Intergenerational Cultural Transition: Iraqi Female Migrants Talk About Cultural Adaptation and Preservation in New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Research on immigration and cultural adaptation has only recently caught the attention of researchers, especially in the field of psychology, and this area remains relatively unexplored in New Zealand. The aim of this study is to explore how Iraqi migrants talk about, and make sense of Arab culture and the preservation of Arab culture in Western society. Arabs face various challenges when resettling in Western society, a society which is considerably different from Arab society. Arab mothers are concerned that their children will take onboard Western values and customs, which go against Arab culture, thus risk blackening the family's face. Arab mothers in particular expressed their concern for their daughters who are raised in Western society, which encourages behaviours that are considered inappropriate according to Arab culture. Concern for daughters stem from the fact that female Arabs are considered the honour and reputation of Arab family. The methodology used is that of qualitative discourse analysis. Ten semi-structured interviews with five Iraqi mothers, and their daughters were carried out. The participants were interviewed about the processes of cultural adaptation and preservation in Western society. Their talk was analysed in relation to how the participants constructed, the other, Arab culture, the bint – the unmarried virgin daughter, and the Arab mother. Most important, on the basis of these four issues we were able to examine the practice of intergenerational cultural preservation. Findings exemplified that Arab mothers in Western society seek to preserve Arab culture and beliefs, whereas Arab daughters who are raised in Western society want cultural conservation, which will free them from cultural and parental control. In general, Arab culture and identity is defined in terms of difference and exclusion from dominant sectors of Western society. Their sense of difference and exclusion, in turn, informs many of their social behaviours and activities. Although the participants constructed a distinctive identity for themselves in relation to Western society in New Zealand, they were also keen to some extent to establish membership to that society despite their sense of difference and exclusion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Globally, as a result of economical, social and political disruption, migration in the last century has been more extensive than ever before. It is currently estimated that around one hundred million people live outside their country of origin (Rissel, 1997). Furthermore, migrants who resettle in a new country face various adaptation challenges, which can have a negative impact on their lives and may cause the resettlement process to be a distressing one. The resettlement process introduces different and challenging experiences for immigrants, especially in cases of the host society[1] having a different set of values, customs and traditions from those of the immigrants' own culture. In most situations, the immigrants would be required to learn a new set of skills, a new language, and to absorb a variety of added roles in order to adapt themselves with adequate ease to the new culture. In addition, Hattar-Pollara and Meleis (1995b) state that:

> "the immigration experience, its level of complexity, and the consequences thereof depend on and are mediated by the sociocultural and economic characteristics of the country of origin and the host society and the geographical distance between them, the degree and quality of change in the new environment, and the particular sociodemographic characteristics of the immigrants themselves" (p. 521).

Furthermore, the affect that the process of adaptation can have on the immigrant and the immigrant's family may not necessarily emerge straight away, but may instead only become visible in the following generations.

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[1] The term host society refers to the receiving society that the immigrants enter, which has its own established order based on notions of membership identity, and values. (Nagel, 2002).

Ethnic identity is considered a salient and significant part of the acculturation process that takes place when immigrants come to a new society (Berry, 2001; Phinney. Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001). Berry (2001) claims that ethnic identity and acculturation are identified as the two fundamental concerns that immigrants and the host society face. There is a clear distinction between these two processes; the notion of acculturation is considered the broader construct of immigration, in which values and the attitudes of immigrants change as a result of their contact within the host society's culture. Ethnic identity on the other hand, is considered an aspect of acculturation, one which focuses on the sense of belonging that individuals have within their own culture (Phinney, 1990). In other words, when reconciling themselves to a new society, immigrants go through a process of acculturation, by which individuals of a certain culture change as a result of contact and interaction with another distinct culture (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). Immigrants and their children who face this process of 'acculturation' are challenged to give up their 'ethnic culture', to acquire the values and attitudes of the new society in order to assimilate into the new culture (Berry, 1990, 1997; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999; Rissel, 1997; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993).

Ethnic identity is also known to be one of the psychological adaptation dimensions that immigrants cope with when settling in a new country (Libere, Chin, Nihira, & Mink, 2001). Ethnic identity is defined as the degree to which individuals identify with and derive aspects of their self-concept from knowledge with respect to, participation with and attachment to their own group (Phinney, 1990; Roysircar-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000). According to Berry (2001), the notion of ethnic identity becomes significant when people are living amongst other groups of people, who are from different cultures, as against what might have been their previous experience in a mono-cultural society. In addition, ethnic identity is likely to be strong when immigrants have a strong desire to maintain their own cultural identity. Migrants can feel vulnerable and isolated within the host society, which in turn gives rise to the emergence of ethnic identity, whereby immigrants retain both their sense of self in terms of feelings of belonging to a particular ethnic group, and a sense of shared values and commitment to the ethnic group.

Interestingly, Phinney (1989) claims that the process of formation of ethnic identity is based on terms of progression, in which ethnic identity is a construct that evolves and changes in time in response to developmental and contextual factors. The formation of ethnic identity is a critical developmental task for immigrants in general, and adolescents in particular. Ethnic identity is securely achieved at the end of adolescence (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder 2001). During adolescence, youths, especially those from ethnic or migrant minority groups, can become increasingly involved in learning about their culture and heritage. This process can have either a beneficial or a detrimental effect upon their adolescence. The benefits involve the affirmation of values and customs, in addition to increased feelings of belongingness and cultural pride. The detrimental effects can involve feelings of confusion, insecurity or resentment in relation to the treatment of their group by the host country (Brown, 2000; Tajfel & Turner 1986, cited in Phinney & Horenczyk et al. 2001). Current research suggests that the first-generation of immigrants face acculturation challenges, whereas the second and subsequent generations face challenges of developing their ethnic identity (Roysircar-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000). This tug of war can have an unconstructive impact on the migrant family.

Due to the great number of immigrants into both the United States of America and Europe there have been numerous studies that investigate the effects of acculturation, cultural adaptation and the resettling of immigrants. These include those of, for instance: Kibria (2000), who investigated the ethnic identity of second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans; Phinney and Romero et al. (2001), who investigated Armenian, Vietnamese and Mexican immigrant families in the United States; Dion and Dion (2001), who studied gender and cultural adaptation in Korean Americans; Lieber et al. (2001), who investigated the ethnic identity and acculturation of Chinese immigrants in the United states; and Campbell and Mclean (in press), who studied the construction of Pakistani identities in England.

Although there exist these various studies which investigate the ethnic identity and acculturation of Asian, South American, and European immigrants, there has been little interest paid to Arab migration to Western societies. This is despite the increasing flow of Arab immigrants to Western societies such as the United States, Europe, Australia and currently New Zealand. The sum effect of this global move on the cultural

adaptation, ethnic preservation and resettlement of Arabs has been scarcely researched thus far. According to Hattar-Pollara and Meleis (1995a), adequate scholarly attention has not been given to immigration in general, and to Arab immigration in particular. This said, in my research I will refer to several studies that have explored Arab immigration and cultural adaptation in Western societies.

Research on Arab Immigrants

Hattar-Pollara and Meleis (1995a) conducted a content and narrative analysis that investigated the experiences of Jordanian immigrant women parenting their adolescents in the United States. Their results illustrated that, the mothers continuously attempted to balance the need for their adolescents to maintain their ethnic identity with the need for them to become integrated positively into the new community, and their parenting was driven by an attempt to avoid loss of honour – *sharaf*, and bad reputation - *sumaa*. According to Arabic culture, loss of *sharaf* is the worst experience for any Arab family. Loss of *sharaf* refers to the loss of a daughter's virginity (but not that of a son). According to the Jordanian women that Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a) interviewed, loss of *sharaf* must be avoided at all times. Sons, on the other hand, are expected to follow different rules that are linked to preventing the attachment of a bad reputation to the family's name.

In Addition, Hattar-Pollara and Meleis (1995b) conducted a study that investigated stress of immigration and the day-to-day life experiences of Jordanian immigrant women in the United States. Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995b) conducted interviews with Jordanian American women all of whom were wives and mothers. The results of their study revealed several themes that the migrant women perceived as sources of stress. The first theme was the notion of 'settling in', as the Jordanian women perceived the first few years after migration particularly stressful for them. Settling in referred to findings jobs, establishing sources of income, and their children's education. These were all identified as major causes of stress for these Arab women in the process of settling in the new society. The children's education was viewed as a top priority and a key concern for all the mothers in this study. Second, the Arab women felt strongly regarding their need to maintain their ethnic identity and their sense of who they are as Jordanian women, wives, and mothers. Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995b), indicated that when the women were asked "what has been most stressful to you about living in The

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United States?," almost always the women would begin by mentioning that they are first and foremost Arabs, which meant they were fundamentally different from Americans. The third theme that was indicated in their study was the recreation of familiarity, by which the women stated that even with the passage of time, they felt lonely - strangers in a foreign land - and had a diminished social network.

A study by Faraghallah, Schumm, and Webb (1997), investigated the effect of acculturation of Arab-American immigrants. Their results indicated that the number of years the Arab migrant had been living in the United States, their age at immigration, having not recently visited their homeland, and being of a Christian religious persuasion were associated with greater acculturation within American society. There was greater personal satisfaction with life in the United States, but with reduced family satisfaction. Their study indicated that permissiveness was negatively related to parental dissatisfaction and that, although acculturation appeared to be associated positively with satisfaction with life in the United States, yet it also appeared to be associated negatively with family satisfaction. According to Faraghallah et al. (1997), these results supported findings of previous scholars regarding the stressful experience of immigration and its adverse impact on family life.

It is significant to note, that adolescents from immigrant backgrounds face many complex issues of adaptation involving both their ethnic culture and that of the new society (Berry, 1997). The issue of ethnic identity becomes difficult for adolescents whose parents are immigrants. On one hand, these young immigrants grow up with, and socialise with other peers of the host society who have a different culture, customs, and language. The young immigrants are also educated in school systems, which encourage the proficiency of the host country's language and customs. On the other hand, the adolescent immigrants are raised by parents who carry with them the traditions, customs, beliefs, religion, and language of their country of origin. The young immigrants are expected by their parents to retain and preserve their ethnic culture and customs throughout their lives (McCoy, 1992, cited in Phinney & Romero et al., 2001).

Phinney and Romero et al. (2001) studied the role of language, parents, and peers on ethnic identity among adolescents in immigrant families in the United States. Phinney

and Romero et al. (2001) suggested that adolescents from immigrant backgrounds face adaptation difficulties due to both their culture of origin and the culture of the new country. In addition, Phinney and Romero et al. (2001) discussed the dilemma which these adolescents might face in trying to balance two different cultures which each have their own set of beliefs and behaviours. On one hand, the adolescents have grown up socialised with parents that carry with them the language, values, religion, customs and practices from their country of origin. On the other hand, the adolescents have been educated in English-speaking schools, which encourage, and emphasise, English proficiency and American customs, all of which will impact on the upbringing and development of these adolescents. The study suggested that ethnic language proficiency and peer interaction with adolescents from the same country or culture predicted ethnic identity, and that parental cultural maintenance predicted adolescent ethnic language proficiency.

Unfortunately, such studies have not been conducted in New Zealand, although New Zealand's population includes many migrants and refugees from various ethnic backgrounds. According to the 1996 national census, New Zealand's population at that time consisted of 8% of ethnic groups from various nationalities, which constitutes 296,028 people (http://www.stats.govt.nz).

Arabs and Arab Culture
The Arab world[2] is understood to extend from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean, stretching across 5.25 million square miles (Barakat, 1993). This region includes the lands between Iraq and the Gulf states in the east, to Morocco's Atlantic coast in the west; and extends from Syria in the north to Sudan in the south (see figure 1). The Arab population is estimated to be more than 250 million people globally, 90% of whom are Muslim. However, being of the Islamic religion should not be equated with being an Arab, as approximately 9% of Arabs are of the Christian faith (Zahr & Hattar-Pollara, 1998). Despite the various Arab nationalities, Arabs and Arab society share common characteristics. There are four prominent characteristics that describe Muslim Arabs and Arab society. First, their pride in their language, Arabic: Arabic is considered a

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[2] The Arab world consists of 23 countries: Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Mauritania, Eritrea, and Comoros.

Figure 1. Map of the Arab Nation

The Arab World

divine and sacred language, since the Islamic holy book, the Koran, was written in Arabic. Allah first revealed the Koran to the Muslim prophet Mohammed (pbuh) when he was aged 40 and engaged in a meditative retreat. This revelation continued for twenty-three years until the Prophet Mohammed's (pbuh) death at the age of 63.

The second characteristic that Arabs share is that of their history and ancestry: Arabs originally come from the area of modern Saudi Arabia, as the majority of Arabs are believed to be descending from Ismail the son of Ibrahim, who is their common ancestor. The battles and wars that Arabs fought, especially during the expansion of Islam, constitute the great Arab history that Arab people are proud of. Such battles go down in Arab history as indicating Arab pride and bravery. The Battle of Badr in the year 624 CE,[3] is a prime example, as it was the first battle between Muslims and non-believers (the Quraish of Mecca) and it is still known in Arab Islamic history to be the most famous battle of that time. Then followed a series of other battles fought by Arab Muslims, such as Uhud in 625 CE, Trench 627 CE, the Battle of Khyber in 629 CE and the conquest of Mecca in the Battle of Hunain in 630 CE. Later, simultaneously with the revelation of Islam, the Arabs unified into one nation, the majority following the Islamic faith and speaking one language, Arabic.

We should add that, to Muslim Arabs, the rise of Islam is one of the most astonishing events in the last 2000 years of human history, an event which assisted in the collapse of two ancient Empires in Rome and Persia and which created a unified cultural area that stretched from Spain and Morocco in the west to Afghanistan in the east.

The third characteristic that Arabs share is their immense pride in their Arab identity: Arabs are constantly aware of their Arab identity, an identity which has been formed according to their cultural beliefs, values, and traditions. According to Jabra (1971), an Iraqi novelist and critic, when an Arab is asked, "who is an Arab?" the reply would be "Anyone who speaks Arabic as his own language and consequently feels as an Arab" (Jabra 1971, cited in Patai, 1983). Finally, the fourth common characteristic is the importance Arabs give to religion. The Islamic religion both plays a crucial role in, and

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[3] CE stands for "*Common Era.*" It is a new term that is eventually expected to replace AD. The latter is an acronym for "*Anno Domini*" in Latin or "*the year of the Lord*" in English. The latter refers to the approximate birth year of Yeshua ben Nazareth (Jesus Christ). CE and AD have the same definition and value. 2000 CE = 2000 AD.

has a great effect on, the structure of the society and the norms that Arabs adhere to. It is crucial to point out that regardless of the Arab individual's religion or nationality, these four important features unify the Arab world and give the Arab people a common identity (Zahr & Hattar-Pollara, 1998).

Ethnic culture and language are what differentiate every nation; these aspects are vital and important to the identity, self-existence and self-worth of ethnic groups. Arab culture, as with any ethnic culture, is preserved through language, customs, traditional practices and religion. Culture constitutes the collective memory of people and the collective heritage, both of which are handed down to future generations. Therefore, maintaining Arab cultural identity is essential for Arabs residing in their own country in general, and in particular for those emigrating and resettling in other countries that have a culture that is visibly different to theirs. As Minces (1982) states, we can also say that, unlike many other traditional cultures, Arabs have a culture that is highly stable: "Arab culture has historical roots and as a culture has not been transformed or affected greatly by the Western traditions" (p. 23).

Arab Migration to Western Societies

Arab migration to Western societies is not a recent event. Arabs have been migrating to the United States since the early 1800s. Between 1880 and 1938 an estimated two hundred and fifty thousand Arabs emigrated to the United States (Nigem, 1986, cited in Meleis & Hattar-Pollara, 1995). Arabs also began to emigrate to Australia in the 1880s. Broadly speaking, the Arab influx into Western societies has increased remarkably during the past 50 years. This is a result of political and economical instability in Arab countries, something that began with the political situations that accompanied such historical events as the Palestinian problem of 1947, the Lebanese politico-religious conflicts, and the 1990 Gulf war in Iraq. It is currently estimated that around six million Arabs live outside the Arab world. Current estimates now show that there are more than four million Arabs living in the United States, nearly 200,000 in Canada, 500,000 in the United Kingdom (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000), one million in Australia (http://www.immi.gov.au), and 11,000 in New Zealand (http://www.stats.govt.nz).

According to Dara (2001), Arab migration, 'depending on the objectives', falls into three different types of human migration:

a) Migration caused by fear and pressure: e.g., wars, famines, draughts, diseases and brutal rulers. These kinds of migrants are conventionally termed "refugees". (e.g., the Iraqi and Afghani refugees in both New Zealand and Australia);

b) Migration caused by the search for a new and better life: as was the case with the migration of millions of Europeans to the Americas, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. This was a voluntary migration that was motivated by the dreams and ambitions of discovering new paradises that would provide an enhanced life for the immigrants; and

c) Migration caused by a combination of both factors (a) and (b) in varying proportions.

The Arab Family: Functional and Structural Roles
Family in Arab culture is considered an influential factor in Arab society. The Arab family is regarded as the central unit of the society. The Arab family is also considered the economic, social, and at times political institution by which each member acquires his or her identity (Patai, 1983). Generally, the family is more important than the individual, and more influential than nationality. Regard for the importance of family in Arab culture is age-old tradition and goes to the heart of the Arab personality and the culture as whole. Many Arab families raise their children following an authoritative design. According to Barakat (1993), this particular style reinforces the Arab socialisation process, as it moulds the children into competent and capable adult members of society, though it is arguable that this authoritative style mostly assists in the shaping of the male child's personality. It encourages a male child to practice on his family the same authority that his father practiced and especially on the female members of the family, who are considered more susceptible and less resistant. In Western culture when a Western person talks about family, they are most likely referring to their nuclear family; when an Arab talks about family, they are referring to their parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws and friends who have become like family (Meleis & Hattar-Pollara, 1995, cited in Adams, 1995). This unique description displays the importance of family in Arab culture and its strong close-knit family structure, as each individual in the family relies on one another in times of social or financial need.

The Arab family considers family honour, status and reputation to be an important concern for each individual. As a result of this family dependence, each member of the

family is expected to maintain, protect and enhance the family's honour and reputation. The individual is expected to put the family's best interest before his or her own personal interest. Thus, every family member in the Arab family is usually considered responsible for the behaviour and even for the living conditions of other members. Haj-Yahia (2000), proclaimed that the Arab individual's commitment towards his or her family "often leads one to forego personal aspirations, needs and desires in exchange for the family's well being, as well as for maintaining the family's reputation and honour" (p. 239). The pursuit of family honour and status encourages the members of the family to abide by cultural and traditional customs in order to be respected and idolised by other family members and society. The enhancement and prosperity of the Arab family's status and pride encourages the family members to seek educational and financial progress in order to 'whiten the face'[4] of the family among other Arab families in general and among Arab society in particular. If one member enhances the family's name and status, then the face of the family is 'whitened'. Consequently, when one member brings shame or dishonour to the family, all members are shamed and disgraced and their face is 'blackened'. The disgrace a family member brings to the family can be carried across to succeeding generations of the family, thus forever smudging the family's name. That is why many Arabs regard the blackening of the face an issue that can cause great damage to the status of the family.

Arabs draw much of their identity from their role in the family. The family provides support and security and offers the members a feeling of belonging and identity. Research in this area indicates that the roots of the Arabic word for 'family' (*usra*) means "to support" (Patai, 1983). The father in the Arab family is seen as the main provider; the mother's role is mainly seen as the homemaker and once the parents reach old age the children provide support to their parents (Barakat, 1993). Although in Arab culture the father is assigned as the household provider and family power, it is the wife who actually exercises power over the children. She is entrusted with raising the children according to their culture and implanting the religious and cultural practices and beliefs in the children. Children are obliged to respect their parents, to conform to their suggestions and accept their advice without disgruntlement or defiance. The

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[4] The face of Arab family is a notion that is used by Arabs to describe the family's reputation, honour, and status. Note how it is considered 'face' and not 'faces': this reflects how Arabs regard the family as 'one'.

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children in the Arab family are also expected to live within the cultural expectations. According to Zahr and Hattar-Pollara (1998), Arab children are "expected to obey and respect their parents and elders, to be loyal to the family, to demonstrate filial piety and parental devotion, especially for elderly parents" (p. 350). This respect and obedience towards the elders is due to the important role age plays in the structure of the Arab family. Age relates to wisdom and experience; at times no important decision is made without consulting an elder family member. Older men are highly respected within their family and have a higher status than all the members. Older women maintain a higher status than men who are younger than they are (Barakat, 1993).

In general, Arab culture dictates that it is important for individual Arabs to behave in ways that reflect well on others, and especially their family, at all times (Erickson & Al-timimi, 2001). In Arab culture, children are seen as a source of higher social status amongst the Arab society. They provide a purpose in life and they also provide continuity of the family's name; and because males carry on the family's name, they are more desirable than females (Zahr & Hattar-Pollara, 1998). In some Arab countries, when a son is born the family sacrifices two goats for his birth and only one for the birth of a girl. The newborn son is carried around and indulged by his mother or sisters more than a newborn girl would be. On the other hand, female children are considered weak and vulnerable and at times a burden. This is a result of the parent's permanent worry over the welfare of their daughters, as the Arab daughter is considered the family's *sharaf* (honour) and *sumaa* (reputation).

Arab Daughters: Sharaf and Sumaa
Sharaf in Arab culture is a general concept that outlines different forms of honourable behaviour or situations. Patai (1983) mentioned a few of the generic concepts of honour which Arab culture embraces. For a man, honour is derived from having numerous sons; it is honourable for a man to engaged in certain types of work, and it is dishonourable for a man to stay at home while his wife is the main household provider; it is honourable to be generous and hospitable; it is honourable to have pure Arab blood from both the father's side and the mother's side. Patai (1983) discussed how honour in the Arab world is crucial for the continued existence of an Arab family, it not only strengthens the family, but it also serves its interests. Arabs take pride in being labelled as honourable and respectable people. Any action that a member of the family might do

which does not go according to cultural and social norms, would result in damage to the family's honour and, in some extreme cases, it would destroy the family's honour (bringing about its loss) (Patai, 1983). The males in the family have the responsibility of making sure that its members do not behave in a way that would damage or jeopardise the family's honour and reputation. Most importantly, Arab honour is directly connected to the chastity of Arab females. Loss of honour results from the loss of a daughters virginity, which must be avoided at all costs (Hattar-Pollara & Meleis, 1995a). Arab women are required to protect and guard their family's honour until marriage. Thus, premarital sex is forbidden and considered a great sin in Arab culture and the Islamic religion. Any possibility of damaging the daughter's honour will bring shame and great disgrace to her family. The Arab daughter is referred to as a *Bint*, a notion that means an unmarried-virgin daughter, regardless of her age.

According to Patai (1983), Arab men are responsible for protecting and supervising Arab women since they are 'too weak' to be relied on in protecting their own honour, especially as it is regarded such an important responsibility. If honour is lost, then the family's *karama* (dignity) is lost. If the Arab woman loses her honour, this would cause the loss of honour for her entire family, thus losing their face, self-respect and reputation. In the old days, and still currently in some Arab tribes, if a man lost his honour as a result of a woman in his tribe losing her honour, the woman had to be killed by her brothers or father to 'wash' their smudged honour[5]. The importance of the female's chastity and honour is clearly a crucial concern for Arabs. Arab females can, and do, play a conspicuous role in determining the honour of her family in a unique way that would affect the family's reputation directly (Abou-Zeid, 1965, cited in Peristiany, 1965). That is why it is preferred that Arab daughters marry as soon as they reach a suitable age for marriage, which varies among Arab families. This way the daughter is no longer the responsibility of her father, but becomes the responsibility of her husband and his family.

The Arab Family in Western Society
Whether the decision to emigrate was voluntarily taken, planned, or forced due to political, or economical disruption, or any other causes, it nevertheless remains a difficult and distressing decision for many Arab families, especially for those who have

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[5] This practice is also referred to as 'honour killings'.

adolescents or young children. Raising adolescents can be a challenging experience for most parents and especially for Arab migrants who live far away from the support of their extended family (Hattar-Pollara, & Meleis, 1995a). As previously mentioned, immigration problems arise when the culture of the host society conflicts considerably with the immigrant's culture. Arab parents in particular struggle in the process of immigration as a result of the confusion between retaining Arab culture and values, encouraging their children to maintain them and yet still encouraging their children to adapt to and integrate with Western society.

The Arab family is also expected to protect their members and keep them in line with cultural and traditional customs to prevent them from being westernised (Meleis & Hattar Pollara, 1995, cited in Adams, 1995). The Jordanian women in the study conducted by Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a) spoke of their great concern for their children who are being raised in the United States. The mothers expressed their fear that their children would lose their Arab heritage and religion, and forget the cultural customs and values of Arab culture, as a result of absorbing Western culture and behaviours. The mothers also stated their concern that their children would begin to date, lose respect for the elderly and their parents, become self-centred, and attempt to behave like American adolescents. Evidently, these behaviours would risk the family's name, reputation, and honour.

It is important to note that there has been scarcely any study of the effect that immigration has on the younger Arab generations, although they are regarded as the most vulnerable members of the immigrant's family. Nevertheless, a classic investigation on Arab adolescents was conducted in the United States by Elkholy in 1966. In his study, Elkholy (1966) described the cultural conflicts which adolescent Arab immigrants experience in the United States and how these conflicts are a result of social and educational factors. Elkholy (1966) illustrated that the children of Arab immigrants absorbed the Western cultural values and behaviours and demanded more freedom from their parents and their cultural restrictions. According to his study, this freedom conflicted with the Arab parents' desire to maintain control over their children's behaviour (Elkholy, 1966, cited in Hattar-Pollara et al. 1995b).

In Arab countries, adolescence is early, brief, and less stormy than it is in the West. This is a result of the Arab individual's role being outlined and defined since birth and the range of individual identities limited (Hattar-Pollara et al. 1995a). Western culture on the other hand, encourages independence and it emphasises the individual's accountability for behaviour. The Western adolescent would form his own identity independently of his family while constructing strong peer relationships. Arab adolescents form their identity according to their role in their family. The Arab adolescent is obliged and bounded by cultural and traditional values that encourage the individual to subordinate themselves to the family group. Consequently, the conflict between these cultural values causes great concern for Arab immigrant parents trying to raise their Arab children according to Arab norms in a Western society. This dissimilarity between values and cultural structures may increase intergenerational as well as intercultural conflicts among immigrant families in general, and among Arab families in particular (Elkholy, 1966, cited in Hattar-Pollara, 1995b). That is why Arab parents in Elkholy's study expressed great sorrow and despair when they sensed that their children were distancing themselves from the family, thus risking the traditional structure of Arab family.

Arabs in New Zealand
New Zealand is a multicultural immigrant society that has had its fair share of the Arab immigration influx. In 1996, there were less than five thousand Arab immigrants in New Zealand. Currently, the 2001 New Zealand census indicates that there are now more than eleven thousand Arabs in New Zealand from various Arab nationalities (http://www.stats.govt.nz). This great increase in Arab migrants is a result of the continuous political, economical and social conflicts in the Arab countries. Arabs who immigrate to Western societies tend to do so foreseeing a better future for themselves and their children, far away from wars and economical struggle.

Arabs have been flowing to countries that accept them, provide them with social and economical support, and peaceful harmonious living, far way from any damaging conflict. New Zealand gained its popularity among Arab immigrants as a country that provides those criteria. The Arab community in New Zealand is largely a community of intact extended families. The vast majority of Arabs in New Zealand who migrated with

their families in the mid-1990s applied for family reunification with other members of their extended family who remained in their homeland.

In addition, the 1990 Gulf war in Iraq caused many Iraqis to leave their homeland and immigrate to or seek refugee in Western countries. New Zealand has seen a large increase in Iraqi immigrants nation wide. In 1996, the New Zealand census indicated that there were only 963 Iraqi migrants residing in New Zealand. The current 2001 census estimates that there are 2,145 Iraqis residing in New Zealand, 480 of them between the ages range of 10 and 19 years old (http://www.stats.govt.nz). As a result, the Iraqi community is one of the largest Arab migrant communities in New Zealand.

Arab immigrants tend to live fairly closely together and prefer interacting with people of their own nationality. This is because Arabs regard it as important to be around people who share their language, religion and cultural customs in order to maintain their Arab heritage and familiarise their children with these customs. That is why immigrants usually have their own organizations and why they establish their own religious places. As mentioned, they do so in order to create an environment which would be similar to their home environment, so they would be able to maintain their culture and religion and to assist the subsequent generations to retain Arab customs and values (Hattar-Pollara & Meleis, 1995a; 1995b). Various Arab and Muslim community based groups and institutions have opened as a result of the increasing number of Arab migrants in New Zealand. Over half of the Arab immigrants settle in Auckland (52%), with only 19% living in the Wellington region and only 9% in Canterbury (Thomson, 1999). The majority of Iraqi immigrants tend to reside in East Auckland (in Pakuranga or Howick) and on the North Shore, mainly around Glenfield or Birkenhead (ANZCS, 2002)[6].

The organisations are important as they enable Arab immigrants to remain in touch and preserve their ethnic identity and Arab values. These organisations include the opening of an Arabic school in Auckland in the mid 1990s, which teaches Arab migrant children the Arabic language, the teachings of Islamic religion and Arab history. More than 29 Islamic centres have been built in NZ, 8 of them been built in Auckland. There has also been an increase in the emergence of various Arab associations that have been

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[6] Personal communication, (ANZCS) October 20, 2002.

encouraging Arab migrants, young and old, to attend seminars and other cultural activities in order to sustain Arab culture and customs. These Arab associations include the ANZCS, the Lebanese Society of Auckland Inc., the Somali Friendship Society, the Egyptian Association, the Palestinian Association, and many more. In addition, the very first Arabic radio station was launched in Auckland on the 1st of July 2002.

It is also important to note that the majority of Arab immigrants who arrived in New Zealand did so during the mid to late 1990s through the General Skills Category, a point-based system that is based on factors such as qualification, age and work experience (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2002). In a research report for the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs, Thomson (1999) indicated that in 1996, 63% of Arab immigrants in New Zealand held University degrees compared to 16% of New Zealanders. Nevertheless, only 40% of Arabs in New Zealand were employed in 1996 and mostly in jobs that were not in their areas of expertise. Due to the structure of roles in Arab families, Arab males are more likely to seek jobs in New Zealand than females. Arab males are inclined to work long hours outside the home. Thus the Arab mother faces alone the responsibilities of raising her children according to Arab protocol: passing on the Arab culture and heritage; maintaining their Arab values; and making sure that her children do not become westernised and lose the importance of Arab values. All this is often done without the assistance of her extended family.

For Arab migrants in general, ethnic identity is formed through culture and traditional practices and beliefs that are transported from the homeland. Thus, Arabs who arrive in New Zealand at a very young age, and are raised in a Western society that has its own different beliefs and traditions, are faced with an apparent dilemma. The younger Arabs are expected to be the conduits through which the homeland traditions and culture are either transmitted and preserved, or lost. According to Portes (1996) the second-generation migrants become a critical point from which to examine the processes of ethnic identity formation and acculturation. Indeed, they are the first in their family to spend the majority of their life, if not all, in New Zealand. Issues of identity, language, economic mobility, ethnic community and intermarriage become fundamental areas of adaptation for the subsequent generations. Unfortunately, there is little information about Arabs in New Zealand, although their number is significantly high. For that reason, I am not able to shed further light on this ethnic group.

The Aims and Objectives of this study

Research regarding Arab migration to Western society has been relatively scarce even with the increase of Arab influx to Western countries. As mentioned previously, Arab cultural adaptation and preservation is an issue that is highly important for Arab migrants in general and Arab mothers in particular. Female Arabs are considered the honour and reputation of Arab family. As previously mentioned adolescent immigrants mix and socialise with peers who have different values and customs. Such values and customs can be considered inappropriate for an Arab immigrant in general, and a female Arab immigrant in particular. Therefore, Arab parents will seek to protect their daughter from the influence of Western culture, in order to prevent them from behaving inappropriately. On one hand, there has been little study regarding Female Arab immigrants in Western society. On the other hand, there has been relatively no research at all regarding Arab adolescents and their experience of cultural adaptation and preservation in Western society.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore how female Iraqi Arab migrants talk about various issues regarding Arab migration and cultural preservation in Western societies. This study will contribute greatly to the psychological field. It will enrich the reader with details regarding Arab migrants and Arab culture that has not been explored in other research studies. This study will promote the understanding of how a minority group such as Iraqi Arab migrants perceive life to be in New Zealand society. Therefore, the three objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Investigating how Arab mothers talk about and make sense of Arab culture;
2. Investigating how Arab daughters talk about and make sense of Arab culture;
3. Investigating the intergenerational relationship between parents and children as parents attempt to preserve and pass on Arab culture and values to their children while living in Western societies.

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

Participants

Ten participants, five mothers and five daughters, were included in this study. The mothers were aged between 41 and 46 years old, and the daughters aged between 15 and 24 years old. All participants had been in New Zealand for more than 4 years, with an average of 6 years of New Zealand residency. These participants had met the following criteria: the participants had to be Iraqi Muslim mothers who had daughters aged 15 years or older; and both mother and daughter had to have been living in New Zealand for more than 2 years.

Four of the mothers were unemployed and had relatively little contact with Western society; only one mother indicated that she was working part time at a local school. All the mothers stated that they were able to hold a simple conversation in English if it was required. Also, four of the mothers had previously been to a Western country and only one mother indicated that she had not left Iraq before migrating to New Zealand. This mother also indicated that New Zealand society was the first time she had ever had contact with a Western society. All mothers were wives of highly educated husbands who had migrated to New Zealand through the General Skills Category, which is a point-based system that is based on factors such as qualification, age and work experience (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2002).

Initially, access to participants was arranged through the Arab New Zealand Cultural Society (ANZCS), which had provided me with a letter of approval indicating their assistance in providing me with participants who are members of their cultural society (**see Appendix A**). The ANZCS had agreed to allow me to attend one of the club's monthly gatherings and give a 30-minute presentation regarding my study. During the presentation, I outlined the nature of my study, the purpose of conducting such a project, and details regarding Arab migration to Western societies. An information sheet was provided for the members, I discussed in detail its contents and most importantly their rights as participants in this project. I also asked the members to pass on the

information I had provided them with, to friends or mothers who were unable to attend the meeting.

After my brief presentation, the members showed their interest in my study by additionally questioning me about my project and they expressed their appreciation that finally someone from their culture had decided to conduct a scientific study about Arabs in New Zealand. After their questions had been answered to their satisfaction, I passed around to the female members who seemed eager to participate in my study a sheet of paper, and I asked them to write their names and phone numbers so that I could contact them during the week. Nevertheless, despite the members' encouragement and enthusiasm towards my study, they were hesitant and reluctant to volunteer to participate.

As a result, no one signalled their willingness to participate. A reason behind their reluctance to participate may be due to the nature of this study. Members may have felt personal discomfort in talking to me about their immigration experience. Additionally, another reason behind their unwillingness to participate may have been due to the nature of my academic field. The area of psychology remains socially stigmatised amongst Arab culture as being an area that deals with people who are mentally unstable - *majnoon*. Thus, Arab members feared that if they were to participate publicly in front of the other members it would reflect on them badly.

The next method I used in order to collect participants was by placing an advertisement in the ANZCS monthly newsletter. The ANZCS newsletter is posted out to more than 100 Arab members every month. The ad was written in English and a brief synopsis of the research project was outlined in addition to my contact details. I also gave the members the option of contacting the President of the ANZCS if they chose to, and he would pass their details on to me. However, this method also failed to achieve any success.

Nevertheless, determination led me to another method for gaining participants. This method is referred to as the "snowballing technique," in which one participant (mother) recommends that I talk with another participant (mother) who they know of that might be interested in participating in the study and who meet the criteria. Through this

method, I found four participants, two mothers and two daughters. The other six participants heard about my study through word of mouth from family and friends, and expressed their interest in participating in my research.

Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants. This procedure was approved by the ethics committee at the Albany Campus of Massey University. Each interview was performed in Arabic and/or English depending on the participant's preference, and lasted no more than 1-hour. I personally tape-recorded and transcribed the interview transcripts in full. The aim of these interviews was to assist us in understanding how Iraqi migrants in New Zealand talk about the preservation of their ethnic and cultural identity, how they pass their Arab heritage to the next generation, and the effect the generational gap between parents and children has on the intergenerational transition. In general, the interview points covered the meaning of Arab culture according to the Iraqi mothers and daughters. The interview points also encouraged the participants to discuss the methods by which Arab culture is transmitted across generations from Arabs born in Arab societies to younger Arabs brought up in Western society. The points that were raised in the interviews started off by encouraging the participants to discuss how they felt before migrating to New Zealand, and then they were asked how they felt after arriving and settling in New Zealand. Then the points addressed their understanding of Arab culture and how they maintain their Arabic cultural practices and beliefs in New Zealand. The daughters were encouraged to talk about New Zealand society and the differences between Arab culture and Western culture. Additionally, participants were invited to talk about how it is to be an Iraqi female in New Zealand (**see Appendix B for the interview points**). All the mothers chose to have their interviews in Arabic, whereas all but one daughter preferred to be interviewed in both Arabic and English languages. Mothers and daughters were interviewed separately.

Prior to conducting the interviews, information sheets were provided for the participants in both Arabic and English (**see Appendix C**). The information sheet outlined the purpose of the study, the procedure that each participant would be going through, confidentiality, and their rights as participants in this study. Also, contact details for my

supervisor and myself were provided in the information sheet in case the mothers or daughters had further concerns or queries regarding this study. After the study was outlined and explained to the participants, I asked if they had any questions or concerns regarding the study or their participation. Once their questions had been answered to their full satisfaction and their rights as participants were explained to them, they were asked to sign the Consent forms (**see Appendix D**).

In order to create a rapport and to make the participants feel comfortable talking about their personal experiences or culturally sensitive issues; 'small talk' was made prior to the recording of the interviews. Consequently, the points that were used in these semi-structured interviews were adjusted depending on the participant's age or personal background and they occasionally required some change in their context or wording. Also, it was naturally expected that I personally invest my own experiences into these interviews in order to facilitate an easier flow of conversation, as some of the interviews required little prompting by me, whereas other interviews required more clarification and effort in order to maintain a successful flow of conversation. To ensure that participants remain anonymous, each person was identified with an initial, in addition to identifying a mother with the letter M, and a daughter with the letter D.

Analysis of data

Aside from underlining a word or part of a word that participants would stress or emphasise, the interviews were transcribed without the use of any specific transcription notation. It is important to indicate that for the interviews that were conducted in Arabic the scripts needed to be translated from Arabic to English before analysing them. For some Arabic words a literal translation was not possible, because Arabic is structured very differently than English. Nevertheless, during translation, I tried as much as possible to find an equivalent meaning for Arabic words in English. However, for those words that did not have a clear-cut equivalent term in English the original Arabic word was used and a detailed explanation of the words meaning was provided (**see the Glossary**).

The steps that I undertook in order to analyse the data was to read the transcripts thoroughly and then to re-read them several times, on one of these occasions without analysis. The reason behind reading the text without analysis is that it allows us to experience, as readers, some of the discursive effects of the text (Willig, 2001). In other words, reading the text before analysing it allows us to become aware of 'what the text is doing'. During the reading, I was looking for recurring expressions of speech, or themes, statements and claims that appear to talk about or represent an event in similar ways, for metaphors that portray the events described, and for words which seem to have underlying meanings. I was looking for the hidden meanings behind the talk: contradictions; claims; blame allocation; justification; and subject positioning that constructs an event. Often, the participants would use the same word or statement but construct it differently depending on the situation.

When these statements or phrases were identified, I saved them into separate files so I would be able to further analyse them later. I then made a list of the themes and key findings from each transcript and tried to link them together. Thus, it was through this thorough procedure that particular discourses from the transcripts emerged and they were identified and stated in my findings section. It is also important to note that coding the transcripts were not completely dependent on the points in the interviews, but they did assist in the clarification and illustration of the data. At the end of the procedure, and after reflecting on the themes that I had found, I spent a considerable amount of time writing and interpreting the findings and, with the assistance of the objectives of this study, I tried to link the themes together in order for them to correspond with the objectives outlined in this thesis.

Reflexivity

"Reflexivity allows the researcher to excavate, articulate, evaluate, and in some cases transform the collective unconscious she or he deploys in structuring research activities as well as in apprehending and interpreting what is observed." (Johnson & Cassell, 2001, p. 131)

The researcher's reflexivity is one dimension on which qualitative research may be assessed (Willig, 2001). Reflexivity calls on the researcher to interrogate their own

assumptions and their own impact on the research process, and as researchers in the area of social sciences, we cannot detach ourselves from applying our own experiences or beliefs onto the way we analyse or approach our research. Hence, the notion of reflexivity allows us to identify the way in which our own perspectives regarding the researched area affect the way that we analyse and interpret our results. Thus, the researcher (or the interviewer) becomes part of a dynamic relationship within which interview data are produced. According to Chamberlain (2001), the researchers are inter-related with the research as a result of being part of the social world they are exploring.

Chamberlain (2001) suggested that reflexivity raises three inter-related questions that researchers need to approach in order to investigate the nature of their involvement and their effect on the researched area. Firstly, who is the researcher?; secondly, what do they bring to the research?; and thirdly, how does this all impact on the outcomes and findings of the research? This type of reflexivity is referred to as *personal reflexivity*. In addition to the involvement of the researchers personal values and experiences, it also involves thinking about how the research might have affected and changed us, as researchers and as people (Willig, 2001). Thus, these questions will be answered in the light of my study.

Firstly, who is the researcher? I am a first-generation, young, female Iraqi Muslim completing my Master's degree in psychology in New Zealand. I migrated to New Zealand with my family in late 1996. I became interested in Arab migration and cultural adaptation in Western societies for to several reasons, the first being that I myself am a female Iraqi Muslim immigrant. The second reason is that, after completing an undergraduate project regarding Arabs in New Zealand, I became more interested in the area of Arab cultural adaptation and preservation in Western society. Finally, the third reason behind me being interested in this research area was that there has been no previous research whatsoever done regarding this ethnic group in New Zealand although their numbers have been increasing considerably since the late 1990s.

The increase in the number of Arab migrants triggered many questions I wanted to explore, such as, how do they adapt in Western societies? How do they feel as Arab expatriates? What is it like being an Arab migrant in New Zealand, and what happens to

the Arab cultural and traditional practices? Later on, when I had decided to complete a Master's degree, I approached my supervisor who assisted me in forming my research points in a more insightful and direct manner. I chose to explore this study discursively; to investigate how these migrants use language as an active and constructive method to form their own meaning of culture, traditions, and the transition of Arab culture across subsequent generations.

The second question that needs to be dealt with is, what do I bring to the research? As previously mentioned, being an Arab migrant and of the younger generation and despite having lived in New Zealand for quite a period of time, I was brought up according to Arab culture and traditions, and according to the Islamic religion. My parents passed on to me the language (Arabic), religion (Islam), and the cultural practises and customs of traditional Arab culture. Thus, what I bring to the research is my appreciation and acknowledgment of Arab values and beliefs. Which leads us to the third question, how did this all impact on the researcher and the researched?

I felt I was able to more fully appreciate and understand the concerns that Arabs go through when migrating to the unknown world of Western societies. I felt empathy towards the concerns of the mothers, and towards the subtle (yet apparent) confusion which daughters were experiencing. I felt that I had achieved a greater understanding of how Arab migrants struggle to maintain their Arab identity, which is the soul of their whole existence.

As for the participants, it was the first opportunity for them to discuss their immigration experience in such depth and detail. The interview topics that we discussed caused them to think about their resettlement in more depth and insight, and a few participants thanked me for helping them look at their migration experience in a different way. Participants mentioned that talking about their migration experience allowed them to see their experience in a different and more insightful light. One of the mothers expressed her gratitude that someone was finally willing to listen to the struggle Arab mothers go through when migrating to Western societies. A couple of mothers also became quite emotional when talking about their migration experience and broke down in tears a few times, but slowly regained their calmness once again during the interview. These mothers later stated that they felt a sense of relief in being able to talk about this

matter and they felt that there were many underlying issues regarding this topic that they had not really considered before. This was also the response I got from the daughters, as some of them stated that talking about culture and the preservation of Arab culture was an issue they had not really considered before, and that my interview points made them think deeply about this issue.

My cultural sense of belonging and awareness assisted me in being able to 'fit in' with the interviewees or the participants. I had the cultural and religious background knowledge and I knew the Arabic language. These characteristics allowed a type of 'comfort' and 'mutual understanding' between the participant and myself. When evaluating and analysing the data, I am able to understand where the participant is coming from, due to the similar values and assumptions we share regarding the Arab culture and its traditions.

Methodology

Discourse Analysis – The Turn to Language

"A large part of our activities are performed *through* language; our talk and writing do not live in some purely conceptual realm, but are mediums for action" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 9).

Researchers have been quite interested in the use of language in our social interactions and social life. Without question, language is central for all social activities, and it is also a natural and simple way of communicating which at times we take for granted. Discourse analysis is a qualitative method that has been used to understand how people use talk to construct events, happenings, or objects (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). It examines how people use discourses in their ordinary conversations, and it pays attention to what people are doing when they make such a claim about emotions, thoughts, or other personal views (Billig, 1992). According to Potter and Wetherell (1987), discourses do not simply 'express' or reflect meanings; rather, meanings are 'constructed' through discourses. However, Potter and Wetherell (1987) stated that when people talk about a certain event or try to make sense of an account, they might be unconsciously constructing that event and trying to make sense of it by using social

activities such as justification or blaming. Parker (1992) on the other hand carefully noted that discourse should be defined as "a system of statements which construct an object" (p. 5). Parker (1992) claimed that for that to take place, researchers have to make sure that a number of conditions are met and Parker (1992) stated these conditions in the first chapter of his book (see, Parker 1992, Chapter 1). According to Parker (1992), objects such as intelligence or love only exist through meanings that are brought about by things people do or say. In other words, "discourses allow us to see things that are not "really" there, and that once an object has been elaborated in a discourse it is difficult not to refer to it as if it were real' (Parker, 1992, p. 5).

Other researchers such as Willig (2001) suggest that social psychologists and researchers in discourse analysis should look at discourse analysis as a particular way of reading what the text is 'doing' rather than what the text is 'saying'. This approach allows us, as researchers, to see the underlying meanings of talk rather than taking what people are saying as actual statements of an event. According to Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987), discursive findings suggest that people do not consistently articulate a particular event or object, but draw on many inconsistent systems in order to make sense of that particular object. Broadly speaking, discourses of an event or object change depending on the situation it is talked about. For example, Arab participants can talk about and construct Arab culture to an Arab interviewer differently than they would if they talked about and constructed Arab culture to a Western interviewer. In general, language does not only 'describe' things, it 'does' things.

There are three reasons why I chose discourse analysis as my method of analysis for the present study: first, because of my developing interest in the area of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis expands our personal horizons and makes us realise our own shortcomings and acknowledged motivations, as well as that of others. Second, the nature of this research project required the use of a methodological tool that would capture details and information that standard quantitative tools would not be able to obtain. I believe that discourse analysis will provide me with a great amount of insightful and profound information regarding the researched topic. In discourse analysis, people's talk and accounts that are formed should not be assumed as being factual reports or concrete descriptions of events or beliefs. Rather, discourse analysis encourages us as analysts to treat the interview materials as 'moral tales' that people

construct depending on their situation at that given time (Whetherell 1999, cited in Davidson & Tolich, 1999) Thus, participants in this study will be making sense of events or beliefs by using resources of their culture and beliefs. In a sense, they will be drawing on a range of cultural beliefs, thoughts, and representations to construct an event or an object. Participants will also be negotiating identities for themselves in the light of these constructs. These identities are not fixed, but they shift and change depending on their situation. The third reason behind choosing discourse analysis in addition to Arab migration being an area that has been scarcely researched, is that for the few studies that have investigated Arab immigration to Western societies, the researchers have done so using quantitative methods in most cases. I believe that quantitative methods would tend to discount or marginalise accounts of participants if used in this study. The aim of this study is to capture the accounts that are constructed by the participants or how they used certain discourses and draw on cultural beliefs and metaphors in order to make sense of events and construct objects. There has been no discursive research whatsoever on Arab immigrants in New Zealand thus far. This study shall be the first to use this method in the area of Arab immigration and cultural preservation in Western societies.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

1. Constructing the other

Participants in this study drew on various cultural, religious and ethnic discourses in order to construct the 'other'. The other is a notion that aptly described how Western people and culture are portrayed according to the participating female Arabs. The participants framed their accounts according to the differences that existed between Arabs in New Zealand and between Western people in New Zealand. Participants would draw on their own Arab identity to construct themselves as Arabs living in a Western culture and simultaneously construct the other. Positioning notions such as 'they', 'them', 'us' and 'we' were profusely and actively employed by the participants to construct Arabs and the other. In their talk, the participants constructed the other as being a group of people who are different ethnically, culturally and religiously from Arabs. When talking about themselves as Arab Muslims, the participants used notions such as 'we', 'us' and 'our', indicating assimilation to this group. Notions such as 'they', 'them', or 'their society' were used when referring to the other. Mothers would draw on their fear and concern that their children might lose their Arab identity to construct the other. Mothers would also refer to terms such as the looseness of the other, unrighteous behaviours that the other encourages and differences between Arab culture and Western culture when talking about Western society. Daughters on the other hand, drew on notions of difference with regards to language and behaviour, 'sticking out' from the other and family bonds of the other.

Arab mothers talking about the other

Comparing Western culture and Arab culture was a prominent way, used by participants in their talk to construct the other. According to the accounts formed by the mothers in this study, the other was constructed as a group of people that have a different set of beliefs, values and characteristics from Arabs. The mothers would draw on previous personal encounters with Western society and compare Arab culture to Western culture in order to construct the other. The existence of the cultural differences and the

emphasis on the notions that differentiated Arabs from Western society was evident in an interview with one of the mothers and an extract is provided below.

> My son's friend came over a few times and says whenever I pass by your house your house has a distinctive smell from the rest of the houses. He asks my son what does your mother cook for you? So you see, they realise we are different from them and at the same time I remind my kids no matter how long we stay here and mix with them in their society we remain Arabs and we are different than them. [H-M]

In this extract, the other are talked about as people who belong to a society that has a culture considerably different from Arab culture. The mother uses the notions of 'they', 'them' and 'their society' in order to construct a group of people who belong to this 'different' society. The mother talked about a 'Kiwi' friend of her son who commented that whenever he passed by her house it had a distinctive scent and always smelt of exotic food. She profusely used the differentiating notions of 'they' and 'we' in this extract, thus constructing the other. The mother began by stating that 'they realise we are different from them', indicating the actualisation of an existing cultural difference between Arabs and Westerners. The mother claims that 'they' or the other group who represent Western people realise that Arabs are different from them. This statement constructs Western society in New Zealand as a society that is aware and knowledgeable about the variation between them and other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, even though Western culture realises this difference, this did not prevent the mother from feeling obliged to have to remind her children that as Arabs they are different from Westerners. This responsibility is a result of her role as the cultural preserver and moral protector of the family. The Arab mother must guarantee that Arab culture and values are preserved. However, the mother's urge to remind her children of the existence of these cultural and ethnic differences does not mean that the Arab children do not realise that such differences exist. It was quite normal for the participating Arab mothers in this study to indicate that, when talking to their children, it is important to use the various differentiating notions such as 'them' and 'us' in order to separate Arab identity from Western identity. It is through this way of talking and her role as the cultural preserver in the family, that the mothers construct their Arab identity. As a result, the other is constructed as being those who live in a society which does not pursue the preservation of their culture. In this extract, the participant draws on her Arab identity by referring to

cultural and ethnic food and the distinctive scent of the Arab home in order to form the other. The other are constructed as being people who do not cook the same food as Arabs and who also do not have a distinctive Arab scent to their home. According to this mother, sustaining Arab Muslim identity is an important matter for every Arab individual and parents should take responsibility in making sure that their children are aware of the importance of this difference regardless of the amount of time Arabs spend living in Western society. This indicates some degree of non-assimilation towards Western society in New Zealand, as a result of the society not belonging to Arabs, but a society belonging to the Westerners, as it is 'theirs' and not 'ours'.

According to the accounts formed by the mothers in this study, Arab children in New Zealand are considered the endangered Arab generation as a result of this generation of Arabs being raised in Western society. Arab parents are concerned that their children might be influenced or tempted into behaving and taking aboard more of Western culture, than their own Arab culture. The fear that their children would lose their Arab identity was evident in the interviews with the mothers. This fear had a significant impact on Arab mothers determination regarding the importance that their children become aware that they as Arabs are different to Westerners. Talk regarding the structure of families in Arab culture compared to that of Western culture also warranted the construction of the other. The mothers talked about the important role of the family in Arab culture. The close-knit family bond was a distinctive feature that was associated with the strong structure of Arab families. Mothers talked about the important role of the family and home in providing a 'strong foundation' for the Arab child.

> Of course the concern and worry is continuous, it is always there, every Arab mother has to always be worried and also keep an eye on her children, because if there is no concern or worry of course the children will be one side and the religion on the other side. But concern will create alertness, how you ask me? Well when I fear for my children, I will keep an eye on them and have caution. So if I fear for my son or daughter I will take more precautions. More from the society, you know this country's traditions, behaviour and culture differs considerably from ours. But thank god... it's true they spend a lot time at school, but I realised that the family has such a great effect on them, both the girl and boy. [U-M]

In this extract, the mother constructed her identity and that of her children by drawing on her religious beliefs and her sense of belonging towards her family. Although the Maori are acknowledged as the actual people of New Zealand, in this interview, when the mother talked about the other she was in fact referring to European New Zealanders or Westerners. Here, the participant also constructed the other as people who have different traditions, practices and customs from Arabs. As an Arab mother, her Arab identity was formed by drawing on her maternal concerns regarding her children's upbringing and the fear of them going astray from their Islamic religion. Arab identity was talked about as a 'concern' that every Arab mothers has in Western society. Once more the mother stated that this fear stems from her concern that her children may lose their Arab Muslim identity in Western society. The other was constructed as being a society that is a source of this fear and is a bad influence on the Arab child's religious belief and ethnic identity. In addition, talking about 'this country' suggests that the mother does not feel a great deal of belongingness to New Zealand.

Mothers would also draw on Islamic beliefs and cultural regulations in order to justify the existing difference between Arabs and the other. Arabs were talked about as being people who belong to a culture and religion that set certain rules and regulations that Arabs have to abide by concerning their behaviour in any society. By abiding by these cultural rules, the individual is conforming to their culture and religion and therefore behaving according to how an ideal Arab individual should. Thus, this cultural conformity assists in sustaining Arab identity and as a result constructs the other who does not conform to these cultural and religious beliefs and who have different values. The surfacing of these cultural rules is mostly notable when Arabs live amongst a culture that is different from their own.

> For me the main thing is for my children to abide by our Islamic religion. For me this is the most important concern especially while we are living here amongst them. Because whoever puts Allah between his eyes as they say, he will be protected against doing wrong, because as long as you are thinking about halal and haram then you won't do wrong... and people won't talk. [W-M]

Here, the mother draws on her Islamic beliefs to illustrate a distinctive line between Arabs and the other. The mother constructs Western society as a culture that contains

evil and unrighteous behaviour which she is adamant to isolate its influence from her children's upbringing. Her stating that she is concerned about her children 'especially while we are living here amongst them' indicates that mother should not allow the other to affect their children's beliefs and behaviour. The other is constructed as a society who can influence Arab Muslims in deviating and committing sins. Arabs should have God between their eyes, which refers to Arabs having God on their mind and in their heart when attempting a task or behaving in a certain manner which might anger him. The mother draws on Islamic beliefs and on notions of permissible behaviours and sins to construct Arab identity. The other is constructed as a society who provides these sinful behaviours. The mother also referred to fear of being gossiped about which risks blackening the face of the family as a reason why Arabs should take caution of how they behave in Western society.

The mothers established an association between Western society and the liberation that people who belong to Western society benefit from. Being someone who belongs to Western society came to signify a state of looseness with regard to belonging to the group of the other. This association was expressed by the mothers in terms of the existence of intimate relationships between males and females in Western society. Mothers attributed that the looseness of Westerners is a result of their freedom which exceeds Arab freedom. Although having a boyfriend or a girlfriend is a feature that is not unique to the Western society alone, nevertheless it is considered inappropriate in Arab culture, even though it does occur. According to Arab culture, single or unmarried males and females are not allowed to form any bond or to have intimate relationships with one another. Western society positions Arabs as conservative, religious and righteous people who do not act in such ways.

> This society is a society of boyfriends and girlfriends. Their liberty is more, they're more advanced, as soon as they open their eyes, from primary school. I see at primary school that the mother comes and asks him who are you playing with, which girl do you like and who do you think pretty? Which girl do you love? Or where is your girlfriend? This all begins from primary so he opens his eyes to these things, that he has to have a girlfriend, he has to have someone he loves or plays with, and when he grows up it has to develop to something else. [A-M]

In this extract, Western society or the other is therefore constructed as a loose society that permits inappropriate behaviour. The mother talks about the freedom and openness that is associated with Western societies. The looseness of the other is justified as being

a result of the exceeded liberation that Westerners have and a result of Western upbringing that encourages children to 'open their eyes' to such unrighteous behaviours. Here, the mother constructs the other as being a group of people who have different mannerisms than Arabs. By constructing the other in this way, the mother is simultaneously forming the identity of Arabs, as being people who come from a culture that does not allow the same amount of freedom in their Arab society and who are a part of a culture that prohibits certain behaviours. For these Iraqi mothers, Western culture comes across as being an open and liberal society in which people can do as they wish regardless of the impact the behaviour might have on the individual's family. Hence, talking about the 'looseness' of Western society constructed the other as being those who belong to this liberated society. The Arab group is formed as being those who not only do not belong to this society, but who also take into account that their actions have a direct affect on their family as result of the Arab individuals concern over the family's reputation – sumaa.

> We always try to explain to our children, that they should take the good things from the western society, study like them, play sports like them, do diets like them…things like that that are good. But not things like, their careless liberty that causes drinking, drugs and what have you like them. These can't happen. So we tell them to learn the good things and avoid the bad things so you can balance things, so you can balance your life and not become loose like them. [A-M]

In this extract, the mother clearly used notions of 'them', 'the western society' and 'their careless liberty' to differentiate between Arabs and between the other who do not belong to their culture or have the same beliefs and values. Western society is constructed as being a society that has both positives and negatives. Arab parents try to explain to their children that they should take the benefits and leave the behaviours which go against Arab culture. Here, education, sports and health issues constitute the 'good side' of Western society. In contrast, carelessness, overindulgence of freedom which lead to inappropriate behaviour such as drinking and drugs constitute the 'bad side' of Western culture that Arabs should avoid. Western society not only represented the loose society, but it also represented the society that many positive benefits can be gained from. The mothers concern stems from their fear that the Western culture would tempt their children to become 'loose like them' referring to the other and that children

would deviate from the Arab norms, thus risking 'blackening' the face of the family and smudging its reputation. By constructing the other who drink, take drugs and have inappropriate relationships, the Arab identity is constructed as being a group of individuals who do not drink, do not use drugs and who do not engage in unacceptable relationships.

Fear and concern regarding Arab children deviating from the ideal Arab path was a reason why one of the mothers in this study went as far as labelling Western society in New Zealand as being a 'hell hole'. The mother stated that by migrating to New Zealand it seemed as if she had thrown her children into a blazing fire which can cause the family from suffering due to the burns of this fire. Here, the other are constructed as people who live in harmony inside this blazing fire which seems to only have negative consequences only on Arab families as a result of differing values and customs. The mother is concerned that her children may risk smearing their reputation if they are tempted by the deviated behaviour of Western society. The flames of the fire represented the deviated behaviours of the Western society that are against the Arab culture.

> I don't say to everything and anything no no, I brought him in the middle of the
> fire…me…I did this to him. I made him live in the middle of this hell hole. If I didn't
> want to worry myself it would have been best to keep him in my country and make him
> live there. [H-M]

In this extract, Western society is constructed as being a dangerous society that can cause painful outcomes equivalent to burns caused by a blazing fire. These outcomes represent the mother's painful experience in having to encounter her children trying to deviate from the Arab cultural norms, which can bring shame to the family's name. Talking about behaviours that may seem appropriate for a Western person and inappropriate for an Arab person also assisted the participant in constructing the other group. Western society is constructed as being a 'bad' society, which tempts the minority groups in behaving and acting in ways that conflict with Arab traditions and customs. Interestingly, fear and concern of being influenced in a negative way by the other was a reason why mothers mentioned that they solely mix with people who are from the same culture or ethnic background as they are. Nevertheless, the participants

indicated that the only contact they have with the other is when conducting formal visits to the doctor or governmental departments. The way in which Arab mothers isolate themselves from the other is illustrated in the excerpt below.

> My psychological relief is a result of me only mixing with our people who are like us, that are from our same country and from same traditions and culture. [A-M]

In this extract, the mother emphasised on the differentiating terms of 'our' and 'us', which consequently formed the Arab identity and the other. Here, the participant talked about her comfort and 'psychological relief', which is a result of the mother interacting with people who are from the same country as hers and who have the same culture and traditions. It is important to note, that according to this participant the other is constructed as a source of psychological discomfort or stress. This can be a result of conflicting traditions and beliefs between the two cultures. The mother states that the only way in which she finds comfort and support is by mixing with 'our people' who have the same understandings as the participant. This method of isolation is a natural reaction the Arab mothers prominently mentioned as a way of preventing the 'evil' influences of the other affecting their beliefs and customs.

It is important to note that although Western society was constructed as a 'bad' and evil society, however when the mothers compared the society in New Zealand to the rest of Western societies such as that in the United Kingdom or The United States, the New Zealand society was talked about as being conservative. Conservation and less corruption constructed Western society as a 'somewhat traditional' society.

> When I arrived in this country I started to compare things. This country is still somewhat traditional, like in regards to a corrupted society no it doesn't show much here. Twenty-five years ago, when we used to travel with our parents to European countries we see the corruption in other European societies. Over here and even after 25 years it is not that visible. [N-M]

Constructing Western society in New Zealand as 'somewhat traditional' is a direct contrast with the previously identified discourses of the other. However, mothers located the other within a construct of conservation when they began to compare Western society in New Zealand to other societies. By claiming that the other is a

society that is not as corrupted as other societies, the mother is constructing the other as being conservative and traditional. This works to legitimatise her position as 'safer' in New Zealand than other Western societies, and therefore Western society in New Zealand is not as bad as it might be in other countries. Attention is drawn to the fact that the mother compares the advancement of other European societies within a period of a quarter of a century in which corruption emerges in these societies in comparison to the society in New Zealand which after the same time frame remains 'somewhat' conservative. This signifies that Western society in New Zealand will in fact reach a stage where corruption does become 'visible'.

Arab daughters talking about the other

Like their mothers, the daughters in this study formed their accounts of the other according to differences between cultures, sticking out and not being like 'them' and feelings of rejection by the other. Daughters in this study also used notions of differentiation such as 'we', 'them', and 'us' when talking about Western society and Arabs. The Iraqi daughters talked about their awareness an existing cultural difference between Arabs and Westerners especially with regards to language and ways of communication. It is important to note that the daughters had direct contact with the other as a result of mixing with them at school or University. Daughters portrayed themselves as struggling to adapt to Western society and with the other. According to one of the daughters in this study, the other was constructed as being people that have a different set of beliefs and attitudes from Arabs. The other seemed to 'believe' and 'act different' from Arabs.

> Well you see everything is different, school is different, language and it was quite hard to learn it at the beginning. The culture was different, it was quite hard to communicate with people… from this country, you know, because the way they believe, you know, they act different like for them it's natural but we see it different because we have a different culture you see. [K-D]

In this extract, the daughter draws her Arab identity, cultural beliefs and language to construct the other. The other are constructed as individuals who do not share common customs and social settings as Arabs, such as the school setting, culture and Arabic language. Hence, by talking about how New Zealand's society varies considerably from an Arab society and using the notion of 'they' and 'them', which refers to the other, the

daughter is using social and cultural cues to assist her in shaping both the other and the Arab group.

Nevertheless, unlike their mothers, the daughters in this study talked about their feelings of belongingness and pride in being Arab. These young Arabs talked about the importance of 'standing out from the crowd' as Arabs in New Zealand and mentioned that what distinguishes them from the other groups are not only their cultural practices but also their distinctive facial features.

> First of all I am proud of being an Arab in New Zealand and like I can say being an Arab in New Zealand and in a European country like it's great 'coz you are different...you stand out from the crowd. Like piercing or tattoos... like we shouldn't do it because we won't be able to stand out from the crowd. um like if one of us girls got her tongue pierced or something, she'd be like any other European chick, but because we... you know, we got the black hair the big eyes the olive skin and all of that we still stand out from the crowd. So we better stay... you know with our own way. [S-D]

In this extract, the young participant began my asserting that she is Arab first and foremost, positioning herself as being fundamentally very different from the other. Standing out from the crowd, not having bodily piercing, and having the facial features of Arabs assisted in constructing both the other and Arabs. The daughter emphasised the importance of having to behave in a certain way in order for the Arabs to be notably different from the other people. By being different, the Arab individual is constructing their own identity, as someone who does not have bodily piercing or tattoos in order for them not to be 'like any other European'. In doing so, the Arab individual is abiding by his or her own Arab traditions and culture, which according to this participant is the ideal way of behaving.

Another issue which the mothers in this study did not bring up, but there daughters did was comparing Arab family to Western family with relation to family bonds. According to the daughters in this study, Western society does not hold much regard to family and family bonds. Arab daughters talked about the weak family ties that connect Western families. The daughters compared the strong family bonds that Arabs have with the weak family bonds Western families have in order to construct the other. Weakness of family bonds among Western people functioned as a warrant whereby such family

relationships constructed the other as being a society of helpless and unreliable family relationships. The emphasis on family bonds was quite apparent in the interviews due to the important role the family plays in the life of the Arab society in general and the life of Arab individuals in particular.

> There is huge difference between the Arab culture and New Zealand culture. totally different 'cuz ok, ok you see the Arab culture they have these ideas that...first family bonds. Arabs are really really connected with each other you know the families, like cousins you go see them in Eid, you know you see them everyday you ring them up. Like my auntie and mum always call each other well you see the New Zealanders... that's what I picked up from the people I work with... they hardly see their family. [Z-D]

In this extract, the daughter drew her Arab identity from her cultural and traditional beliefs regarding family ties. The other was constructed as a result of the daughter's awareness of the weak ties the 'New Zealanders' have with their family. The repeated use of 'really' indicates the extent of difference between Westerners and the structure of their family's and Arabs who are 'really really connected' with their extended family. It is important to note, that this issue of comparing the role that the family plays in the life of Arabs and the other emerged significantly as a justification behind the notion of the 'loose' society.

Therefore, according to the differences in culture, ethnicity, customs, religion and beliefs the participants constructed the discourse of the other. The importance of being able to differentiate themselves as Arab Muslims, from the other people in New Zealand is a result of the significant role Arab identity plays in the formation of the Arab culture and family. For this reason, the construction of Arab culture will be discussed next.

2. Constructing Arab Culture

Participants constructed Arab culture through two major discourses: religion and heritage. According to these Muslim participants, Arab culture is either a product of Islamic teachings of the prophet Mohammed (pbuh) whose teachings were based according to Allah and the holy book the Koran, or a product of inherited cultural traditions and customs passed on through generations. Participants would also draw on both Islamic teachings and heritage in various ways to construct Arab culture. The

importance weight Islamic teachings and Arab heritage varied significantly among participants and especially between the two generations.

When talking about Arab culture, participants would draw on a religious discourse, whereby 'Allah', 'Koran', and the teachings of the 'Prophet Mohammed' are the main foundations that construct Arab culture. Mothers and daughters would draw on Islamic teachings as constructing the 'ideal' Arab culture that Muslim Arabs should abide to, but mothers talked about how Arab culture does not clash with religion as religion and culture are constructed as completing each other and being 'one'. Daughters on the other hand talked about how Arabs are confused and mix heritage with culture which affects the 'ideal' Arab culture as Islamic teachings are meant to be the perfect knowledge that Arab culture should be formed according to.

The mothers in this study would draw on the Islamic teachings stated in the Koran to construct Arab culture. Religion therefore was talked about as forming the backbone of Arab culture that all Muslim Arabs should abide by in order to be strong balanced 'good' Muslim Arabs. Arab culture was constructed as working together with the Islamic teachings in order to avoid cultural and religious 'clash', which would cause chaos amongst Muslim Arabs.

> Our traditions and culture don't clash with our religion. For us as Islamic religious people that come from an Islamic country, traditions don't clash with religion, so whatever our religion allows us, it becomes a tradition and whatever it doesn't allow us to do we stay away from it. You can say that the word tradition and culture are the traits of cultures and nations, but for us, as Muslims, our traditions and cultural practices come from our Islamic religion". [U-M]

In this extract taken from an interview with one of the mothers, the mother draws on her Islamic beliefs as being the bases of Arab culture and traditions. The mother used the notion of 'us', which differentiates her from other people including Arabs who are not Muslim and who do not hold the Muslim identity. In her talk, the mother positioned herself as being a religious Muslim that comes from an 'Islamic country' in which traditions are formed from religion. Arab culture and traditions are constructed, as beliefs and customs that abide by the Islamic religion and that do not clash against it. Therefore, culture is constructed according to the rules of Allah. In other words, the

mother used the discourse of religion to construct Islamic practices as being the borderline between what is allowed and what is not allowed in the Muslim Arab culture. Behaviour that clashes with the Islamic religion in Arab culture is seen as being a cause of sin, and misdeed. Furthermore, for any other ethnic or religious group, culture and traditions are constructed as being learnt 'traits' that these groups have, which are not based upon a strong foundation such as religion, in contrast to Muslim culture and beliefs that are predominantly based on the 'Islamic religion'.

The daughters also used the discourse of religion to construct Arab culture. The daughters pointed out that people should not confuse culture, which is a product of 'direct thoughts' of other people, with Islamic teachings. Arab culture was constructed as being 'whatever Allah tells you'. The daughters drew on the religious discourse by talking about 'sticking to religion' and the rules of Allah in the Koran, as opposed to 'whatever is passed on' from other generations, which does not necessarily have a significant impact on constructing Arab culture. Islamic teachings were constructed as being practices that Muslims are 'meant to know' and as teachings that are taken for granted by Arab Muslims.

> There are so many people that come here and forget about their religion ok... like if you stick to your culture you know, you're sticking to your religion, whatever Allah tells you. They aren't like whatever is passed on...you are meant to know them from the Koran. [Z-D]

Here, the daughter draws on the religious statements of Allah in the Koran to construct Arab culture. Interestingly, the daughter indicates an association between culture and religion. Arabs abiding to Arab culture abide are therefore abiding to religion and vice versa. According to this participant, culture constructs religion and religion constructs culture. Furthermore, to justify the importance of religion in constructing the 'ideal' Arab culture, customs and heritage were talked about as being 'anything and everything' that is passed on from previous generations. Therefore, these customs do not necessarily have a constructive influence on the formation of Arab culture; on the contrary, it can have a negative effect by preventing individuals from being 'free'.

They get our customs mixed up with our religion sometimes like yeah I get… like yeah… and they mix it up like I mean there are heaps of things our religion, like allows, but in our culture it's not… because of our people…they talk about one another like ok … but in the Koran it doesn't necessarily say you can't… you can, you are free, but you know our tradition's is what's stopping you from doing it. [F-D]

In this extract, the daughter positioned herself as being someone who realises the difference between religion and customs of Arab culture, and that 'they' which referred to Arabs who are not aware of this difference, are 'mixed up'. Although the daughter talks about customs being 'mixed up' with religion, the daughter clearly draws this belief from a religious discourse. Here, the daughter draws on her Islamic beliefs and the laws of the Koran, and constructs Arab culture. Hence, Arab culture is ideally formed according to what the Koran states and not according to all that is passed on from previous generations as cultural customs. Religion is constructed non-directly as forming Arab culture but customs and heritage that was passed on from previous generations interfered with the religious formation of Arab culture and resulted in this 'mix up' or confusion that Arab people are faced with. The participant used the notion 'our' frequently in this extract when referring to 'our religion', 'our culture', 'our people' and 'our traditions'. Consequently, even though the notion of 'our' denotes assimilation towards Arab people and culture, the participant nevertheless clarifies that Arabs should not take onboard all of what Arab culture has to offer because Arab culture is made up from confusing elements of religion and customs, covertly indicating that there are aspects of Arab culture that are incorrect. This clarification assisted the participant in positioning herself as an Arab individual who is aware of the 'mix up' between religion and customs by other Arabs.

Due to the powerful role that the Koran plays in a Muslims life, in addition to its holiness, it is also considered a sacred book of Islamic laws that are maintained over time. The daughter constructed the Islamic teachings mentioned in the Koran as an influential source in guiding Muslim Arabs towards what they can or cannot do in their culture. In other words, the Koran constructed Arab culture. Interestingly, the Islamic religion also formed freedom. According to this participant, if Arabs abide by the Koran and only the Koran in forming Arab culture, then Arabs will not be confused regarding what is allowed and what is prohibited as the Koran in its self indicates to Muslims

these matters. The freedom that religion offers to Arabs relates to being able to behave in whatever manner the individual wishes as long as it does not go against the Koranic laws thus risking Allah's wrath. The daughter constructs simultaneously constructs cultural customs and traditions as barriers that restrict Muslim Arabs from being able to exercise this freedom that religion offers, in addition to fearing gossip, which would cause disgrace to the family and blackening of the face. The Koran and religious beliefs are constructed as being the source of an 'ideal' Arab culture. The daughter indicates when a Muslim individual acts in a manner that is tolerated and accepted by the Koran and Islamic teachings, and even though it is not a custom or part of the culture, then they should not be judged nor gossiped about by people, risking their sumaa being tarnished because religion 'allows' it to happen and religion is based on Allah's words and Allah knows best.

Heritage which constitute as traditions and beliefs inherited from ancestors, and passed on through generations, formed the discourse of cultural inheritance. Participants talked about Arab culture as being a part of the 'way we were brought up'. The participants were brought up according to beliefs and customs passed on from their mothers who maintained and preserved them, and who in return had them passed on from their mothers so on and so forth. Arab culture is constructed according to the way Arab people in the past 'behaved and how they lead their lives'. The participating mothers talked about the discourse of cultural inheritance as forming not only Arab culture, but Arab identity as well.

> I think it's the way we were brought up... like for example when I think about it... a very long time ago...not my mother or even your mother or me, no, like I would see...my grandmother...or your great grandmother...how they behaved or how they lead their lives, and that's what makes us who we are. [H-M]

In this extract the mother draws on customs and values that previous generations were brought up on and who in return passed it on to her as forming 'who we are'. Arab culture was constructed through heritage and values of how Arabs in the past behaved

and lead their lives, indicating that Arabs in the past lead an 'ideal' life which forms an 'ideal' culture.

One of the daughters went as far as labelling Arab culture as being a 'pathway' through which they must walk. According to this young participant, Arab culture is constructed through traditions and customs which people were brought up on and passed on from previous generations. These traditions sustain Arab culture and Arab identity. The daughter talked about Arab culture being a 'pathway' that parents themselves had previously walked through when they were young. Evidently, this pathway is one through which all generations have to walk. Any individual, who strays from this route and chooses to create a pathway of their own, is perceived as a deviating individual who risks blackening the face of the family. Thus, the issue of freedom of choice in an Arab individual's life is also covertly mentioned here.

> It's something they have been brought up on for centuries and many years and they are trying to revive it in us and teach them to us, just as their parents did to them... yes you can say that, well not rules but the pathway that they walked through, they want us to walk through. Because if we don't abide by that we'll have our own path than theirs... and we wont turn out like them, and they want us to turn out like them. [N-D]

In this extract, Arab culture is talked about as a 'pathway' parents had previously walked through. The heritage discourse constructs Arab culture as a being formed through that which has been passed on from previous generations that form the 'ideal' way of living and in so doing produces certain helpful functions for the speaker, which interestingly emerges through her talk. First, the daughter repetitively uses the notions of 'they' and 'theirs' distancing herself from the ownership of this 'pathway'. Interestingly, although the daughter positions herself as a 'good Arab daughter' by walking through the same pathway as her parents, yet she indicates clearly through her talk that this pathway is not hers and is therefore not made by her but by her parents and previous generations. Here, the daughter refers to abiding to the cultural customs and values which parents pass on to their children as being the same customs and values their grandparents passed on to her parents. The daughter also constructs Arab children as being a mean in which Arab parents use in order to revive customs and values that have been passed on so they will not be lost or forgotten. The daughter justifies that parents want their children to follow in their path so children will turn out like their

parents. This allows parents to raise their children according to the heritage and customs that have been passed on to them as it is seen as 'ideal' values that will form an 'ideal' Arab child. At the end of her sentence, the daughter refers to parents as 'them' which again denotes somewhat of a distancing position which the daughter is taking. This position refers to the generational layer or the generational gap between Arab parents and their children and indirect resentment to the pathway is mentioned here, because Arab parents want their children to turn out like them. It is important to mention here, that Arab children to constructing a pathway of their own is talked about as if it were something that is inappropriate or culturally unacceptable.

Participants would also simultaneously draw on both the religious and heritage discourses to construct Arab culture. Islamic teachings, the Koran, holy sayings of the prophet Mohammed and inherited customs and beliefs all contributed to form Arab culture. The way in which both the discourses of religion and cultural inheritance function together to construct Arab culture is illustrated below.

> I would say my mum said this, my grandmother said this, my auntie said this, and they would have based these things on strong sources. Sources like for example religion, Koran and the sayings of a religious Islamic Sheikh, or this hadith said this…things like that. If you go back to its roots you would realise that the strong base of culture is religion. [A-M]

In this extract, although the mother mentions the influence of inherited values and beliefs on forming Arab culture, she also draws on a religious discourse whereby 'the Koran', 'sayings of a religious Sheikh' and 'hadith' also construct Arab culture. The mother then constructs religion as the root which forms a strong base for Arab culture. By talking about the inherited customs and values of her elderly which passed on their heritage to her and by positioning them as people who gain their values and beliefs from 'strong sources' such as Islamic teachings, the mother is also positioning herself as a devoted and good Arab. The mother is positioning herself as someone who abides and follows Arab traditions and religious teachings. Thereby constructing her own Arab identity, as an Arab individual in general and as an Arab mother in particular.

Committing sins and conducting behaviour that is considered religiously unacceptable were attributed as being the foundation of traditional customs and influencing the

formation of Arab culture. One of the mothers in this study made sense of Arab culture by drawing on customs inherited from ancestors who obtained these customs from religion. The mother referred to the notion of 'a'ayb' and stated that this notion came from Islamic religion, which is why a'ayb is now a known notion among Arabs and Arab culture.

> Where did our traditions come from? They were passed on and were inherited from our ancestors. Where did they get it from? They got it from our religion. Like if I tell my daughter having a boyfriend is a'ayb its not only a'ayb it's a sin. Where did this a'ayb come from? It came from committing a sin, we are not allowed to do it in our Islamic culture and it's all got to do with the Islamic identity. [U-M]

Here, the prevention of committing sins and behaviour that is considered religiously unacceptable, were attributed as being the foundation of traditional customs thus forming Arab culture. A mother referred to this combination of Islamic religion, and culture as the 'Islamic culture'. The participant agreed that the source of Arab customs is religion and that their ancestors refined some of the Islamic laws and passed them on to the following generations, thus forming Arab culture and customs.

Therefore, according to this mother, what constitutes Arab culture involves a combination of traditions and Islamic teachings, rather than either traditions or religion in particular. Arab culture is constructed as being the basis of the 'Islamic identity', whereby Muslim Arabs obtain what is considered 'a'ayb' and what is not considered 'a'ayb' from the Koran, thus forming a custom or tradition and therefore a culture. The mother gave an example of how this combination is formed in the issue of dating, which is forbidden in Islam. The mother mentioned that according to Islamic Arab culture, her daughter is not allowed to have a boyfriend as a result of it being culturally unacceptable. The mother then mentions that such beliefs are attributed to religious sources, because it is considered committing a sin, in addition to it causing disgrace and shame to the family's sumaa. Deviating from Arab cultural norms and religious teachings threatens the Islamic identity.

3. Constructing the bint

As previously mentioned, the bint is an Arabic word that refers to an unmarried virgin daughter. The bint is considered the family's sumaa (reputation) and sharaf (honour). It is important to note, that when Arabs talk about sumaa then they are also indicating to the notion of sharaf as well. Sharaf refers to the daughter's chastity which if lost will consequently risk the family losing their reputation or sumaa.

The participants acknowledged the importance of the Arab girl in Arab culture in general and they also talked about the bints position in Western societies. Participants talked about having to protect the girl from any wrongdoing especially while living in a society which can influence these wrongdoings. Mothers talked about the importance of protecting Arab daughters from the negative influence of Western society. The young daughters on the other hand, felt the strain and pressure of this protection and while struggling to be one of the 'cool chicks' they also acknowledged that they represent the family's name and reputation and had a responsibility to protect their honour. Daughters also talked about having to make excuses when they are among their 'kiwi' friends for not having a boyfriend, or not being allowed to mix socially with the opposite gender. Therefore, when talking about how it is being a Muslim female Arab in New Zealand, the construct of bint emerged significantly from the transcripts of both mothers and daughters. According to the participants, the bint was constructed through discourses of honour and reputation, purity, and susceptibility.

Discourse of Reputation and Honour

The discourse of reputation and honour formed an important part of the construction of the bint. Participants would draw on their beliefs and values to construct the daughter as representing the family's reputation and honour. Reputation and honour positioned the bint as being the sole bearer of the family's name, honour and pride. Therefore, if an Arab girl deviates from the cultural norms that she is bound by, she risks blackening her reputation and the reputation of her family. Within this discourse, blackening the face of the family constitutes a threat to the Arab family. An Arab family's face is blackened if they are badly talked about by other Arab families, thus jeopardising their name and their status in Arab culture and society.

A girl's sumaa is far more important than anything else, and her behaviour is a reflection of her family's upbringing. If she does anything wrong, where would the family put their face. [H-M]

In this extract taken from an interview with one of the mothers, reputation constructed the bint as being a reflective mirror on how her family brought her up. A bint with a bad reputation reflects how poorly her parents raised her, compared to a girl with a good flawless reputation which reflects how well she is brought-up. Within this construct, bad behaviour or wrong doings constituted a threat to the family's name and reputation thus risking blackening the family's face. This construct positioned the bint as being solely responsible for the status of the family's reputation.

Reputation was also identified by the daughters in this study as being a crucial defining feature of an Arab girl. The daughters accounts revolved around the notion of fear of giving a 'bad name' to the family. Reputation was called upon to justify the parental concern regarding the daughter's behaviour. This was done by the daughter's acknowledging that their parents fear the fact that their daughter's might go astray as a result of the influence of Western society.

I guess um my parents are scared from the fact that I might go astray and that I would do things like the kiwis, or like for example if I go off and do something that will... like how do you say it... something that would bring a bad name to our family and things like that... the reputation. Yes and that's a negative thing. [F-D]

In this extract, the daughter going 'astray', doing things 'like the kiwis' and going 'off' and doing something that would bring a 'bad name' to the family constituted the Arab daughter's position as the bearer of the family's reputation. Here, going 'off' refers to inappropriate behaviour that goes against Arab culture which portrays Western behaviours. The daughter justifies that her parents concern over her behaviour is merely because they are worried she might 'go off' and 'do things like the kiwis', which would bring a bad name to the family. Interestingly, behaving 'like the kiwis' also assisted in positioning the Western society as a society of people who behave in a way which is shameful and would cause Arabs to deviate and smudge the family's name. A bint bringing a bad name to her family is stated as being a 'negative thing' to the family. It is also important to mention, that by the daughter referring to her reputation as 'the

reputation' and not 'my' reputation indicates the family's ownership of the reputation. In other words, because the Arab daughter's behaviour reflects the way her parents brought her up; her reputation is therefore owned by the family and not by the daughter alone. If an Arab daughter smudges her reputation, the whole family's reputation is smudged as well.

Protecting the daughter from getting 'hurt' also justified parental concern over Arab daughters. In the extract illustrated below, the daughter talks about her parents concern that she might bring a bad name to her family. The daughter then mentions that her parents concern stems from fearing she might 'hurt' herself. Parental concern over the daughters reputation and honour was talked about as being for the daughter's sake and not the family's.

> Um, I guess they don't want me to bring a bad name to my family and also a protection for me, for my sharaf, not for their sake or anything....I don't know, maybe it is, but it's for my own benefit at the same time so I won't go off and get myself hurt. [S-D]

In this excerpt, the daughter begins by positioning herself as the bearer of the family's name. She justifies that her parents concern over her behaviour is because they fear she might bring a bad name to her family. The daughter then adds that this fear is mainly because her parents want to protect her and not for their own sake. Concern that the daughter might 'go off' is mentioned here as well and refers to the daughter adopting the deviated behaviour of Western people. Here, getting 'hurt' positions the daughter as a vulnerable person who does not know how to protect herself therefore requiring her parents to take care of her. Hurt refers to the daughter behaving inappropriately in ways which go against Arab culture, thus resulting in going astray from the ideal Arab path and affecting negatively her 'good' Arab girl image.

As a result, the daughters in this study perceived sumaa and sharaf as being an essential part of an Arab girl, which must remain unblemished for the rest of her life. Any behaviour that the young Arab daughter carries out that conflicts with Arab cultural norms will affect the reputation of the family for the rest of their lives. The discourse of reputation and honour positioned the Arab girl as being the fundamental bearer of the

family's reputation, whereas an Arab guy 'can just do anything, and it won't change'. This was demonstrated in the extract below.

> Mum told me this… that a girl's reputation sticks with her for life…only for girls, while guys can just do anything and it won't change. [K-D]

Honour and reputation positioned the daughters as being entrapped in a cultural role that they are required to play. The way in which they carry out this cultural role can be the direct cause of the rising or the falling of their family. The affect this cultural role has on how Arab daughters talked about the issue of the bint was explained by one of the daughter's in this study as a role Arab daughters 'have to' carry out. The mentioning of 'having' to be 'careful' with what Arab daughters say and do because she 'represents the family' signifies a portrayal of cultural entrapment. This cultural role positions Arab daughters as individuals who have no power over their own behaviour, as they are obligated through cultural norms to protect their reputation and honour.

> Yeah (Sighing) it is really difficult, I mean I have to be careful with what I wear, I have to be careful with what I say, and things that I do…I think the girl 'sorta represents the family… yeah they'd be worried that people might think my family didn't raise me properly…but um of course if a guy does something that's ok, because he's just a guy and that's how they… yeah that's how it works. [F-D]

In this extract, the daughter established an association between being the bearer of the family's reputation and parental concern over being gossiped about by other Arabs whereby being the bearer of the family's reputation signified a responsible role for the daughter to take up which was very difficult for her to manage. This was mainly a result of the daughter wanting to be just like one of the other girls in her school without having to worry about if her behaviour would reflect badly on the family and risk other people thinking her parents did not raise her properly. The daughter then begins to compare the role Arab males play in Arab culture. According to this daughter, an Arab male can behave in any way he likes because 'he's just a guy'. Interestingly, positioning the Arab female as being the essential bearer of the family's name and honour, while comparing that to the liberal role of Arab males in the family emerged very strongly in the transcripts as a relatively consistent way of talking that both the mothers and

daughters would use. An example of this is illustrated in the extract below taken from an interview with one of the mothers.

> You see this is the problem in Arab culture. If a boy makes mistakes, no one tells him why, it's true that they might say he made a mistake but it will be quickly forgotten. They'd say oh come on, he's just a boy let him learn from his experiences before marriage, as long as after marriage he calms down. But for the girl if she does make a mistake this will haunt her for the rest of her life and this is the problem with our Arab culture. [W-M]

In this extract, the mother acknowledges that when it comes to fairness between the treatment of males and female Arab culture is imperfect, though as a result of Arab culture being dominated by males, nothing has been done to change this belief. Here, the mother refers to the Arab male as a 'boy' indicating a motherhood notion which suggests that no matter how old a son becomes he remains a 'boy' in the eyes of his mother. Learning from mistakes justified Arab males being allowed to make these mistakes before marriage. Interestingly, marriage is constructed as a line in which males cannot cross when it comes to making mistakes. Marriage is also constructed as a union which tames Arab males and positions them in a more mature and responsible role than they were before marriage. Mistakes are constructed as experiences that provide the male with knowledge and skill. It is important to mention here that according to Arab culture, an Arab male takes pride and boasts of his 'knowledge' and 'experience' whereas Arab females are expected to remain naïve and inexperienced until they are married. A mistake made by the Arab daughter on the other hand is talked about, as being a fault that would 'haunt her for the rest of her life', thus indicating that once a girl's reputation is smudged then it shall cause a lifelong disgrace to herself and her family. This way of talking positioned the Arab daughter as weak, vulnerable and fragile.

Discourse of Purity

Participants constructed the bint as being someone 'clean' and pure. Cleanness positions the girl as being untouched by men and innocent from all unrighteous behaviour. Maintaining the bint's purity and innocence functioned as a warrant whereby the presence of high levels of parental expectation justifies the role of the pure and innocent bint in Arab culture. These 'high' expectations that the bint must meet in order for her

to whiten the face of her family position the Arab daughter as being an achiever, in addition to being the bearer of the family's sumaa and honour.

> I'll tell you what my parents want from me, they want me to be to really get into my studying, and get a really good degree. They want me to follow my um... my culture and my religion and they... you know they have high expectations of me and... they um they want everything to be clean they want my background to be clean, like as in he doesn't want to know if I have been out with a guy, you know. [F-D]

Here, the bint is constructed as the 'good girl', who acknowledges parental expectations and who is aware of the cultural importance of remaining 'clean' until she is married for the sake of her family's sumaa and sharaf. According to Arab culture and religion, Arab girls are expected to maintain their chastity until marriage. Thus, talk regarding remaining pure and maintaining a clean background not only justifies the construct of the pure bint, but it also warrants the role purity has on her chances of marriage. This is a result of cultural customs of marrying a virgin woman that reflects her good upbringing, which in return indicates her ability to raise her children appropriately and according to Arab culture.

The participants also constructed the bint as being a 'symbol of purity and innocence'; the concept of the bint representing a symbol signifies the importance of this role, in which a daughter is looked upon as being an emblem of purity and representing the family's name. Once again, talk regarding the comparison between roles of Arab females and males in representing the family's name and honour, emerged from talk regarding purity and innocence.

> The girl is the symbol of the family's honour, I mean the boy...in our society, no matter what he does or how much he messes up, when he wants to get married they will give him the best girl, they'd say he used to be irresponsible but not anymore... the girl, god created her a symbol of purity and innocence, if she lost her sharaf, or her purity then she has lost everything, you know. [U-M]

Here, the participant positions the bint as God's symbol of purity. By referring to this strong notion of symbolism, the participant is using her talk to indicate the great

importance of Arab girl's reputation. Symbols are idealised, worshipped and valued as being important indications of religious beliefs and culture. By constructing the bint as 'God's symbol of purity', the participant justifies having to guard the Arab daughter from any misconduct and indicating the importance of having to ensure the family's reputation is unblemished. The bint is positioned as a God-sent responsibility, justifying the need for extreme caution over the upbringing of the Arab daughter. Accordingly, the loss of the bint's honour and purity is constructed as an 'all or nothing' value, the participant indicated that if a girl loses her honour or her purity, then she has practically lost 'everything'. The overt concern regarding the bint's chastity and purity warranted the cultural protectiveness of Arab daughters. A participating mother drew on cultural metaphors to construct the bint as being as delicate and fragile as a glass vase. If a man touches this glass, his fingerprints will smudge the crystal clear image of this exceptional vase.

> Our culture is very protective of the girl. I always tell them that a girl is like a glass vase, even if someone touches her…she'd be a smudged glass, so this glass has to always sparkle and be clear, and if it broke, and you know what I mean by that, and even if you tried to mend it together, the cracks will always show, so she will remain that way, cracked. Just like when a person makes a mistake in his life, it will remain lingering, it will never go away. [N-M]

This unique description constructed the bint, as an expensive 'object' which the family needs to protect from being touched by others. Arabs use metaphors and religious sayings extensively to justify behaviours. The mother draws on a cultural metaphor that represented the daughters chastity as a 'glass vase', which would be smudged if touched. Here, the daughter is constructed as a fragile and delicate 'object' that must be guarded at all times in order to prevent others from leaving their fingerprints on her. This interesting description is also reinforced by the teachings of the Koran, which encourages Muslims to protect the chastity of their daughters. The discourse of the untouched daughter signifies the importance of preventing any outsider from harming the family's honour and reputation, which is represented in the Arab daughter. Also, the mother talked about the importance of maintaining the sparkle that represented the daughter's 'clean' chastity. Constructing loss of virginity and gaining a bad reputation was formed through talk regarding breaking the glass and being able to see its cracks. Hence, 'cracks will always show' refers to the permanently bad reputation, which will

constantly be a part of a girl's life as a result of her purity being flawed. The significant importance of maintaining the family's honour and pride is constructed through making one mistake in a lifetime and having it 'lingering, it will never go away'.

Discourse of Susceptibility

Vulnerability and frailness constructed the discourse of the susceptible daughter. The bint's susceptibility objectified the need to protect her from any harm or deviated temptations especially those that Western societies present. Furthermore, given that a bint's reputation 'sticks' with her for life, the Arab girl is constructed as being the vulnerable link in the family. If a girl's honour is harmed, the family's reputation is severely jeopardised. Susceptibility positions the bint as being directly exposed to wrongdoings of Western society and temptation. This discourse also assisted in constructing the bint as being a naïve weakling that needs to be protected from 'slipping' into wrongdoings.

> We try to protect her because we worry about her making a mistake, by making a mistake
> or slipping from… you know because the girl is always frail and delicate, but I mean
> probably there are those that… depending on their personality of course, there are those
> that are easily tricked that's what I mean by it. She's delicate, sensitive and she enjoys
> compliments and being flattered, you know. [U-M]

In this extract, the mother positions Arab girls as being naïve inexperienced individuals who require a watchful eye at all times in case they might 'slip' into wrongdoings. It was interesting to note how the mother justifies that the reason behind cultural and parental concern over the daughter is not that she represents the family's honour as such, but that she is 'frail' and 'delicate'. Thus, frailness and delicacy is overtly linked to vulnerability and weakness of Arab daughters. The mother justifies this 'normal' parental concern by claiming that girls are 'always frail and delicate'. Consequently, the mother then disclaims the idea of the delicacy of Arab daughters, which was considered being a characteristic that is 'always' a part of her creation, by adding 'but probably there are those that', which now positions 'some' girls who have a stronger personality and are not 'easily tricked' as not being 'frail and delicate'. Moreover, naivety constructs the Bint as being a vulnerable target for the 'bad' society. The mother draws on characteristics that females are framed in by Arab society, such as being delicate, sensitive, enjoying compliments and being flattered, to construct the susceptible

daughter. Interestingly, one of the daughters in this study justified these cultural customs with regards to protecting the bint is a result of the Arab girl being 'weak against guys', which refers to being emotionally and sexually vulnerable.

> For an Arab girl, her reputation gets ruined easily and um yeah… she like you know, like she's really weak against a guy 'sorta thing, and you know, if he forces her to do something you know, there's no choice she might not be able to get out of it, you know, and if her parents find yeah, the reputation would get ruined easily and people would aim at the girl before they'd aim at the guy… yeah that's because they're really sexist. [S-D]

From this excerpt, the participant used powerful words such as 'force', 'no choice' and 'she might not be able to', all of which position the girl as being a weak and vulnerable individual that has no power over her behaviour and actions. This positioning implies that Arab daughters have no control over and therefore no responsibility towards their behaviour. The daughter also constructed reputation as being an object that is 'easily ruined' as a result of people in the society 'aiming at the girl before they'd aim at the guy'. In this sentence, the participant is covertly blaming Arab society and beliefs for their unjustifiable first reaction in pointing the finger at Arab females. The unjustifiable reaction constructed the Bint as being a 'perpetrator', even though she is also considered 'weak' and 'sensitive'. Consequently, this contradicts the participant's construct of the weak and vulnerable bint, as it would have been expected that the weak and vulnerable who have no power over their actions would be perceived as 'victims' and not 'perpetrators'. Moreover, the daughter warrants Arab society being 'really sexist' as the cause behind their reaction towards Arab daughters.

4. Constructing the Arab Mother

Participants positioned the Arab mother as a cultural preserver, as a family warrior, as a family adviser and as someone in control. According to the discourses constructed by the participants, passing on Arab culture, customs and religion is the sole responsibility of the Arab mother. This responsibility is a result of the distinct structure of the Arab family that positions the husband as the main home provider for his family, while the wife is encouraged to stay at home, raising her children according to Arab cultural and religious customs. It is also important to note, that Arab mothers have a special social status in Arab culture as being individuals who are given complete respect, by society in

general and her children in particular. Therefore, it was not surprising that the mothers and daughters in this study constructed Arab mothers differently. According to Arab culture, Arab children are expected to respect and comply with their parents 'advice' or 'instructions'. The mothers talked about giving 'advice' to their children whilst talking about 'control', which indicated the Arab mothers social status. The mothers would draw on the importance of cultural preservation and protecting their children from the negative influence of Western society to construct the Arab mother. According to the mothers in this study, the Arab mother was positioned as a cultural maintainer and advisor to her children. Thus, mothers would talk about being in 'control' of their children's upbringing, which they would construct as being 'advice' or 'convincing' to form the role of the Arab mother. The daughters on the other hand would draw directly on the notion of 'control', to construct the Arab mother. Daughters would position Arab mothers as idolised individuals who they look up to, as sources of cultural and religious information adopting the idea that mothers 'know best', and mothers are 'always right'. Accordingly, the issue of 'control' was a controversial one.

Mothers constructing the Arab mother

When talking about their role as Arab mothers raising their children in Western society, the mother would position herself as being a person solely responsible for the good or bad upbringing of her children. Mothers would draw on Arab beliefs and customs that position the mother as being a cultural guardian to construct the Arab mother.

> I always say, that the home has a huge role...the mother...maybe because of the way I was brought up. It all comes from the home. In my opinion, I always tell my kids...um, like when I advise them...they say yes mum, we know we know...I tell them if I keep quiet, a catastrophe will occur. That's why the mother has to always take care of these things... sometimes I get tired, but I never give up because the outcomes are fruitful. [H-M]

Here, the mother starts by talking about how the 'home' plays a 'huge role' in the lives of her children, then completing the sentence by adding 'the mother' referring to herself. Thus, the mother constructs herself as being the 'home', which plays an important role in the lives of her children. This indicates the important influence Arab mothers have on the upbringing of their children and, on passing on cultural and religious values. Moreover, this signifies the sole responsibility of Arab mothers and it consequently and subtly rules out the 'huge role' of 'fathers' in the upbringing of

children. The mother then justifies that the reason behind constructing herself in such a crucial terms is because of the way she was brought up, thus implying her personal 'good upbringing'. Furthermore, the important role of the 'home' is pointed out again in this extract by mentioning 'it all comes from the home', which supports the significant role the Arab mother plays in Arab culture in general and in the life of her children in particular. The participant then positions herself as a person in control of her children's upbringing by stating 'I always tell my kids'. This empowering position is drawn from her age, experience, and knowledge of cultural and traditional customs. Subsequently, the mother then corrects herself by mentioning that she gives 'advice' to her children. Thus, positioning herself as an 'advice-giver'. This constructs the mother as a person who is flexible to a certain extent within traditional methods of upbringing. Hence, the mother is indicating that the way she raises her children is by giving them advice and not by forcing ideas and customs on them. The participant draws on her role as a cultural controller to construct the Arab mother as being a 'saviour' of catastrophes, 'If I keep quiet, a catastrophe will occur'. Here, the mother is justifying once more her role as a person in control of family matters; the mother's watchful eye over her children's behaviour prevents mishaps from happening. Hence, if the mother maintains her silence and does not interfere with the way that her children lead their lives, evidently a tragedy will happen. This implies that a mother must always be on the look out to make sure that her children are abiding by the cultural values that she taught them, thus avoiding blackening of the family's face.

It is worthwhile noting that this contrast between constructing the Arab mother as someone in control and as an advisor emerges significantly in the interviews with the mothers. Nevertheless, the mothers in this study did not talk about 'control' in its definitive meaning. The mothers would use their talk to construct themselves as being in control while using words such as 'advise' and 'convince'.

The Arab mother was also constructed as a guide who directs her children towards the ideal Arab path. Guidance positioned the Arab mother as a knowledgeable and responsible person who advises her children and gives guidance and direction to point them towards the 'right path'. This pathway refers to the 'ideal' Arab way of living and behaving which is agrees with cultural norms. Interestingly, the discourse of advice emerged significantly from the interviews with the mothers. This is a result of the taken

for granted respect which is given to Arab mothers by their children, which positions mothers as individuals who know what is best for their children due to their age and experience. The mothers would position themselves as advisors, to imply that they do not 'force' customs and traditions onto their children, but direct them in the right way. This suggests that Arab children are allowed to make their own decisions in regards to accepting or refusing these traditions. One of the mothers in this study clearly emphasised that the role of the Arab mother is to 'convince' her children and not to use 'force' on them.

> Praying for me is a must, they have to pray, they have to maintain it, yes, but not by force, but by convincing. You know this is our religion. I think it's a nice thing for us to maintain from our religion. [W-M]

Here, the mother talks about the Islamic practice of 'praying'. In this extract, the mother is positioning herself as a person who plays an important role in her children's life by stating 'praying for me is a must'. This indicates that the traditions and customs the mother herself regards as 'a must' for her children are the ones which she will raise them into. This authoritative role is also emphasised with the repetitive use of empowering words such as 'they have to'. Interestingly, the mother adds 'not by force, but by convincing' which contradicts her previous authoritative position. Thus, the mother shuffles herself back into the position of the convincer. Moreover, the important role the mother plays is evident by using 'I think' and 'for us to maintain'. The emphasis on 'I' reflects the important position the mother holds in her family. Thus, the mother constructs herself as being the authoritative cultural preserver. While 'convincing' denotes the freedom to choose, the role of the Arab mother is unarguably an authoritative one. Respecting the Arab mother, in addition to respecting her 'advice' is a matter that is not mentioned directly in the interviews. Arab children are obliged to respect their parents regardless of their 'advice', thus this issue is taken for granted by Arabs. Therefore, arguing with parents or confronting them is typically regarded as inappropriate behaviour and disrespectful and is preferably avoided. Thus, respecting the Arab mothers 'advice' can also be regarded as a form of 'control'. Advice is not far from being considered as a controlling instruction. This way of talk which constructs the Arab mother as a 'controller', emerged significantly from the interviews conducted with the daughters and will be discussed shortly. The participating mothers would also

construct themselves as being the understanding peacemakers in the family. Parental force and control were talked about as being reasons why the Arab child would 'curse the day he became an Arab'.

> If the mother is very strict and forceful, like in her treatment, like you can't do this for example, you can't do that, and this is unaccepted behaviour, this is forbidden, and this is…like if you pressure the child a lot, when he sees all this, he senses the pressure on him and the environment outside is totally contradicting, like so of course this will cause umm…suffocation always causes outbursts, and he'd curse the day he became an Arab or a Muslim, isn't that right! [H-M]

Here, the controlling Arab mother functioned as a warrant whereby continuously scolding a child about what they cannot do or what is inappropriate would cause the child to regret his Arab heritage. Strictness and force were constructed as causes behind the Arab child's suffocation. Control positions Arab mothers as forcing their children to behave in a certain way which the children themselves might disagree with. Nevertheless, due to the respect that children are obliged to hold towards their parents, the child is expected to accept the mothers 'controlling' suggestion and work according to it. Suffocation constructs the Arab child as feeling pressurised by the mothers control, thus resulting in the child rebelling on the mother in general and on the Arab traditions and customs in particular, leading the child to 'curse' his Arab heritage. The mother ends her sentence by saying 'isn't that right', which is a 'confirming' statement more than it is a 'questioning' statement. It is also significant to mention that by ending the sentence in this way the mother positioning herself through her age and experience as someone who knows that such rebellious outbursts do in fact occur as a result of parental control. Thus implying that as a mother, she does not use such methods of control, which would result in her children's rebellious acts that might risk the family's reputation.

In addition, the Arab child's suffering was also mentioned in an extract from an interview with one of the mother's who mentioned that mother should be 'natural' with their children, which implies that mother should not use force in their upbringing or use control over the children.

> If you use force the child will suffer. When you are going to be natural with him at the same time, you tell him dear this is something wrong. I mean we have to have a certain limit. Like we for example...I mean you allow him to do some things to a certain extent of course. So like ...so we should say dear, these behaviours are wrong, and things like that. Everything has a limit. [A-M]

It is important to mention that the mother's in this study would quite often talk about the Arab child's 'struggle' and 'confusion' when being brought up in Western societies which contradict Arab customs and values they are raised by. Thus, in this extract, the mother is constructing herself as an understanding mother in addition to being a liberated mother to 'a certain extent'. The mother begins by stating 'The child will suffer', which implies her awareness of this inevitable happening when force is used as a method of bringing up a child. The mother establishes an association between using force and suffering whereby using force signifies the Arab child undergoing confusion regarding certain behaviours that parents might disapprove of, which would cause the child to rebel against his parents and culture. The mother's 'natural' way of reacting towards her child's demands and her lenient mannerism in bringing up her children constitutes her role as an 'understanding' Arab mother. Being 'natural' implies that the mother should use calmness and understanding as ways of reacting towards her children if they seem to behave in an inappropriate manner. The mother mentions that 'you tell him, dear this is something wrong' which positions the mother as an understanding mother and a good family communicator. Here, Arab mothers are constructed as people who do not use aggressiveness or hostility when raising their children. Having certain limits when raising children is mentioned as something the Arab mother must have. The mother uses 'dear' twice to imply her calm and understanding way of talking to her children. The mother suggests that parent's also 'should' have a limit when reacting towards their children, which indicates that force and control is not the ideal way of bringing a child, on the contrary it would cause the child to suffer and rebel.

Nevertheless, the mother then contradicts herself by stating that one of the main hurdles which Arab parents might face is uncontrollable children and that if parents 'control their children' then they have nothing to worry about.

> A man's happiness is in his job. When he doesn't work, I mean even if he works at a job, not in his area of expertise, well this will affect him psychologically, and at the same

time, it will affect his family. This is one of the other challenges that a family might face...if they like, were able to control their children... you know...if they are able to control their children and teach them like...show them the right path. [W-M]

In this extract, the mother talked about the challenges parents in general face when coming to a Western society, the issue of unemployment. When asked about the challenges she faces as an Arab mother in Western society, the mother mentioned that her husband's unemployment was a major concern for the father in general and for the whole family in particular. According to the mother, unemployment is regarded as a 'psychological' strain. Subsequently, the mother then compared such a psychological strain with the challenges parents face if they have no control over their children's behaviour in Western society. Here, the mother used 'control' several times and paired 'control' with 'teach' and 'show'. By using these two words, the mother is adding to and describing the first word giving the impression that, controlling *is* teaching and controlling *is* showing the children the 'right path'. Hence, the mother is using her talk to construct the Arab mother as a 'controller' who does not 'force' beliefs and customs on her children, but she merely teaches them and guides them through the ideal Arab path.

Arab mothers were also constructed as warriors facing a battle against immoral behaviours that might influence their children to behave inappropriately. Jihad was identified as an important feature of the Arab mother. Participants accounts often revolved around the notion of 'Jihad'. Jihad was called upon to justify the mothers need to protect her children from the wrongdoings of Western society. The mothers compared the process of raising their children according to Arab culture, whilst living in Western society, as a form of Jihad. Mothers constructed themselves, as being Jihad warriors fighting for what they believe is righteous. Therefore, by positioning Arab mothers as warriors against what is immoral, the participants are simultaneously constructing Western society as the source of the immoral or evil behaviour.

To be quite honest, it requires Jihad. I mean for the mothers that come here and are able to protect their children, I mean that is a form of Jihad. God will reward them. [U-M]

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In this extract, constructing the upbringing of Arab children in Western society as a form of Jihad and trying to prevent Western society from ruining their parental upbringing, is associated with the role of the warrior mother. Here, the extract introduces the discourse of warrior with the word 'Jihad' and it is followed up by the mother stating 'God will reward them'. To understand the effect of these notions one must first understand the relationship between 'Jihad' and 'holy rewards'. According to Islamic teachings, the word jihad means striving. In its primary sense, Jihad is perceived as being an internal object, within self, to rid it from immoral actions or inclinations, and exercise constancy and perseverance in achieving a higher moral standard (About Islam and Muslims: *Jihad,* no date). Thus, striving to raise children according to Arab and Islamic customs and beliefs and protecting them from the negative influence of Western beliefs constructed the *mojahida* Arab mother. Another mother in this study clearly gave a definition to her form of Jihad, which she stated as 'fighting', that suggests struggling or undergoing a 'war'.

> So now u can say that I am fighting...it's like a form of Jihad for my kids...it's true they make mistakes and slip...but at the same time I am around so when these mistakes do happen...I resolve them. [H-M]

Here, the mother positions herself as a fighter for her children. Thus, fighting for her children constitutes her role as a warrior mother. The mother also acknowledges that her children do make 'mistakes and slip'. The mother uses the term 'slip' to construct certain behaviour that is deemed inappropriate according to Arab culture, which suggests that these behaviours are unintended, and sudden. Thus, the mother implies that if her children do act in a manner that goes against Arab traditions, then their behaviour is an unintended slip, which she has no control over. Here, the mother is suggesting that she should not be considered a bad mother if people knew of her child's mistake. Being aware of these mistakes and being around when they occur constitutes the mother's role as someone who resolves such mistakes. Thus, the mother positions herself as the family's saviour when such slips or mishaps occur. The mother is also suggesting that she holds an important position in her family by stating that she is the one member in the family that resolves these mistakes when they occur she would be around to take care of them, which supports the position of the Arab mother being solely responsible for the moral protection of her family.

Daughters constructing the Arab mother

Like the mothers in this study, daughters also talked about the use of control of Arab mothers when raising their children. However, in contrast to the mothers in this study who suggested that Arab mothers should not use control in their upbringing and denied using force and control in their way of raising their children, daughters explicitly talked about Arab parents being controlling and restrictive. Control referred to constraining their children's freedom and instructing them to behave in ways that mothers regard as being culturally and religiously appropriate. Control positioned Arab mothers as playing a powerful and influential role in the family. Control positioned Arab mothers as being in command over their children's personal decisions and behaviours. Within this construct, the Arab mother's role as the family's protector and her social status warranted this 'control'.

> Some Arab mothers <u>do</u> control their kids. They would tell them not to talk to this person, and not to talk to that person. Which is bad in a way, 'coz I think people should, you know try and, you know, like they should let them know as many people... and... through this they will realise who's good and who's bad, you know. So they can form, you know their own personality. No one should control them. [S-D]

In this extract, the daughter began by claiming that Arab mothers 'do' in fact control their children, the daughter indicates that this is the case with 'some' and not all Arab mothers. The daughter's emphasis on 'do' portrays the reality of the existence of controlling Arab mothers, thus suggesting that this is an unarguable fact. Moreover, by using 'some' in her sentence, the daughter is trying to distance her own mother from falling in the category of controlling parents. The importance of 'talk' that the mothers seem to have control over, suggests that this social behaviour is regarded as a threat to Arab mothers. Although the daughter did not mention the control mothers have over other matters such as what is appropriate or inappropriate to wear or coming home late, this does not rule out that the daughter believed that parents also have 'control' over these behaviours. Thus, 'talk' that seemed to be a significant controlling matter for this participant indicated the concern Arabs in general, and female Arabs in particular, feel in regard to fearing being gossiped about by other Arabs. This concern over gossip links back to the role of the female being the family's honour and reputation. The control over talking to, or socialising with, certain individuals reflects the Arab mother's concern that her children mix with the wrong crowd, who may have a bad influence on

her children. Thus, socialising with the wrong crowd can risk the family's reputation, and control warranted the construction of the moral protector. The daughter mentions that mothers would 'tell' their children not to socialise with certain individuals. Here, 'tell' referred to a controlling instruction that the mother gives to her children more than it referred to an advice. In addition to constructing the Arab mother as controlling, the daughter also mentions that control is a 'bad' way of raising children. Consequently, Arab mothers who use control, and force, over their children are constructed indirectly as being 'bad' mothers who raise their children 'badly'. In this extract, the daughter constructs the 'ideal' mother, as one who allows her children to experiment and experience socialising with various sorts of people. Socialising and gaining experience from learnt mistakes would assist Arab daughters to learn from their mistakes. Here, the repetitive use of 'should' indicates a behaviour that mothers 'ought' to do suggesting its importance. Thus, mothers 'should' let their children socialise with different people and children 'should' have the freedom to behave, as they want. The daughter justifies that this type of Arab mother is ideal because she will assist in the shaping of her children's 'own personality' without the control of the parents. Hence, if the parents controlled their children, then the child will not have their 'own' personality, but a personality formed according to the preference of the parent. By ending her sentence with 'should' when mentioning that, 'no one should control them', the daughter is again suggesting something, which 'ought' to happen. This indicates that freedom of choosing whom to socialise with is in fact a choice that Arab children have a right to. Mothers who control and restrain this privilege in fact do not have the right to do so. The daughters in this study also talked about how Arab children would rebel over their parents and culture as a result of this 'control'.

> Any person when you tell him don't do this, he'll tell you why? And you just tell him
> don't do it. But he goes and does it. In Arab countries, it's more of...for the child... until
> he's in high school his parents control him you know. While the Western child, no, he has
> his own personality. So this might be something for Arab parents to consider... like if a
> child stands in front of his parents and argues, like if he wants to go out and his mum says
> no, he says why not I want to go out, and things like that you know. [Z-D]

Here, the control that parents have over their children warrants the child's rebellious behaviour. From this excerpt, the daughter constructed Arab parents as people who do not listen to their children, as people who are controlling of their children's behaviour,

and as people who are uncooperative. This was evident from the daughter saying that 'he'll ask you why? And you just tell him don't do it', suggesting that parents take for granted their controlling position and use that to enforce decisions on their children. The daughter simultaneously constructs the Arab child as a rebellious individual who goes and does things even though his parents told him not to. The daughter draws on the example of parents who are controlling over their children in Arab countries and then compares the life of the Arab child to that of a Western child. By drawing on these examples the daughter is illustrating that as a result of Arab parents control, the Arab child does not have his 'own' personality compared to the Western child who does, and that by rebelling over his parents, the Arab child is in fact trying to find his own personality. Having control over their children warranted the child standing in his parents face and arguing with them. According to Arab culture, defying and arguing with parents is considered an extremely disrespectful behaviour. The daughter justified that if parents want to avoid this offensive behaviour, then they should 'consider' giving their children freedom and not attempt to control them. This of course links back to the notion of 'suffocation causes outbursts', which the mothers in this study previously talked about. Nagging was also identified by the daughters in this study as a behaviour Arab mothers would act upon in addition to them being controlling. Daughters would talk about mothers nagging and continuously repeating advice and instructions, which warranted the Arab mothers controlling behaviour. The daughters would draw on the mother's role as the cultural preserver and as a person who has is responsible for her children's good upbringing to position the mother as a 'nag' who goes over things 'again and again'.

> Yeah and then the mother would say, oh what if somebody sees you talking to that guy? What would they say? blah blah blah. And they continuously just go over it again and again. [F-D]

In this extract, the mother's persistence and nagging functioned as a warrant that justified the position of the controlling Arab mother. This construct positioned Arab mothers as being constant worriers regarding their children in general and their daughters in particular due to the female's sensitive status in the Arab family. In this extract, fear of being gossiped about is again mentioned by the daughter as being a cause of the mothers concern, thus justifying the mother's need to continuously go over

advice or instructions. The repetitive use of 'blah' suggests how the daughter portrays her mother as being a 'nag' who continuously repeats her advice unnecessarily. This was supported by the daughter adding 'and they continuously just go over it again and again'. It is worthwhile noting that one of the mother's in this study had also previously talked about how her children would position her as a 'nagging and lecturing mother' by mentioning that her children would say, 'Oh here she goes lecturing us again'.

In addition, like their mothers, daughters in this study also constructed Arab mothers as advisors regarding various cultural and religious matters. According to the daughters, advice positioned the Arab mother as a cultural teacher, as a responsible mother and as a trustworthy person whom the daughter would go to when she requires guidance.

> Mainly on some Friday nights we all pray together and my mum reads us some chapters of the Koran and she starts explaining to us and she tells us stuff, like how she was as a kid you know and that sort of thing. Yeah and um yeah, that's mainly how I understand the culture, and sometimes I am curious as well and I ask my mum questions, and she explains them to me. [K-D]

In this extract, the daughter draws on praying as a family and her mother reading and explaining the Koran to construct the Arab mother. Here, the mother is positioned as a religious teacher by encouraging her children to pray and read the Koran, in addition to a social teacher by giving her children examples of life from her childhood. Therefore, having religious and cultural knowledge warranted the position of the advising Arab mother. This role positioned the Arab mother as being able to guide her daughter towards the ideal path and 'explain' to her various cultural and religious queries. Here, the daughter positioned her mother as being someone who she is comfortable talking to and who does not use control or force to direct her children in the right path. The role of the advising Arab mother also assisted in constructing the Arab mother as someone who knows what is best for her family. Daughters would position their mothers as someone who is 'always right'.

> I do argue with my mum about stuff, but then when I think about it I mean she's right, she's always right. ' coz when I was younger I wanted to wear a bikini when I was going to the beach but she told me 'no no', bad people will talk, its haram and stuff. I used to go who cares about the people and stuff. I mean they can say what they want, but then when

I think about it, you know no body would want to look at me anymore and...so sometimes she's right. [N-D]

The Arab mother's role as the family's moral protector and as the source of cultural and religious information constructed the Arab mother that is 'always right' and who knows what is best for her children. The daughter begins by admitting that she argues with her mother regarding 'stuff' that the daughter does not approve of. This suggests that when the Arab daughter is faced with contradicting customs and behaviours in Western culture she would try to behave in ways that go against Arab customs, thus risking an argument with her mother who would try to put her back on the 'right path'. By claiming that she argues with her mother, the daughter is positioning herself as a rebellious daughter and according to Arab culture, this implies a daughter that is badly raised. Therefore, by adding 'but' in her sentence, the sentence is operating as a disclaimer. The daughter realises that portraying herself as a rebel is not an appropriate role for Arab girls to play. By adding 'but when I think about it', the daughter is disclaiming that she is a rebel and positions herself as someone who agrees with what her mother says because her mother is 'always right'. The daughter then draws on a previous incident that justified the positioning of the Arab mother who is 'always right'. The Arab mother is constructed as the family's moral protector according to her religious and cultural knowledge regarding what is 'haram' or religiously inappropriate and fear of 'bad people' talking. Here the daughter is acknowledging her mother's awareness of many religious and cultural customs. The daughter's also fear of not being looked at by Arabs (which would reduce her chances of getting married in the future) also warranted the construction of the Arab mother who is 'always right'. Interestingly, the daughter then changes her opinion regarding her mother being 'always right' and positions her mother as being 'sometimes right'. This shift in the Arab mother's position suggests that although the daughter believes her mother knows what is best for her, she still disapproves of some cultural and religious customs that the mother seems to encourage, which suggests the emergence of the daughter's rebellious attitude towards Arab customs.

Respect also formed a prominent part of the construction of Arab mothers. Arab mothers hold a respectable and important role in the Arab family therefore it was not surprising that daughters would also position Arab mothers as their idols who they look

up to regarding many cultural and religious matters. The Arab mother was constructed as someone who the daughter would 'take ideas and thoughts' from regarding how to take care of their own future family. Daughters thought highly of their mothers especially in regards to handling a home and children.

> Looking way back, it was all about what my mum said to me. Like for my mum right now, I've always had my dad as an idol to look up to, but my mum is like someone to take ideas and thoughts from, on how to treat my future family as well. I know my mum is weak in some ways, but in other ways, she can be a really strong woman. Like now looking at the house, I am like, how can she handle it with us, and running around, and yelling, and the screaming and tidying up. It's like way too much, but like she's a very strong woman, and when I look at it's like, I think man I really need to...be a strong woman too. [S-D]

Here, by drawing on the daughter's past experience with what her mother had told her about Arab cultural customs in Western society constituted the Arab mother's role as a person responsible over her children's cultural and religious upbringing. The daughter acknowledges that her personal cultural and religious beliefs were based on what her mother had informed her. She then begins to compare her two parents by indicating that she had idolised her father, but her mother was always a source of 'ideas and thoughts'. Thus, the Arab mother is positioned as a source of information and thoughts, which Arab daughters would use to assist them in dealing with their own family. This indicates that the daughter regards her own family as one that is almost ideal. Although the daughter uses the term 'idol' for her father, nevertheless it is evident that she idolises her mother's 'ideas and thoughts', as well. The daughter positioned her mother as being 'weak' in some ways and then claimed that she can be a 'really strong woman' in 'other ways' such as being responsible of her home and children. Handling her children, running around, yelling, screaming and tidying after her children warranted the role of the strong Arab mother who is not only respected but idolised for her hard work. The daughter repeats her claim that her mother is 'a very strong woman' by being able to manage all those responsibilities, which according to the daughter is 'way too much'. The role of the respected mother emerges again by the daughter indicating that 'I really need to be a strong woman too', hence supporting her claim that her mother is 'strong' and because she looks up to her mother she needs to be strong like her.

5. Intergenerational Cultural Preservation

The accounts previously formed by the participants in this study which concerned constructing the other, Arab culture, Arab mothers and the bint, related to the important issue of intergenerational preservation of Arab culture in Western society. Mothers and daughters in this study drew on the discourses identified in order to construct their Arab identity and position themselves as Arabs belonging to different generations and living in Western society. These discourses promoted the development of two major aspects: the preservation of Arab culture and the conservation of Arab culture.

Cultural preservation refers to the process of preserving and passing on Arab culture in its exact form and without change, from one generation to another. Arab mothers as cultural preservers are responsible for passing on Arab culture along with Arab values, customs, beliefs and religion to their children. Arab mothers regarded the preservation of culture and ethnic identity as an important matter for the Arab individual and especially for the younger generation. The mothers in this study also indicated that they were concerned about their vulnerable Arab daughters slipping into wrongdoings under the influence of Western values. According to the mothers in this study, preserving Arab culture and values will protect their daughters from these wrongdoings and deviated behaviours. This was evident in the discourses formed by the mothers when constructing the other, Arab culture, Arab mothers, and the bint. When constructing the other, the mothers strongly drew on the discourses of fear and concern to construct the 'other people' and their society. The Arab mother was constructed through the discourses of guidance, respect and Jihad against the evil influence of Western values, which positioned Arab mothers as cultural preservers and protectors. The Arab mothers were responsible for passing on Arab values and beliefs, which are important for the continuation of Arab culture, and they protect Arab individuals from the influence of wrongdoings of Western society. In their previous accounts, the mothers emphasised the importance of reminding their children that Westerners differ considerably from Arabs, and that Western culture contains behaviours that are culturally and Islamically inappropriate for Arabs and are therefore regarded as sinful behaviours. By using notions such as 'they' and 'them' that categorised the 'other' who do not belong to Arab culture and by using notions of 'us' and 'we' when referring to themselves as Arabs, the mothers were trying to ensure that their children were aware of the cultural difference between Arabs and Westerners. The notions of differentiation between Arabs and

Westerners were illustrated in a quote taken from one of the interviewed mothers, these notions have been emphasised in italic for reasons of illustration.

> I remind my kids that no matter how long *we* stay here and mix with *them* in *their society*, *we remain Arabs* and *we are different* from *them*. [W-M]

Here, the notions of 'we', 'them' and 'their society' demonstrate the mother's strong feeling towards Arab culture and Arab identity. These notions were used in order for the mother to point out that Arabs are in fact clearly different from Westerners and that the mother will not hesitate to ensure that her children are aware of this difference as well so as to assist them to create their Arab identity and sense of awareness of their Arab superiority.

The Arab mothers in this study also emphasised that preserving Arab culture is important for every Arab individual and especially for the protection of the true ideal Islamic Arab identity. According to the mothers in this study Arab culture was regarded as 'making' Arabs who they are. Thus implying that Arab culture is a source of creation for Arab beliefs, values and identity. This dependence on Arab culture in making Arabs, who they are, emphasised the important value of Arab culture in the eyes of Arab mothers and consequently indicates the importance of preserving Arab culture. This was illustrated in the extract below.

> I think it's the way we were brought up... like for example when I think about it... a very long time ago...not my mother or even your mother or me, no, like I would see...my grandmother...or your great grandmother...how they behaved or how they lead their lives, and that's what makes us who we are. [A-M]

From this extract, it was quite evident that the mother took pride in who she was and how she gained her culture and identity. Arab culture was regarded as being formed from two main sources: Islamic teachings of Allah, and heritage passed on from previous ancestors. Some mothers indicated that Arab culture is a combination of both these two sources. This signifies that Arab culture regardless of its foundation is based on a path that Arabs regard as vital for the Arab individual and that Arabs should take pride in maintaining their culture and passing it on to subsequent generations. Arab culture in its exact form is therefore regarded as 'ideal' and perfect, regardless of time

and place. This is why Arab children were expected to accept Arab culture as it is, so they in turn can maintain it and pass it on to their children, and they in turn can pass it on to the following generations.

Arab mothers also regarded cultural preservation as a 'cultural bridge'. This cultural bridge carries Arab children across from Western culture that is not related to Arab values, to Arab culture which enriches Arab children with customs and traditions crucial for the continuation of Arab identity. Arab mothers acknowledged that by raising their children far away from Arab countries and society, their children risk being influenced by Western values. Arab culture was regarded as a shield which protects Arab children from deviating from Arab cultural norms and taking onboard Western values. The extract below illustrates this issue.

> I want our culture to be like a bridge. A bridge between them and between us. Like between them over here and their roots over there. We try to speak Arabic with them so they won't forget. I mean the language and traditions for example and things like that you know. Of course this would helping a lot in preserving our Arab identity, like it will let them bond more and it will also bring the younger generations living here closer to home. [W-M]

Arab mothers clearly show a growing concern regarding their children losing Arab identity and culture. Here, the mother established and association between the preservation of Arab culture and a 'bridge' that links young Arabs to their Arab roots. The role of this bridge is to connect the younger Arab generation who are raised in Western society and risk being influenced by Western values, with their Arab beliefs and values. Speaking the Arabic language at home and nurturing Arab traditions were regarded as one way to construct this bridge. Arabic language in particular is a sacred language and its preservation is crucial for Arabs. Preserving Arab culture is considered a way in which the preservation of Arab identity is established and it also assists in bringing the younger Arab generations living in Western society closer to their homeland's roots and values.

However, there were some contradictions present in the mothers accounts in how they managed this. This was the conflict between acknowledging the importance of Arab

culture, yet at the same time admitting that subsequent Arab generations would not be able to hold onto all Arab values and customs while living in Western society. The mothers in this study pointed out that expecting their children to maintain all of the Arab values and beliefs while living in Western society is an unrealistic demand. This issue was illustrated in the extract below which was taken from an interview with one of the mother's in this study. The mother indicated that the subsequent generations of Arab children in New Zealand would inevitably forget their Arab roots and culture.

> Of course it will happen, and parents have all the right to worry. The next generation won't be able to handle this well. I mean because already this generation are finding difficulties. I just wish that what I have taught them now they'd be able to teach even if at least half of it to their children. Their children of course will barely teach a quarter of it to their children…and that way it will diminish." [N-M]

This extract clearly reflects the concern that Arab mother feels regarding the loss of Arab culture and identity by their children in Western society. The Arab mother acknowledges the fact that eventually Arab culture and identity will diminish across generations. The mother stated that Arab parents and mothers in particular, have a right to be concerned about this because this will jeopardise Arab identity and the continuity of this proud culture. Western culture is regarded as a great threat with its strong influence on Arab individuals. The temptations of Western liberation that exceeds the freedom allowed by Arab culture, and the influence of Western ideas on the minds and behaviours of Arab daughters in particular, were considered to be the reasons why Arab mothers fear the consequences of losing Arab culture and values. Due to the vulnerability and naivety of Arab daughters, Arab mothers expressed their worry about their daughters losing sight of Arab values and Arab culture in Western society. The extract below demonstrates this Arab maternal concern.

> For example the girl…bit by bit she'll become liberal. First of all she won't care about the way she dresses, then she won't care about how she behaves, then she won't care about her manners. It all happens bit by bit… but it's only because of the parents concern regarding their children's behaviour, and all that is because they want to take care of them. Parents try their best to do their best. But then praise Allah; the human being decides what is best for him when he grows up. As long as they are under your wing, you have to do what you can do. [U-M]

Arab daughters are considered inexperienced and vulnerable. Arab mothers were concerned that their daughters would slip into wrongdoings and risk the honour and reputation of the family. In this extract, the mother indicates that parents do their best to raise their daughters according to Arab culture and values in order to protect them from the negative influence of Western society. Freedom is considered an indulgence that can cause Arab daughters to deviate and slip into inappropriate behaviour. The mother justified that Arab parents are concerned for their daughters because they want to take care of their children and because of the sensitive position Arab daughters hold as the family's reputation and honours. By taking care of their daughters Arab parents are not only taking care of their daughter, but also simultaneously protecting the family's reputation, honour and status. What is more, in this extract the mother mentions that Arab parents struggle in order to raise their daughters culturally and religiously by stating that 'parents try their best to do their best'. Here, the mother is justifying that if daughter's act inappropriately then the sole responsibility cannot fall on the parents alone, especially that Arab parents have already tried their best while their children were under the parents wing, but in fact the responsibility also falls on the children who when they grow up they decide what is best for them.

Cultural conservation refers to the process of changing certain aspects of Arab culture in order to accommodate Arab customs and beliefs within Western society. Arab daughters indicated that they were circumscribed by Arab culture and values that prevented them from experiencing the freedom that they felt they needed while living in Western society and that parents should exercise some leniency concerning cultural restrictions. This leniency resulted in the conservation of Arab culture. Arab daughters were resistant towards accepting some cultural customs and beliefs. Unlike the mothers in this study who indicated that Arab cultural preservation is their main concern, the daughters in this study drew on the discourses that constructed the other, Arab culture, Arab mothers and the bint in order to portray daughters as 'having to' be culturally appropriate, and talked about cultural conservation. Their accounts which portrayed Arab mothers as controlling and Arab culture as restrictive, implied that daughters needed their 'freedom' from the control of their parents and culture. In particular, Arab culture and Islamic teachings restricted Arab daughters from enjoying the freedom their Kiwi peers had.

> I am starting to adapt to it, but sometimes I have these moments when... I feel that... I
> really need my freedom. I really need to see the actual Auckland. [S-D]

Arab daughters imply that they 'need' their 'freedom' from parental control and cultural restrictions. In this extract, the daughter indicates that she is gradually adapting to the life in New Zealand and mixing with Western friends at school. However, the daughter also points out that there are times when she feels she is bound by culture and religion and therefore cannot do what her Western friends do, such as seeing the 'actual Auckland'. When I asked the daughter what she meant by seeing the 'actual Auckland' she replied that the actual Auckland was how her friend's portray Auckland city being on Saturday nights and by going to nightclubs and bars. Evidently, as a Arab Muslim daughter she would not be allowed by her parents to experience such events, resulting in her stating that she 'really' needed her freedom. Interestingly, by indicating that they 'need freedom' the daughters construct freedom as a crucial object that Arab daughters cannot live without. This construct positions Arab daughters as dependent on freedom in order to live a happy and satisfied life in Western society. One of the Arab daughters indicated that she wants her independence from cultural and parental restriction, and that there are certain traditions and customs that she disagrees about.

> I 'sorta changed. I want my independence as well, and I do sometimes disagree with my
> parents about the culture and how it really annoys me and sometimes I do... When my
> mum like, when I want to go out somewhere and my mum would advise me, but I would
> just tell her who cares and stuff like that, and over here I just constantly argue and argue
> and argue until something bad happens. [F-D]

In this extract, the daughter begins by admitting that she has changed considerably from the time that she arrived in New Zealand as a young child. Wanting her independence is one way this daughter had changed, and rebelling over Arab traditions and customs is another. Because Arab daughters are expected to be compliant and obedient towards their parents, arguing with parents and stating that she wants her independence is seen as a result of cultural conservation, in which the Arab daughter agrees on some Arab customs and disagrees on others. This is evident in her statement that when her mother advices here she brushes her mother's concern off by saying 'who cares', which indicates a rebellious daughter rebelling over Arab customs in Western society. In

addition, by claiming that she would 'argue and argue until something bad happens' indicates that the daughter acknowledges the consequences of rebelling but that does not prevent her from declaring her disapproval over Arab customs. Here, the Arab daughter portrays an image of a young Arab immigrant not accepting all Arab cultural customs and beliefs and wanting her 'independence' that she is prevented from due to cultural and parental restriction. This is a clear indication that cultural conservation is taking place. For this daughter, Arab customs, which prevent her from having her independence and restrict her from the freedom she aspires, will evidently be those which she will not take onboard with her to her next Arab generation.

In addition, conservation of Arab culture was apparent in a quote taken from one of the daughters in this study who indicated that Arab parents are not aware that they now live in a different country that has a different culture and set of beliefs.

> But now she is saying a lot of 'no's, I am like thinking, yeah I wont be able to do all of, you know, the things I have got in my head and you know how I told you before, you might snap and do something like run away. So yeah, you know what the hell am I doing here if I am not gonna get my freedom, I'm just gonna run away. Then there's no point in staying. They have to realise we aren't living in Iraq anymore. [S-D]

Here, the daughter talks about parental restriction, which is portrayed in her mother constantly, saying 'no' to her daughter with regards to wanting to go out with friends or wanting to stay out late. The daughter justifies that if her mother does not allow her to do the things in her 'head', which implies the need for a certain extent of freedom and leniency then the daughter would 'snap' and 'run away'. In this extract, Arab daughters are positioned as being bound by parental control and kept under strict surveillance of their mothers. This type of 'suffocation' will cause an 'outburst' that carries sever consequences such as the daughter running away from her family, which will evidently bring disgrace to the family and blacken their face. The daughter unequivocally questions the reason behind her living in Western society when she cannot enjoy the freedom that it offers, and she repeatedly mentions that if she cannot have her freedom then she would rather 'run away' from her family in order to gain the freedom she wants. The daughter then makes her final statement 'they have to realise we aren't living in Iraq anymore', which is a strong indicator of the daughters disapproval

regarding certain Arab cultural customs or beliefs that restrict Arab daughters and does not allow them their freedom. This restriction in turn can result in them snapping and deciding to 'run away' from their family. Again, Arab cultural conservation is portrayed here as taking onboard customs and beliefs that do not prevent Arab daughters from experiencing the freedom that they feel they need, in order to live in Western society. It is important to note, that wanting parents to 'wake up and smell the coffee' and to realise that they are not living in an Arab country anymore, was an issue that was mentioned frequently by the daughters when talking about cultural restrictions and lack of freedom that Arab daughters face when living in Western society. The extract below illustrates this notion clearly, and it was important for the purpose of clarification to include this long extract in this section.

> Like for example like our parents they got raised in an Arabic country ok, while we got raised here we went to schools here... you know our parents at school like for them, like its a'ayb if you mix with...like guys and have your own group and sit down and talk. Well in New Zealand it's normal 'coz schools are mixed, and Uni's are mixed, things like that. We think it's ok you are not doing anything wrong, but parents think Whoa no it is wrong you shouldn't do that. That's because they got raised there, so their traditions are still... you know complicated you know. The way they think is quite complicated, while we think everything is, you know, is easy, you know so what if you go out or something you aren't doing anything bad. But you know you have to face it. It's a free country no one...it's not going to annoy anyone. You got to change so you can, you know fit in. [Z-D]

In this extract, the daughter begins by comparing Arab parents who are raised in Arab society and young Arabs who are raised in Western society. According to this daughter, Arab parents have a 'complicated' way of thinking because they bring with them their Arab beliefs and customs when arriving in Western society, and try to impose them on their children. Going out in mixed gender groups is regarded as an inappropriate behaviour according to Arab parents, and is an issue which can cause parents to control their children and restrain their freedom. According to the daughter, this point of view which Arab parents have regarding the inappropriateness of going out with males and females is a result of the 'complicated' way of Arab thinking, and also because traditions are 'complicated'. The reference to the word 'complicated' clearly indicated the notions of 'backward' or the 'unnecessary' way of Arab thinking. Arab cultural

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conservation was reflected in her words when she stated that Arab parents should face reality. This reality consisted of the fact that the Arab family now lives in a 'free country', and that certain behaviours which might have been considered inappropriate back then in Arab culture is not considered inappropriate in Western society. The daughter also claimed that Arabs have to change and accommodate their beliefs and traditions in order to 'fit in' with Western society.

Interestingly, Arab daughters mentioned that they would not be as strict as their parents would, which suggests Arab cultural conservation in which this young generation will take onboard and pass on what they believe is necessary for their children to know in regards to Arab culture, beliefs, and practices. Therefore, it seems that the concern that Arab mothers mentioned regarding their children gradually losing Arab customs and values is in fact in its place. This is demonstrated in the extract below.

> I still want to be an Arab…but I think some religious rules can change a bit. Like there
> are these really strict rules….I won't be too strict on my children um I'd let them go out
> to a certain time though, and yeah, I'd give them choices to decide. I'd give them advice
> but I won't tell them no they can't do that. Yeah I won't force them. [K-D]

In this extract, although the daughter mentions her pride in being an Arab, yet she also points out that certain Islamic rules need to be changed. Here, changing Islamic rules refers to accommodating them to Western society. This process of conservation allows the Arab daughter to raise her children according to how she wanted to be raised by her parents. The daughter indicates that she still wants to remain Arab, which reflects her pride in her Arab identity, but certain strict rules that would prevent Arab children from experiencing an extent of liberation and independence require being changed or completely ruled out. Arab culture, Islamic teachings, and Arab parents were regarded as forceful and controlling elements in Arab upbringing, which this Arab daughter refuses to take onboard over to the next generation.

However, Arab daughters demonstrated some contradiction and inconsistency in their talk. Although Arab daughters wanted their freedom from Arab culture and parental control, they also indicated that they were proud in being Arab and that they were proud of their Arab identity which allowed them to 'stand out from the crowd' of Westerners.

First of all I am proud of being an Arab in New Zealand, and like I can say being an Arab in New Zealand or in a European country… like it's great 'coz you are different…you stand out from the crowd. [S-D]

In this extract, the daughter began by indicating she is proud in being an Arab in New Zealand because she stands out from the crowd of Westerners. Here, standing out reflects the respect and self-satisfaction that the Arab daughter feels as a result of her distinctive Arab heritage and identity. This positions Arab daughters as being empowered by their Arab culture and identity, which gives them a sense of pride in being distinctively different from the Western crowd. It is important to note, that by beginning her statement with stating her Arab pride, the daughter is making a clear indication that she is different from Westerners and that this difference is something, which makes her proud. Pride in being Arab was clearly reflected in the account formed by the daughters in this study when constructing the other.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

Arab culture and identity is defined in terms of difference and exclusion from dominant sectors of Western society. Their sense of difference and exclusion, in turn, informs many of their social behaviours and activities. Participants for instance, mentioned that their immediate social circles, the friends with whom they spend most of their social time were primarily or exclusively Arab. However, at the same time that these participants constructed a distinctive identity for themselves in relation to Western society in New Zealand, they were also keen to some extent to establish membership to that society despite their sense of difference and exclusion. To illustrate, while participants in this study were eager to pass on Arab values and customs to their children, they were equally keen to indicate that Arab children should take the constructive aspects of Western society. Arab mothers in particular indicated that Western society has positive aspects that their children should take onboard such as responsibility, a certain amount of independence, and a positive approach to life and dedication to work and education. According to Haj-Yahia (2000), these approaches lead the Arab individual to forego personal aspirations in order to pursuit and enhance the family's status and reputation in order to whiten the face of the Arab family.

Migration of Arabs from Arab society to Western society in New Zealand presented adaptation challenges for Arab migrants as a result of cultural differences between the two cultures. The present study investigated Arab cultural adaptation and preservation in Western society; in particular, how Muslim Iraqi female immigrants talk about and make sense of, Arab culture and the intergenerational preservation of Arab culture in New Zealand's society.

The discourses formed by these participants in this present study varied considerably reflecting generational differences, distinct beliefs, and concepts. However, in general this study dealt with four issues, these were; constructing the other; constructing Arab culture; constructing the bint; and constructing the Arab mother. Based on these four issues we were then able to investigate how intergenerational cultural transition was

achieved. First, I will discuss briefly the four issues, and then on the basis of these four issues I will explore intergenerational cultural transition.

Arab mothers who participated in this present study considered it essential that their children were aware of the cultural difference between Arabs and Westerners in order for them not to lose sight of their distinctive Arab heritage, and identity. Arab mothers profusely used notions of differentiation in which they would use terms such as 'they', 'them', and 'their society' to construct the other, and terms such as 'we', and 'us' to construct Arabs. Like their mothers, the daughters in this study also used the notions of differentiation in order to construct the other. When one of the daughters was asked, "How do you feel as an Arab living in New Zealand?" she immediately pointed out that "First, I am proud of being an Arab". Coincidentally, Hattar-Pollara and Meleis (1995b) indicated a similar response that they obtained when asking Arab Jordanian mothers in the United States "what has been most stressful to you about living in the United States?" Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995b) claimed, "almost all the mothers began by asserting that they were Arabs first and foremost, which meant that they were fundamentally very different from Americans" (p. 531).

Research has suggested that minority groups or immigrants who resettle in a new country face many adaptation challenges. According to Abu Baker (1999), migration causes many problems to the individual in general, and the migrant family in particular. When migrants encounter a new culture, which challenges their beliefs, behaviours, and norms, these issues can have a negative impact on the migration experiences, and two process can occur: acculturation and ethnic identity. Interestingly, Abu Baker (1999) claimed that during the acculturation process, immigrants experience what is referred to as societal disintegration and personal crisis. This process refers to the experiences which immigrant go through when their ethnic social order which they were accustomed to, collapses as a result of their mixing with and integrating within the host society. As a result, migrants feel that their ethnic identity and individuality is under threat, and thus the issue of ethnic identity and ethnic cultural preservation emerges. Migrants try to establish and define their identities in contrast to the host society, and in a sense exclude themselves from the host society in order to create their ethnic uniqueness. Social exclusion of ethnic minorities is an issue which has been widely researched (Campbell & McLean, in press). Migrants would talk about the 'other' or the

host society and use notions that would differentiate them from the host society. These notions assist the migrant to create their ethnic identity on the basis of talking about the other. According to Campbell and McLean (in press), social exclusion among minorities is often actively sought and valued, and establishing uniqueness of ethnic identity is considered a positive thing which strengthens and binds the minority groups who live within the host society. This issue of social exclusion was evident in the present study as the participants constructed the other and profusely used notions of differentiation. Moreover, constructing Arab culture also assisted the participants to establish their Arab uniqueness while living in Western society.

The second issue which was explored in the present study dealt with constructing Arab culture. In general, there were two main discourses that both the mothers and daughters in this study would draw on when constructing Arab culture: religion, and heritage. Once again, this was a method in which the Arab participants in this study used in order to talk about, and make sense of their Arab culture, values, and customs while living in Western society among a culture that varies considerably from their own.

The issues of constructing the other and Arab culture were similar to those mentioned in Nagel (2002), who investigated the constructs of difference and sameness formed by Arab immigrants in London. In her study, Nagel (2002) indicated that Arabs created an 'Arab ethnicity' and gave it significance in order to separate themselves from the English. This form of exclusion was portrayed by the Arab interviewees talking about how the English 'behave', and how the 'English culture' differs remarkably from Arab culture. Nagel (2002) also claimed that the Arab interviewees would construct an Arab identity, define Arab traits, and compare them to those of the 'other', namely the English.

In the present study, ethnic identity and cultural preservation was regarded as a shield that protects migrants and minority groups from the negative influence of the host society. Most important, ethnic identity strengthens the bond among the minority groups and the extended family, and it preserves cultural customs and values. According to a study on Pakistanis in England conducted by Campbell and McLean (in press), older groups of the Pakistani community, and especially the mothers, stated that the morals and customs of the host society are often incompatible with their own and go against

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Pakistani culture. The Pakistanis also described the English culture as potentially corrupting for the minds of young Pakistanis in particular, as they are the ones who socialise and integrate with the host society more than the other members of the minority group.

Similarly, in the present study, Arab mothers expressed their concern regarding the inappropriate behaviour and beliefs of Western society. Mothers in this study stated that Arab culture, beliefs, and values, protect the younger Arab generation from taking onboard Western behaviours and customs that go against Arab culture, and can bring shame to the Arab family. In particular, Arab mothers expressed their concern regarding their Arab daughters who are raised in Western society, and who are considered the honour and reputation of Arab family. This led us to the third and fourth issues in this study that related to constructing the bint, and the Arab mother respectively.

In this study, the mothers and daughters constructed the bint through various discourses; the most prominent were reputation (sumaa), and honour (sharaf). Mothers in particular expressed their concern that their Arab daughters may be influenced by Western behaviours by losing their chastity and risking the family's reputation. Purity was another identified discourse that constructed the bint. According to Arab culture, daughters are to remain pure and untouched by men, indicating their purity from all unrighteous behaviour. Another discourse that constructed the bint was the discourse of susceptibility. Arab mothers in particular constructed daughters as weak, vulnerable and naïve individuals who are prone to slipping into the wrongdoings of Western society. Arab mothers were concerned that their vulnerable daughters would be tempted into making mistakes which would result in the blackening of the family's face. Arab daughters acknowledged their role as the bearers of the family's reputation and honour. However, they also portrayed it as a cultural role that they were trapped in, which resulted in parental restrictions and control. The issue of vulnerability lead Arab daughters to talk about the control of their parents and the cultural restrictions, which prevented Arab daughters from experiencing freedom. This issue assisted the participants to construct the Arab mother.

Mothers and daughters in this study constructed the Arab mother differently. The mothers in this study constructed the Arab mother as a cultural preserver, as an advisor,

and a mojahida warrior. Due to the role the mother plays in the family, they talked about being in control of their children in order to guide them through the correct path that abides to cultural norms. The mothers in this study talked about control being a form of advice and guidance, and not restriction. Unlike their mothers, the daughters talked about the controlling parents, who prevent them from enjoying the liberty which Western society offers. However, in general the construct of the Arab mother indicated the important role of cultural preservation which Arab mothers play. I shall use the domino effect in order to illustrate this issue. Arab mothers are regarded as cultural preservers. A good Arab mother is one which raises her children according to ideal Arab values and beliefs. If a mother raises her children according to these ideal values, her status among her direct and extended family soars, gaining her admiration and respect, as she would have whitened the face of her family. Consequently, Arab children who take onboard and abide by the cultural values that their mothers raised them on would reflect their family's good upbringing, and hence the children would also whiten the face of their family. In addition, Arabs are aware of the effect that inappropriate behaviours and wrongdoings can have on the reputation and status of the family. Fear and concern regarding blackening the face of the family and the shame this can bring on the Arab family's name is also a main reason why families give so much importance to preserving Arab culture and identity. Behaving in a way that goes against Arab culture, such as behaving like Westerners, results in the blackening of an Arab family's face.

It is important to note that these issues were similar to those considered by Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a, 1995b). Hattar-Pollara and Meleis (1995a) conducted a study on the experiences of Arab Jordanian immigrant women raising their adolescent children in California. Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a) stated that the role of Arab mothers was dictated by culture, and history that portrayed Arab mothers as being solely responsible for the maintenance and preservation of Arab culture and values. The Arab mothers in Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a) indicated that their husbands and the Jordanian community expected the mothers to ensure that their children behave in ways that conform to Arab culture and customs. The Jordanian women also stated that they feared that their children would lose their heritage and family values, and that they were concerned that their adolescents would lose their Arab identity and customs and behave more like the 'American kids'. These results were similar to those which we obtained from the present study, especially with regards to the Arab mothers using the notions of

differentiation when constructing the other, and also the responsibility Arab mothers have in preserving and passing on Arab culture, customs, and beliefs to their children.

Nevertheless, Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a) did not investigate how the Arab adolescents themselves perceived the immigration experience to be. This is a limitation that I was able to avoid. I believe that it is important to include the younger Arab generation who are considered the carriers of ethnic culture to the subsequent generations. Ajrouch (2000) stated that the younger Arab migrants and the second-generation become the carriers through which their ethnic culture and values are either transmitted to subsequent generations or lost. The young migrants are the critical point from which to examine the processes of acculturation and ethnic identity formation.

In this study, my focus was on Arab daughters in particular due to their sensitive status as the bearers of the family's honour and reputation. Nevertheless, Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a) indicated that there were two themes that emerged from their study regarding the consequences of Arab adolescents losing Arab identity: loss of honour (sharaf), and bad reputation (sumaa). Interestingly, these two notions emerged in my present study when constructing the bint.

However, although Arab daughters acknowledged the difference between Arab and Western culture, they nevertheless indicated that they were struggling to adapt to Western culture while being culturally aware of their Arab identity. This in particular, reflects the feeling of confusion which adolescents from immigrant backgrounds face when trying to adapt to both the culture of origin and the culture of the host society (Phinney & Romero et al., 2001). Adolescent migrants struggle to develop an identity that integrates both their ethnic values and those of the host society. On one hand they live with parents who encourage the preservation of ethnic values, customs, and language. On the other hand, they live among and socialise with, peers who belong to the other society, and the adolescent migrants go to educational institutions that encourage them to learn and be proficient in the host societies language, customs, and beliefs (McCoy, 1992, cited in Phinney & Romero et al., 2001).

Finally, on the basis of these four constructs, the issue of intergenerational cultural preservation was explored. The constructs of the other, Arab culture, the Arab mother,

and the bint were integrated in order to explore the process of intergeneration cultural transition. According to Arab mothers in this present study, Western freedom exceeds that which Arab culture allows, and Western culture and behaviours are culturally and religiously inappropriate for Arabs, especially for Arab females. Therefore, if Arab mothers give their daughters the freedom that they desire without control, then Arab daughters will be prone to slipping into wrongdoings and risk the family's name and honour. Preserving Arab culture and identity is regarded as a guarding shield, which protects young Arabs in general, and Arab daughters in particular, from smudging the family's name and attempting sinful behaviours. The Arab mothers expressed their concern that their children would forget their heritage, customs, and religion and lose the strong family values that characterise Arab culture, or ignoring the norms that govern the relationships in that culture. Additionally, the mothers expressed their worry that their children and especially the females would date; they would lose respect towards their parents; become selfish and self-centred; and attempt to separate themselves from their family and become independent just like the Kiwis. These concerns were very similar to those expressed by the Jordanian immigrant mothers in the United States in the study conducted by Hattar-Pollara et al. (1995a).

However, there was some contradiction in the accounts formed by the mothers in regards to cultural preservation. The Arab mothers acknowledged that to expect their children or their children's children to preserve all cultural beliefs and customs is unrealistic. Arab mothers admitted that subsequent Arab generations will eventually lose some cultural customs and beliefs and that the generation following that will do the same, resulting in the eventual loss and diminishment of Arab customs and identity among Arabs living in Western society.

Arab daughters, on the other hand, claimed the need for cultural conservation. Cultural conservation referred to taking onboard some Arab customs and beliefs and accommodating Arab culture to Western society. Arab daughters in this study mentioned that it is quite unrealistic for their parents to expect them to preserve Arab customs and values without changing some of the beliefs in order to adapt more easily to Western society. One of the daughters in this study clearly indicated this issue. The daughter claimed that the difference between young Arabs and the older generation in New Zealand is that Arab parents were raised and had lived for many years in Arab

society, while the children have been raised and are living in Western society. The daughter indicated that Arab parents should realise that they cannot raise their children as if they are still living in Arab society. Arab daughters stated that they would raise their children differently to how their Arab parents had raised them, by exercising some leniency and giving their children an amount of freedom, which their parents did not allow them to have. Abu Rabia (1995) claimed that as a result of the differential roles that females and males play in Arab societies, females are deprived from freedom and are not encouraged to pursue careers freely. Conversely, when the younger generation of female Arabs migrate with their family's to Western society which allows them the liberty their Arab conservative society prevents them from experiencing, the Arab daughters begin to rebel against their traditional norms and identify with Western society as a sign of assimilation, wanting to be considered just like them.

Despite their growing presence, Arabs in Western society have received little attention by academics. The lack of popularity of Arabs as a research subject, I believe, belies an unwillingness to stray from accepted categories of ethnicity, and because of many cultural barriers that Western researchers might face when studying such an ethnic minority. In choosing Arabs in my study, my goal was to draw the attention of research and researchers towards a minority group that has not been given the opportunity to express its 'voice' in such an important issue such as migration.

A major strength of this study was the fact that I myself am a female Iraqi immigrant. This asset allowed me to communicate with the participants in their own Arabic language or in English. This point allowed a sense of rapport and comfort between the participants and myself, as they felt they were able to talk freely about their personal immigration experiences. My cultural sense of belonging and awareness assisted me in being able to build rapport with the female participants.

Further research will give more insight and better appreciation regarding the lives and experiences of this ethnic group who have been portrayed in many misleading and dark images by Western society. Arabs are considered one of the most misunderstood ethnic groups in Western society, as they have been misinterpreted and stereotyped in the press as terrorists, "fanatics", or oil-rich sheikhs (Erickson & Al-timimi, 2001).

This study illuminates some of the pathways through which meaning arises. The meanings attached to cultural preservation produce not only feelings of belonging, but also have implications for the success and/or failure of this and future Arab generations in Western society

To conclude, it is my hope that this study allowed the reader to experience and understand the way in which 'talk' can have an underlying meaning that portrays how people would draw on discourses in order to construct certain events or beliefs. All this was done with the assistance of a group of Iraqi immigrants in New Zealand. Their talk, which constructed Arab culture and cultural preservation in Western society, provided us with an interesting overview of how language not only 'described' things, but it also 'did' things.

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GLOSSARY

A'ayb: a strong Arabic notion that refers to behaviour that is deemed culturally and religiously shameful, which will 'blacken' the face of an Arab family and disgrace it.

Allah: the Muslim word for God.

Eid: After 30 days of fasting in Ramadan, the following 3 days are called Eid, in which family and friends visit each other and congratulate one another in successfully completing the fasting month of Ramadan.

Hadith: this refers to the taught practices and sayings of the Muslim prophet Mohammed (pbuh).

Halal and *Haram*: Notions of halal and haram are contrasted with each other. Halal refers to certain things that are religiously permissible for Muslims, whereas haram refers to things that are religiously unacceptable therefore sinful.

Majnoon: a person that is 'crazy'. This word is normally associated with a person who is mentally unstable, and can be referred to as, *mareeth nefsi*. In Arab culture, being mentally unstable is considered shameful and dishonouring.

Mojahida: a Muslim female that carries out Jihad.

pbuh: whenever a Muslim person mentions the name of the prophet Mohammed they would add - peace and blessing upon him.

Sharaf: the honour of an Arab family, which takes many forms but mainly refers to the virgin Arab daughters of the family.

Sumaa: the reptuation, or the name and status of an Arab family.

APPENDIX A

ANZCS LETTER

ARAB NEW ZEALAND CULTURAL SOCIETY INC.
P. O. BOX 65 231, Mairangi Bay, Auckland,
New Zealand
Phone/Fax: President: 09 625 7720
Phone/Fax: V. President 09 478 8922

جمعية الثقافة العربية النيوزلندية المتضامنة

12/03/2002

To whom it may concern

The Arab New Zealand Cultural Society Inc. executives board has reviewed the Thesis Proposal "*Arab Migrants in New Zealand*" by student Rose Joudi, and found there is no objection to the student to work on this thesis.

We do believe that the laws and codes of ethics will be apply for any work concerning any group lives in New Zealand.

We wish Rose Joudi a successful work and a good contribution to New Zealand community. We will support her in any task, that she might need the help of this society.

Regards

Dr. Dhia ALCHALABI, PhD
President of
Arab New Zealand Cultural Society Inc.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW POINTS

Points for Mothers:

1. Immigrating to Western country can be a huge step, how did you feel about this, and what concerns did you have at that time, for yourself or your family?
2. After arriving in New Zealand and living in it for more than 2 yrs now, what is it like?
3. What is it like to be an Arab in New Zealand?
4. What do you think is the meaning of Arab Culture?
5. How do we go on preserving it in Western country?
6. Do you think Arab parents have any worries regarding their children's ability to protect and maintain their traditions?
7. How can Arab parents balance two cultures that are quite different from one another?
8. How can our children balance that?
9. Raising our Arab children in a non-Arab country can be quite challenging, what do you think are the main challenges that Arab parents might face?
10. As an Iraqi mother, do you think it is easier to raise a boy or a girl in Western society?

Points for Daughters:

1. When you knew your family were immigrating to New Zealand, what did you think it was like in this new country?
2. After arriving here and living here for more than 2 yrs, what is it like?
3. What is it like being an Arab in New Zealand?
4. What do you think is the meaning of Arab culture?
5. How do you maintain your culture, like your language or traditions?
6. What are the main differences between the Arab and New Zealand culture?
7. Do you think parents need to worry about their children's ability to take care of their culture and ethnic identity?
8. What do you think are the challenges our parents face when trying to raise us Arab children in New Zealand?
9. In your opinion, are the generation of young Arabs in New Zealand able to balance these two different cultures?
10. Do you think it is easier to raise a boy or a girl in Western society?

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION SHEETS

(ENGLISH & ARABIC)

Iraqi Migrants in New Zealand

Information Sheet

Al Salam Alykum,

My name is Rose Joudi and I am a Postgraduate student at Massey University. The purpose of this study is to investigate how Arab immigrants in New Zealand preserve their cultural identity, and it will also explore how parents pass their cultural heritage to the second generation.

If you decide to volunteer for this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. The interview will be audio taped, and transcribed by me. You will be asked questions relating to you or your family's cultural adaptation in New Zealand. I will be talking about issues such as your concern regarding your children's ability to keep their cultural identity in a western society, and the generational gap between your understanding of culture, and your child's understanding of their ethnic culture and the western culture.

The results of your participation will be strictly confidential. No names or individual identifying information will be published in the research study unless given permission by you. With the exception of the researchers involved in running this study, nobody will be allowed to see or discuss any of your responses.

The total time for your participation will be *one hour*.

On completion of the project you will have the option to retain the tape(s), or agree that the tape(s) be destroyed.

Your rights as a participant are:
  i. To decline to participate;
  ii. To refuse to answer any particular questions;
  iii. To withdraw your data from the study at any time up to 2 weeks;
  iv. To ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
  v. To provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used.

A summary report and explanation of the results will be made available to you when the study is completed if you so request.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your participation in this study, please contact:

Rose Joudi, Dept. of Psychology, Massey University (Albany)
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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee, Albany Campus, Protocol MUAHEC 02/016. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Margot Edwards, Acting Chair, Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee, Albany, telephone 09 443 9799, email M.F.Edwards@massey.ac.nz.

المهاجرون العراقيون في نيوزيلندا

استمارة المعلومات

السلام عليكم

اسمي روز جودي وانا طالبة دراسات عليا في جامعة ماسي. الهدف من هذه الدراسه هو جمع المعلومات عن العراقيين المهاجرين في نيوزيلندا وكيفية محافظتهم علع عاداتهم وتقاليدهم. سوف تقوم هذه الدراسه أيضا بمحاولة إستكشاف طرق إنتقال العادات والتقاليد من الاباء الى الأبناء.

إذا وافقت على المشاركه في هذه الدراسه سوف تقوم بالمشاركه في مقابله. سوف أقوم بتسجيل وكتابة المقابله و سوف تسألون أسئله تتعلق بشعوركم كمهاجرين في نيوزيلندا وطرق تكيفكم مع الحياة في نيوزيلندا. سوف أقوم بمناقشة مواضيع تتعلق بقدرتكم على المحافظه على عاداتكم وتقاليدكم في المجتمع الغربي والإختلافات بين عادات وتقاليد الأباء والأبناء.

نتائج هذا البحث سوف تكون محكومة بأنظمة الخصوصيه المتعلقه بجميع أبحاث جامعة ماسي. لن يتم نشر أي أسماء أو تفاصيل شخصيه بدون أذن مسبق من الأشخاص المتعلقه بهم المعلومات المتعلقه بالمقابله سوف لن يتم مناقشتها خارج دائره ضيقه من المختصين.

المقابله سوف تستمر لمدة ساعه واحده.

بعد إكمال الدراسه سوف تخير بين المحافظه على شريط المقابله أو يمكنك طلب التخلص من الشريط.

يوجد لديكم الحقوق الاتيه

- رفض المشاركه

- رفض الإجابه على أي من الأسئله خلال المقابله

- الإنسحاب من الدراسه في أي وقت حتى اسبوعين بعد المقابله

- الحصول على إجابه لأي سؤال يتعلق بالدراسة خلال المشاركة

- التأكد من أن معلوماتك الشخصيه لن تستخدم إلا بعد الحصول على إذن مسبق منك

سوف نقوم بتزويدك بنسخه ملخصه عن البحث بعد الإنتهاء منه إذا كان لديك أي أسئله بخصوص البحث الرجاء الإتصال بـ

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البريد الإلكتروني rosejoudi@hotmail.com
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APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORMS

(ENGLISH & ARABIC)

Massey University
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Iraqi Migrants in New Zealand

Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time up to 2 weeks following the interview and to decline to talk about any particular concern.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed: ....

Name: ....

Date: ....

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Inception to Infinity: Massey University's commitment to learning as a life-long journey

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المهاجرون العراقيون في نيوزيلندا

استمارة الموافقة

لقد قرأت ورقة المعلومات و قد شُرحت تفاصيل الدراسة إليّ أسئلتي قد أجيبت إلى رضاي . و أفهم أننيّ قد أسأل أسئلة إضافيّة في أيّ وقت .

أفهم أنّ لديّ حقّ للانسحاب من الدراسة في أيّ وقت حتّى أسبوعين بعد المقابلة وا لرفض الإجابة على أي من الأسئله خلال المقابله . أوافق على أن أشارك في هذه الدّراسة تحت الشّروط ألمُدرجة في ورقة المعلومات .

التَّوقيع   ---

الاسم   ---

التّاريخ   ---