Arab American group. Other studies serve as good guides to what constitutes acculturation. Certain elements of the acculturation process tend to dominate acculturation measures across studies, like language, or marrying within the new host society (Silverstein & Chen 1999; Kulczycki & Lobo 2002). Because the questions measure actions and activities related to performing the Arab identity, the measure will be called “Arab Acts”. “Arab Acts” was measured by responses to the following questions.

- There are many ways of being Arab or Chaldean. For you, personally, how much if at all, does each of the following mean for you?
 - Speaking Arabic
 - Marrying someone of Arab background
 - Participating in Arab art and cultural events

To get a more multidimensional measure of acculturation, and given the questions used to

measure perceived prejudice, questions regarding information acquisition are also being used. It is useful to consider the respondent's use of Arab language. We can use these questions as a potential indicator of Arab language use or understanding. This acculturation measure will be referred to as “Arab News”. Following are the measures of “Arab News”.

- Are any of the newspapers you read in Arabic?
- In a typical week, do you listen to radio news in Arabic?
- Does your satellite dish receive Arabic programs?
- Are any of the news items you read on the Internet in Arabic?

Two new variables were computed. The perceived prejudice measures were condensed into a new variable called “American News Bias.” Higher values for the “American News Bias” variable indicate that the respondent views the news as being more biased. Two measures of acculturation were developed to give a multi-faceted dimension to the variable. The acculturation measures concerning the use of news media, and information acquisition were put together to create a variable called “Arab News”. High values on “Arab News” indicate that the respondent uses less Arab news sources. The variables concerning Arab American acts or activities were computed into a new variable known as “Arab Acts”. Higher values on “Arab Acts” mean the respondents engaged in more of said activities.

Additional independent measures include SES. Not all studies measure SES by looking at occupation, level of educational attainment, and income. Studies like Steven G. Prus's have measured SES by income and level of educational attainment, leaving occupation out (2007).

Previously mentioned studies like Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Wu's (2006) and Wray-Lake, Syversten and Flanagan's (2008) suggest that there might be interesting interactions between SES and the dependent variable. Socioeconomic status was broken down into the variables of income and education for measurement purposes. Income is measured by:

- The number of the income group that includes total family income before taxes in 2002 (i.e.

income from all sources, and the income of all family members living with respondent, including salaries, pensions, dividends, interest, and public assistance).

Answers to these questions are measured by the respondent's acknowledgement of being in a bounded income category. For example, the individual respondent might pick the \$50,000 to \$74,999 dollar family income range. The answer rates for individual categories of household income are contained above in Table 1.

Education is measured by the respondent's highest grade of school or degree that they completed. The answer categories range from some high school to having a doctorate or professional degree. Answer rates for individual respondents are contained above in Table 1. The demographic variables of sex and age are also being included as important secondary variables.

Questions and response categories for all variables are contained in Appendix A. Response rates for all of the categories and questions are contained in Table 1 of Appendix B.

Results

The research question in this study is; does acculturation have an effect on the amount of perceived prejudice that Arab Americans sense? The hypothesis was that the more acculturation an individual has within the Arab American community, the more the person will perceive prejudice. The ranges and means for dependent and main independent variables are included in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Dependent and Non-Demographic Independent Variables Used in the Analyses

Dependent Variable	Range	Mean
American News Bias	6-15	12.60
Independent Variables		
Arab News	4-20	12.50
Arab Acts	3-12	5.77

American News Bias Measured as 1 = Biased for, 2 = Balanced, 3 = Biased Against

Arab News Measured as 1 = Yes, 5 = No

Arab Acts Measured as 1 = A Lot, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Only A Little, 4 = Not At All

According to the descriptive statistics for American News Bias, respondents had a mean answer value of 12.60. A value of 6 would indicate the respondents believe the news sources are biased in favor of the groups in question, while a value of 15 would mean the respondent thought the media was biased in favor of every group. A mean value of 12.60 indicates they found American news sources to contain bias against Arabs, Palestinians, or Muslims in their coverage. The independent variable of Arab News had a mean response value of 12.50. A value of 4 would mean the individual affirmed the use of all of the Arab media sources in the questions. A response of 20 would indicate no use of Arab media sources referenced in the questions. The value of 12.50 shows that the respondents, on average, made use of some but not all of the listed Arab media sources. Finally, the Arab Acts measure had a mean response value of 5.77. A value of 3 would indicate that the respondents attach a lot of value to all of the aforementioned means of being Arab. A response of 12 would show that the respondents put no value in the means of being Arab. A value of 5.77 shows that the respondents clearly value at least some of the ways of being Arab, though they do not necessarily emphasize every way.

Correlations were run to determine relationships between the variables. The test showed that “Arab News” and “Arab Acts” are moderately correlated ($r = .285$) with a .01 level of significance (Table 3). The less an interviewee used Arab news sources, the less they participated in activities associated with being Arab American. Of the tests between the dependent variable “American News Bias” and “Arab Acts”, there appears to be a weak negative relationship ($r = -.082$) between the two variables. That is, the more Arab American activities the respondent engages in, the more biased he/she perceives American news to be. No significant correlation was found between the dependent variable “American News Bias”, and the independent variable, “Arab News”.

In terms of demographics, there is a positive moderate relationship ($r = .233$) between higher levels of education and viewing the media as being more biased. There was also a moderate positive

relationship ($r = .213$) between higher incomes and being less involved in Arab American activities. There was a weak negative correlation ($r = -.174$) concerning income and “American News Bias”. People with higher incomes tend to report viewing the media as being more biased. There was a weak negative correlation ($r = -.133$) between sex and American activities. Women were more likely to engage in the activities. There was also a weak positive correlation ($r = .083$) between age and the perception of media bias, where older people were more likely to say they saw the media as being more biased. All correlation results are contained in Table 3.

Table 3
Correlations for Variables Used In Analysis

	Arab News	Arab Acts	American News Bias
Arab News	1		
Arab Acts	0.285**	1	
American News Bias	0.072	-0.082*	1
Education	0.056	.213**	.233**
Income	.443**	0.068	.174**
Sex	0.048	-.133**	-0.026
Age	0.106	-0.061	.083*

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

** Significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

Linear regression was performed at both the .05 and .01 levels of significance to see if the dependent variable of American News Bias would show some correlation to the independent variables Arab News and Arab Acts. The full model (Table 4) shows no significant predictors of perceived prejudice.

Table 4
Regression Coefficients: The Effects of Arab American Information Acquisition and Arab American Activities on Perceived Prejudice

	<i>b</i>	B
Arab News	0.068	0.174
Arab Acts	-0.221	-0.223
Education	0.040	0.022
Income	0.163	0.125
Sex	0.066	0.018
Age	-0.001	-0.009

Based on these correlations, it turns out that Arab News was not found to be significantly correlated with the perceived prejudice variable. This outcome suggests that the hypothesis is not supported, and that Arab News might not be a good indicator of perceived prejudice. Given the correlations show the “Arab News” variable was not correlated with perceived prejudice, the measure of acculturation was removed and a second model was run. These results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients: The Effects of Arab American Activities on Perceived Prejudice

	<i>b</i>	B
Arab American Activities**	-0.124	-0.159
Education**	0.353	0.251
Income*	0.099	0.081
Sex	-0.048	-0.014
Age*	0.008	0.073

* Significant at the .05 level.

** Significant at the .001 level.

The results show there is a negative relationship between “Arab Acts” and “American Media Bias”. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis of the study, that acculturation within the Arab American group would be associated with the perception of more prejudice toward the group. The SES variables have shown themselves to be positively correlated with perceived prejudice in the media.

Respondents with greater amounts of education and higher incomes were more likely to report more perceived prejudice in American news sources. This finding is consistent with other studies about Arab American youth, where youth from families with higher SES would report perceiving more prejudice (Wray-Lake, Syversten & Flanagan 2008). The finding is also consistent with other studies showing that Arab Americans with higher SES were more likely to perceive threats or prejudice from outside groups (Tam Cho, Gimpel & Wu's 2006). This finding is interesting because it's hard to determine why this relationship is so. Are higher-status Arab Americans perceiving more prejudice because they are more visible than other Arab Americans who may be living in ethnic enclaves? Or perhaps these higher-status individuals perceive more prejudice because they are more acutely aware of the negative portrayals of Arabs in some media. The positive correlation between age and the perception of prejudice in the media was not expected. This finding suggests that older respondents would see the American news media as being more biased than younger generations of Arab Americans would.

Discussion & Conclusion

This study's purpose has been to examine whether acculturation plays a role in the amount of perceived prejudice that Arab Americans experience. The hypothesis was that as an individual person becomes more acculturated within the Arab American community, that person would perceive more prejudice from outside groups. The individual would feel that others are reacting more to their Arab American identity as he/she becomes further acculturated into the group. The results of the regression support the idea that acculturation does have some part in the perceptions of prejudice experienced by Arab Americans, as research has shown with other ethnic groups (Sodowsky & Plake 1992). However, the relationship is not particularly strong. Therefore, we cannot say whether the perception of prejudice comes from an interaction between acculturation and prejudice, or between identity and prejudice, or some other combination. Previous studies do show that a strong sense of group identity is related to feelings of perceived prejudice by members of that group (Operario & Fiske 2001). Because acculturation involves changing one's identity or creating a new one, it is possible that acculturation

and perceived prejudice are related. The correlations that were run provide support for this conclusion.

As previously discussed, literature on Arab Americans and identity offer many useful theories for interpreting the results of this study. Many of the theories in the literature involve threats to the group from an outside force or group. The ethnic boundaries theory (discussed previously) may explain how perceived prejudice and acculturation relate to one another (Sanders 2002). It could be that as Arab Americans perceive prejudice from outside groups, they come together and grow closer as a group. Growing closer as a group might involve further acculturation, especially for members on the periphery of the Arab American group. Another theory that emphasizes the idea of an outside threat affecting group behavior is David's "mobilizationalist" view, which posits that groups respond to outside pressure by identifying more strongly with their group (2007). Other studies have come to the same conclusion (e.g. Peek 2005; Tam Cho, Gimpel & Wu 2006). Social capital theory may explain some of the results (Sanders 2002). It may be that Arab Americans who perceive prejudice also have a lot of social capital within their own group, but less outside of it. If those individuals who have less social capital with outside groups believe that the difficult dealings are a reaction to their Arab American identity, then perceived prejudice could be generated.

Of the central variables used, SES was by far the most interesting. The finding that income and education are related to perceived prejudice is not surprising. Wray-Lake, Syversten, and Flanagan's study of Arab Americans teens found that the higher the SES of the parents, the more likely the teens were to perceive prejudice due to their Arab American identities (2008). It may be likely the more SES an Arab American person has, the more aware they are of negative characterizations of Arabs in the news media. The results of the regression with SES and perceived prejudice in American media seem to bear out this idea.

What Else Might the Results Be Saying?

There is also the possibility that Arab American interviewees were reacting to perceived prejudice concerning their race. There is literature suggesting that a number of Arab Americans like to think of themselves as being white if they reject the Arab American label. But even those that embrace the label also like to consider themselves as being white (Ajrouch & Jamal 2007). Could it be that some of the interviewees during the DAAS study saw a racial element when being asked about “American Media Bias”? Perhaps the respondents believed that the new media were portraying Arab Americans in a way that was not congruent with how they viewed themselves concerning their race.

The result that the use of Arab news or of experiencing media in Arabic was not significantly related to perceived prejudice in American news media is puzzling. The finding directly contradicts the hypothesis that usage of Arab media sources would influence the way an individual perceived prejudice from outside groups. The use of Arab news was found to be positively correlated to the Arab Acts variable, so it would seem that the two are related. It is interesting that the Arab News variable was not found to have a significant relationship with perceived media prejudice like the Arab Acts variable did. There must be some confounding factor having to do with the use of Arab media, or experiencing media in Arab and perceiving prejudice in American media. It's possible those individuals that use Arab media also use many other media sources, and perceive less prejudice because of a broader view of media sources overall. It could be true that the Arab news variable was not a good indicator for the views of Arab Americans. Further studies of Arab Americans and perceived prejudice might try and see if the group uses a mixed variety of media sources. The study could try to measure how much the usage of news media shapes the views of the viewer. In the case of this variable, the hypothesis was not supported.

Another unexpected finding was the weak positive correlation between age and perceived prejudice in American news media. It may be that older respondents who see more media bias are comparing current media to those that existed when immigrating to America. There is a lot of literature

mentioning how the media conception of Arabs has changed over time, and become more negative. Especially once the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 began, it seems that the popular portrayal of Arabs in the news, film, and other media has been changing in a very negative way (David 2007; Naber 2000). It could potentially be true that older people gravitate to news sources that contain more biases, and that this tendency to gravitate toward these sources accounts for slightly higher perceptions of bias.

The questions measuring “Arab Acts” and “Arab News” were selected so that the measurement of acculturation would be as generalizable as possible. However, there is a potential downside to the measurement as well. Substantial numbers of Arab Americans in the Dearborn area of Michigan are very segregated in terms of where they live. Some live in ethnic enclaves, while those of higher SES live in the suburbs (Howell & Shryock 2003). It could be possible that the Arab American residents of the Macomb and Wayne counties live in the same types of arrangements. Due to the distribution of Arab Americans in these counties, it is possible that their Arab culture and identity has developed differently than those of other places. If the Arab American culture in Dearborn, Macomb, or Wayne is unique in the way that it engages in “Arab Acts” and “Arab News” as they were defined in this study, then this means of testing acculturation may not apply as well measuring the responses of other populations. If the foregoing conclusion is true, the results may not be generalizable to all Arab Americans.

Arab Americans and Perceived Prejudice In the Future

Disentangling acculturation and identity is difficult because these are very personal processes that impact the way people are seen by others. These processes shape the ways that individuals see themselves. Future studies should attempt to find more holistic measurements of Arab American media usage, including the use of various American media sources. Perhaps there could be some way to measure how much a person likes media sources generally, or whether they see some sources as inherently flawed when compared with others. The questions about American Media Bias did this for

American news sources, but it might be insightful to see how interviewees see other news sources in terms of bias. If interviewees can share their thoughts on all of their media use, perhaps it will be possible to assess whether perceived prejudice is experienced by those less involved in Arab American activities.

Studies concerning the ways that Arab American identities are continuing to become more different or similar over time could help create a more nuanced picture of the Arab American community at large. Are Arab American immigrants still choosing to forge their own identities, or are they undergoing acculturation processes to be more like mainstream Americans? Longitudinal studies could provide some insight to these questions.

Despite various limitations with the study, it does possess several strengths. There is literature about Arab Americans, acculturation, and perceived prejudice as separate topics. However, I have not been able to locate any that tied them together using media bias as a measure of perceived prejudice. By operationalizing perceived prejudice in this way, we can look at how exogenous factors such as media content might cause the individual Arab American to perceive more or less prejudice. The results of the current study imply that acculturation to a host culture, overt prejudice, and overt discrimination are only some of the factors that impact perceived prejudice within a minority group. The study makes use of data where there are large concentrations of Arab Americans, which might help us to learn whether Arab Americans perceive prejudice in a unique way. The results indicate that perhaps it is the process of acculturation within the Arab American group that helps to shape the way members perceive prejudice from outside groups. This is an important finding because it means that the perception of prejudice might not be due only to outside influences, like actual prejudice or discrimination from outside groups. Future studies could compare perceived prejudice through measuring media bias in both populations that are Arab American, and populations of Arabs to see whether or how perceptions differ.

The results of the current study also lead to potentially interesting new research questions. Could it be that activities are more important than views in predicting or understanding perceived prejudice in a group? Might SES be the main factor in how acculturation and perceived prejudice relate to one another? SES certainly plays a large role in shaping a person's identity, why shouldn't it play some role in the acculturation process? Future research could look at whether Arab Americans of low SES become acculturated into different groups than those with a higher SES, then the groups could be compared to see whether they have any significant difference in their levels of perceived prejudice.

In conclusion, the hypothesis that acculturation will have some effect on the amount of perceived prejudice sensed by an individual Arab American has found some support in this study. Through the use of a linear regression, it was found that Arab cultural activities, income, and education have relationships with perceived prejudice as measured by American media bias. Some of the hypotheses were met, such as the expectation that those engaging in the cultural activities would perceive more bias in the media. However, the other main hypothesis that Arab media use would predict media bias was not founded. The finding that higher income and education were related to the increased perception of prejudice are somewhat puzzling. Even more puzzling is the slight positive relationship between age and the perception of prejudice. Future studies should emphasize the role of media use in mediating the perception of prejudice within the Arab American group, preferably by casting a wide net to gather more comprehensive information on media usage.

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Appendix A

All of the following questions are from the Detroit Arab American Study of 2003, and are being printed here with gracious allowance from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, or ICPSR.

Perceived Prejudice:

- American Media Bias:
 - First, think about American news coverage of religion and religious people. Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?
 - 1. Biased In Favor 2. Balanced 3. Biased Against
 - Next, think about American news coverage of Islam and Muslims. Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced or biased against?
 - 1. Biased In Favor 2. Balanced 3. Biased Against
 - Next, American news coverage of Arab/Chaldean Americans. (Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?)
 - 1. Biased In Favor 2. Balanced 3. Biased Against
 - Next, American news coverage of Israelis. (Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?)
 - 1. Biased In Favor 2. Balanced 3. Biased Against
 - Next, American news coverage of Palestinians. (Do you think the coverage is biased in favor, balanced, or biased against?)
 - 1. Biased In Favor 2. Balanced 3. Biased Against

Acculturation:

- Arab Acts:
 - Please look at page 19 of your Blue Booklet. There are many ways of being Arab or Chaldean. For you, personally, how much if at all, does each of the following mean for you?
 - Speaking Arabic
 - 1. A Lot 2. Somewhat 3. Only A Little 4. Not At All 5. Not Relevant
 - Marrying someone of Arab background
 - 1. A Lot 2. Somewhat 3. Only A Little 4. Not At All 5. Not Relevant
 - Participating in Arab art and cultural events
 - 1. A Lot 2. Somewhat 3. Only A Little 4. Not At All 5. Not Relevant

- Arab News:
 - In a typical week, do you listen to radio news in Arabic?
 - 1. Yes 5. No
 - Are any of the newspapers you read in Arabic?
 - 1. Yes 5. No
 - Does your satellite dish receive Arabic programs?
 - 1. Yes 5. No
 - Are any of the news items you read on the Internet in Arabic?
 - 1. Yes 5. No

SES:

- Please look at page 25 of the Blue Booklet and 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, interest and public assistance.
 - 1. Less than \$10,000 2. \$10,000-14,999 3. 15,000-19,999 4. \$20,000-29,999 5. \$30,000-49,999 6. \$50,000-74,999 7. \$75,000-99,999 8. \$100,000-149,999 9. \$150,000-199,999 10. \$200,000 Or More
- Please turn to page 23 in the Blue Booklet. What is the highest grade of school or degree that you completed?
 - 1. Less Than High School (Less Than 9th Grade) 2. Some High School (9, 10, Or 11th Grade) 3. Completed High School Or GED (12th Grade) 4. Some College (13th, 14th or 15th) 5. Associate Degree (e.g. AA, AS) 6. Bachelor's Degree (e.g. BA, AB, BS) 7. Master's Degree (e.g. MA, MS, Meng, Med, MSN, MBA) 8. Professional Degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD) 9. Doctorate Degree (e.g. PhD, EdD) 10. Other (Specify)

Sex:

- Sex of respondent.
 - 1. Male 2. Female

Age:

- In what year were you born? _____

Appendix B

Table 1

Responses for Dependent and Non-Demographic Independent Variables Used in the Analyses

American News Bias	%
American news bias in coverage of:	
Religion and religious people	
Biased In Favor	8.3
Balanced	59.3
Biased Against	32.4
Islam and Muslims	
Biased In Favor	3.1
Balanced	45.1
Biased Against	51.8
Arab/Chaldean Americans	
Biased In Favor	3.3
Balanced	57.3
Biased Against	39.4
Israelis	
Biased In Favor	77.8
Balanced	19.4
Biased Against	2.8
Palestinians	
Biased In Favor	1.6
Balanced	25.9
Biased Against	72.6

Acculturation	%
Arab News	
Do you typically listen to radio news in Arabic?	
Yes	31.1
No	68.9
Do you read newspapers in Arabic?	
Yes	30.3
No	69.7
Satellite dish receives Arab channels?	
Yes	92.1
No	7.9
Read Internet news in Arabic?	
Yes	27.3
No	72.7

Arab Acts	%
What do the following ways of being Arab or Chaldean Mean to You?	
Speaking Arabic	
A Lot	59.1
Somewhat	22.3
A Little	10.1
Not At All	8.5
Marrying Someone of Arab Background	
A Lot	57.4
Somewhat	17.3
A Little	10.9
Not At All	14.4
Participating in Arab Cultural Events	
A Lot	24.5
Somewhat	32.6
A Little	23.1
Not At All	19.8

Author's Biography

Justin Du Mouchel was born in Calgary, Alberta Canada, as a US citizen born abroad. He has lived numerous places in both Canada and the United States throughout his life. He attended the École secondaire l'Essor in Tecumseh, Ontario Canada, for his freshman and part of his sophomore year of high school. He graduated from Electra High School in Electra, Texas in May of 2000. Justin is currently a senior at Utah State University. He started at USU in the fall semester of 2003, and became a sociology major after taking most of his generals. Since that time, Justin has also become an economics major, and has picked up a minor in French. He has been involved in the Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honors Society, has served as an Undergraduate Teaching Fellow September 2006 until April 2007, and has helped with various charitable activities on and off campus. He has also been involved with the local Freemason Lodge, Harmony Lodge # 21, which is in Logan. Justin is planning to graduate in December of 2009. His future plans include attending law school.