

# Becoming american, becoming ethnic



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Name: Instructor: Course: Date: Immigrating to America Introduction I was born in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, where my father worked as a teacher and my mother operated a small shop. I went to school in American Community School of Abu Dhabi, a school located in Abu Dhabi. The school uses English as the main instruction language. My father always wanted to migrate to the United States, and that is the reason why he enrolled my brother, my two sisters, and me to an English speaking school. The classes were offered in English. Although Abu Dhabi is known for Islamic culture, we lived in a relatively secular neighborhood where Islamic rules were not very strict. My father applied for teaching jobs in the United States and had hopes that he would find a school that would be interested in a teacher of Arabic.

On my final year in primary school, my father found a teaching job in California. He was to start teaching Arabic the following month. They agreed with my mother that he should first go and let us finish our school year and then join him later.

Life in America When I first landed in California, I was astounded by the huge sky scrapers in the city of Los Angeles. Although United Arab Emirates has of late started designing and building extremely tall buildings, most of these building are located in Dubai. In Abu Dhabi, there are not as many sky scrapers and I was taken aback by this simple physicality of the United States. There was also the initial shock of the bustle in Los Angeles. In Abu Dhabi, things are kind of relaxed and people are never in a hurry to get things accomplished. The economy of Abu Dhabi allows people to lead a relaxed lifestyle.

When I arrived in Los Angeles, it soon dawned on me that unlike Abu Dhabi where people depend on oil and natural gas revenues, the American society is business oriented. This means that they have to make to their appointments in time or fail to get the deal. I found out that this was the main reason why there is a lot of bustle in the streets (Dublin 67). The other thing I found to be interesting and out of the normal in Abu Dhabi is the absence of a division of gender statuses and roles.

Men and women are treated as equal in the United States. Men and women have access to the same jobs. In Abu Dhabi, there is division of labor by gender. Although the country has started implementing economic and social policies that reflect continuity and change for women, women still cannot access a number of jobs that are set aside for men. It was interesting to see women hurry along the streets to their places of work just like men. Cultural Differences The Arab culture is quite different from the American culture.

Abu Dhabi culture is Arab oriented. Strengths and weaknesses are present when both cultures are compared to each. While the Arab culture is relationship oriented, the American culture is work oriented. In the American culture, time is linear.

Gender relationships are also very different in the two cultures. In the American cultures, both genders are treated as the same and have equal access to the opportunities that are found in the economy. However, women in the Arab world are treated like they are lesser individuals from the men. This kind of culture has been noted to be retrogressive and governments have tried to change it. However, many opportunities are presented to men

rather than to women. Women are still treated as inferior to the men in all aspects of life. The other aspect of cultural difference is religion. In Abu Dhabi, religion plays a critical role in all aspects of life.

For instance, most of the laws are heavily influenced by Islam, the main religion. This has been one of the contentious issues that have fettered the Arab countries against the western countries. Most of the people in Abu Dhabi must say their prayers in the morning and in the evening. Going to the Mosque has been identified as one of the most important aspects of the culture. This implies that the religion controls many aspects of the Arabic culture. In the United States, religion is not as influential as it is in the Arab countries. Many people have adopted a secular lifestyle.

Prayers are reserved for the church services and not as many people attend these services. Instead of hinging their lives on religion, Americans have hinged their lives on commercial activities. This has led to a situation where many people have done away with their spiritual lives and concentrated on their businesses and careers. The social unit in America is also quite different from that of Abu Dhabi. Whereas many people in Abu Dhabi will maintain their relationships with the extended family, the Americans rarely maintain these relationships. This can be attributed to the verity that Americans are so engrossed with their businesses and careers that they have failed to maintain their extended family relationships. However, many people in Abu Dhabi have started living as nuclear families but still maintain close ties with the extended family. The government has been supporting living as an extended family rather than a nuclear family.

Family Apart from my immediate family in Los Angeles, California, we have other extended family members in the United States. There are about four families that are related to my nuclear family. We share the same relations from United Arab Emirates.

In an effort to maintain the relationship between the families, we make an effort of having family get-together every three months. Hosts are alternated between the four families. In this way, every family get to host a get together once per year. We also do visit United Arab Emirates at times. There is where most of our extended family members are found. My maternal grandfather and maternal grandmother are the oldest family relations that are alive.

However, when I was growing up in Abu Dhabi, my maternal great grandmother was still alive. That is the farthest that I can trace my family relations. Influence of Ethnicity My Arabic culture has been influenced to significant levels by the American culture.

My family has been naturalized as American citizens. We school in a dynamic environment. Although whites are the predominant group in the school and in my neighborhood, I contact many people from different cultural backgrounds.

This has had an effect on my culture because of my contact with these cultures. My neighborhood has the majority of residents being whites. However, there are other groups such as Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, and other groups. These have made my neighborhood be characterized by a blend of cultures. However, the dominant culture is the <https://assignbuster.com/becoming-american-becoming-ethnic/>

American culture. This is because the American culture features a combination of different cultures. At school, there is a combination of cultures that have made me adopt different features of different cultures. Almost all cultures have been influenced by other cultures.

This has led to a state of affairs that created a culture that features different characteristics of different cultures. I can say that have been acculturated due to the exposure of different cultures. I have also learnt to live within the community of many cultures. This is because most of the people I interact with are not Mexican. They are not also strictly American whites.

This is the reason why in the United States' metropolitan areas, there are many cultures that unite form a culture that is cannot be said to be from a particular ethnic group (Dublin 69). Conclusion Having migrated from Abu Dhabi to the US, I have been exposed to different cultures from different backgrounds. The existence of a difference between the American culture and the Arabic culture, introduced me to living in a diverse society. After migrating to the United States, I was exposed to even more cultural backgrounds from different regions of the world.

America is known to host numerous migrants from diverse parts of the world. This is why the US has a unique culture characterized by blending together of different cultures. Despite the fact that the dominant culture is the white Americans culture, other cultures have played a major role in diversifying the cultural heritage of the United States. I have been acculturated into the American culture and have also learned a number of characteristics of different cultures that are found in the United States.