

The Influence of Religion on the Leisure Behavior of Immigrant Muslims in the United States

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Using the concepts of ethnic resilience and selective acculturation as a theoretical foundation, this study analyzes the effect of religion on the leisure behavior of Muslim immigrants to the U.S. The research project was based on 24 interviews that were conducted in the spring and summer of 2002 with immigrants from Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Korea, and Mexico. The results of the study show that the effect of Islam on leisure behavior manifests itself through the emphasis on strong family ties and on family oriented leisure among Muslims; the need to teach and supervise children and to pass traditional moral values to subsequent generations; the requirement of modesty in dress, speech and everyday behavior; as well as the restrictions on mix-gender interactions, dating, food and alcohol. The findings of this study suggest that leisure researchers need to pay more attention to the effects of religion on leisure behavior and should strive to incorporate the religious beliefs as part of the cultural heritage of minorities.

KEYWORDS: *Religion, Islam, Muslim, leisure, immigration, ethnicity, post 9-11.*

The research on the effects of distinct racial and ethnic backgrounds on leisure has attracted a considerable attention over the last 27 years (Floyd & Gramann, 1993, 1995; Gramann, Floyd, & Saenz, 1993; Stamps & Stamps, 1985; Washburne, 1978). However, studies exploring the effects of religious beliefs on the leisure behavior of specific religious groups are scarce, focus almost solely on Christianity, and result primarily from the work of a single researcher (Heintzman, 1987, 1994; Heintzman & Van Andel, 1995; Ibrahim, 1982). This is quite unexpected, given the sustained interest in the issues of religion, including Islam, among sport researchers (Daiman, 1995; Eisen, 1999; Hargreaves, 2000; Hoffman, 1992; Sfeir, 1985; Zaman, 1997). In fact, in reference to leisure and sport, Eisen (1999) commented, "The fact that religious philosophies and attitudes have something to do with how we view and administer our leisure activities through history is one of the best-kept

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secrets of modern sport scholarship" (p. 231). Although not in contexts specifically related to leisure, anthropologists and psychologists have also examined the relationship between religion and social behavior (Howard, 1986; Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003). Psychologists have suggested that religion permeates not only the individual's psyche, but also his or her social and cultural spheres of life (Spilka et al., 2003). Anthropologists, on the other hand, have asserted that religion is thick with meaning and symbolism that can affect one's social environment through activities such as ritual where one is connected with the supernatural (Howard, 1986).

In his 1987 overview of the current trends in research on the relationship between religion and leisure, Kelly noted that one might relate religion to leisure in three distinct ways. First, religious observance may be considered as a form of leisure activity since it involves use of free time with positive anticipated outcomes. Second, when one takes into account the history of conflict involving religious institutions and certain "undesired" recreation patterns, religion may be viewed as being *in conflict* with leisure (see Clark & Critcher, 1985; Cross, 1990). Third, religion may be considered a form of leisure in the form of contemplation or spiritual pursuit that is intended to "enhance the spiritual lives of devotees" (Kelly, 1987, p. 164). One may argue that although such links are certainly important, there exists a whole spectrum of ways in which religion and leisure intersect that have been hardly subject to any scientific inquiry. Leisure activities centered around the church, organized by the church, using church premises and funds, undertaken in the company of fellow church goers, and with the religious intent in mind have not been tackled in the contemporary leisure literature. Moreover, analysis of the influence that religious beliefs have on people's leisure participation is still lacking.

Although little is known about the effect of religious beliefs on the leisure of the general population, even less research is devoted to the leisure behavior of ethno-religious minorities in the United States. In addition to being non-mainstream in North America, such religious beliefs are often associated with populations that occupy marginalized positions in society and consequently deserve special attention on the part of leisure researchers. In this study we focus on this absent area of inquiry—the effects of religious beliefs (Islam) on leisure behavior of people of the Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Northern African background.

Currently, there are between 6 to 9 million Muslims in the U.S., residing mainly in California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Indiana, and Michigan (Hasan, 2001; U.S. Department of State, 2001). About 78% are immigrants (U.S. Department of State, 2001). Islam has between 700 million and 1.2 billion followers worldwide (ReligiousTolerance.org, 2003) and is based on two fundamental beliefs. Muslims must submit to one God, Allah, and believe that Muhammad is God's last and greatest prophet who revealed God's final and complete revelations (Jameela, 1967). Muslims are not a homogenous group of believers as Islam has two main sects—Sunnism and Shi'ism, each with different ideological tendencies (see Hasan, 2001 for a thorough dis-

cussion of the topic). Regardless of the ideological divisions within the Islamic faith, most scholars believe that Islam is a way of life that includes all aspects of living, social behavior and conduct (Sfeir, 1985). Muslims are collectivistic in nature, emphasize the primary role of family in their life, prohibit consumption of alcohol or drugs, promote self control, and stress the need to pray five times a day (Hasan, 2001; Jameela, 1967).

According to Ibrahim (1982), Islam does not have an official stance on leisure, although religious texts such as the Hadith and the Qur'an suggest a favorable attitude toward free time activities. There are three specific pastimes, namely swimming, shooting, and horse-back riding, that have been mentioned in the Hadith. Moreover, Muhammad is reported to have been racing with his wife. These verses have inspired many Muslims to participate in similar leisure activities (Ibrahim, 1982). The Qur'an also makes references to health and instructs Muslims to take special care of their bodies (Walseth & Fasting, 2003). Although existing studies reported that leisure activities in which Muslims engage in, such as socializing or watching TV, are similar to those of the mainstream Americans (Ibrahim, 1982), very little is known about the effect of Islam on leisure attitudes, leisure styles, and leisure motivations of Muslims.

The objective of this paper is to examine the influence of religion on leisure behavior of Muslim immigrants in the United States. The concepts of ethnic resilience and selective acculturation provide a theoretical foundation for this study. Ethnic resilience is used to analyze the place of religion in the everyday life of immigrants and its effect on leisure behavior of interviewed Muslims, while selective acculturation is used to frame the often conflicting influences of traditional ethnic and modern American values on their lives.

Literature Review

The literature on leisure behavior of Muslims is very scarce. A series of studies conducted in the United Kingdom in the mid 1980s examined school lives and after school activities of South Asian teens (Carrington, Chievers, & Williams, 1987; Glyptis, 1985; Taylor & Hegarty, 1985). The results of this work suggest that South Asian girls were constrained in their leisure pursuits by the lack of parental approval, strict dress codes, inadequate availability of single-sex facilities, and their religious beliefs. Their leisure activities were mostly home-oriented and centered around their extended families. Similar results were obtained by Tirone (1999, 2000) and by Tirone and Pedlar (2000) in their study that included a sample of second generation South Asian Muslim teens residing in Canada. Tirone and her colleagues observed that young Muslim women spent much of their free time with parents and siblings and stressed the central role of family in other aspects of their life. According to Tirone (2000), membership in South Asian social clubs was central to the continuity of their religious traditions and provided activities for children and teens such as sports, dances, and festivals. Parents encour-

aged their children to participate in activities organized by ethnic clubs, which constituted an appropriate social environment for teens to meet people of similar religious and cultural backgrounds and thus lowered their chances of developing friendships outside of their ethnic community.

Leisure behavior of Muslim immigrants to the U.S. has usually been described in reference to the experiences of Arab Americans. As Abu Laban and Abu-Laban (1999) described, one of the popular forms of recreation among Arab Canadian youth was watching TV. Their research showed that constant exposure of immigrant teenagers to the American mass media has made them aware of the negative stereotypes of the Arab culture deeply imbedded in Western societies. It has also been suggested that watching television and other sedentary activities become more predominant in the lives of Arabs after immigration (Hassoun, 1999).

Researchers have speculated that the collectivistic culture of Arabs creates significant tensions when confronted with the more independent family organization typical to the American society (Abu-Laban & Abu-Laban, 1999). Despite these differences, Arab families have been shown to maintain the collectivistic and family-centered relationships over successive generations. Triandis (1995) suggested that collectivistic cultures, such as the one shared by Arabs, display certain unique characteristics. Group needs have priority over individual needs, people define themselves in terms of their group, they emphasize relationships (regardless of whether they are deemed as positive or negative), and focus on norms and appropriate behaviors pertaining to that specific group.

Theoretical Background

A majority of studies on ethnic minorities in leisure contexts has utilized assimilation theory to model the behavior change among the newcomers (Floyd & Gramann, 1993, 1995; Stodolska, 1998). The assimilationist perspective, however, has undergone much critique and has been significantly revised since the publication of the *Assimilation in American Life* (Gordon, 1964). Among other criticisms (see Alba & Nee, 1997 and Portes & Rumbaut, 1996 for an extensive discussion of the topic), it was claimed that it failed to acknowledge the existence of sacred and secular ethnic cultures and that it did not distinguish between religious groups, such as Jews, and national groups, such as Italians and Poles (Gans, 1979, 1994). Gans (1979) argued that assimilation affects both the sacred and secular cultures; however it affects the latter more than the former. Moreover, the rate of assimilation among ethno-religious minorities is slower than among ethnic groups defined by their national origin. In 1994, Gans proposed that ethnic and religious acculturation should be treated differently and that such distinctions would particularly apply to post-1965 immigrant groups, such as Muslims. The differences between the rate of religious and ethnic acculturation were thought to stem from several characteristics of ethno-religious minorities. First, while ethnic groups were loosely organized, ethno-religious groups

were usually dominated by formally organized denominations. Second, in North America religiosity is a private activity that requires no affiliation comparable to the one required by ethnicity. Third, the declining importance of religious affiliation as an indicator of prestige and as a symbol of class position had reduced the need for conversion. Lastly, in subsequent generations, religious affiliation may take symbolic forms in which "consumption of religious symbols" (p. 585) may not create any complications or barriers to dominant lifestyles.

Not only was the soundness of the concept of assimilation criticized in the 1980s and 1990s, but some authors went as far as postulating the need for a complete abandonment of the notion and for reformulating the field of ethnic and migration studies. According to Portes (1984), the new paradigm shifted the focus of study from assimilation to ethnic identification, ethnic consciousness, and ethnic solidarity. This alternative approach identified *ethnic resilience*, "a mixture of the awareness of racial and cultural differences and the social solidarity based on them" (p. 384), as an important component of the experience of post-1965 immigrants. Portes juxtaposed the notions of "full assimilation" and "ethnic awareness," defined as the "perception by members of a minority of the social distance separating them from the dominant group and the existence of discrimination based on racial or cultural differences" (p. 384). He argued, in direct opposition to ethnic group awareness, fully assimilated minorities are characterized by a sense of equity and the belief that one can freely mingle with anyone else in the society. Factors such as education, knowledge of English, lack of racial distinctiveness, high occupational status, and "information about the U.S. society" reduce the salience of ethnicity.

In 1987, Keefe and Padilla put forth a theory of *selective acculturation*. Based on the findings of their study on the cultural change among Mexican-Americans, they concluded that "no single continuum of acculturation and assimilation emerges from [the] study" (p. 189). Ethnic minority members were found to acculturate, but this process proved to be selective. Immigrants adopted certain strategic traits of the mainstream culture that facilitated their adjustment to the American society but, at the same time, retained some of their ethnic cultural characteristics ensuring long-term survival of the group. As a result, the subsequent generations of Chicanos spoke the English language and were well adapted to life in the U.S., yet retained their traditional food, music, strong family relations, and leisure preferences. In the context of leisure studies, selective acculturation theory was employed by Gramann et al. (1993) and by Shaull and Gramann (1998). Shaull and Gramann examined the effect of selective acculturation on the importance of nature-related and family-oriented experiences in outdoor recreation to Mexican Americans. Gramann et al. used selective acculturation theory to compare perceived importance of social-psychological benefits of outdoor recreation participation between Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans. Their findings showed that some cultural values, such as familism, withstood conformity pressures and maintained their importance among the most ac-

culturated and the most structurally assimilated Mexican American respondents.

This study utilizes the concept of *ethnic resilience* to show how continuous awareness of cultural differences and inter-ethnic solidarity among immigrant Muslims affect their leisure behavior. Moreover, we will draw upon *selective acculturation* theory to analyze the cultural adaptations made by Muslim Americans and to explain possible conflicts that exist within their community. Several research questions guided this study: What role does Islam play in immigrants' lives and in their leisure in particular? In what ways does Islam constrain or facilitate leisure engagements? And how do Muslims build their leisure lives after immigration?

A symbolic interaction approach was employed in this study. Symbolic interactionism is a part of the interpretive tradition within social sciences that seeks to understand the symbolic meaning guiding actions within the social environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Symbolic interactionism postulates that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them. It argues that such meanings arise out of the interaction of the individual with others, and it states that meanings are handled and modified through an interpretative process by the person who is interacting with any given object (Blumer, 1986). Within the symbolic interactionist tradition, it is important to understand particular motives and the origins of actions a person takes while interacting with his or her social environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Moreover, social life is considered to be an ongoing process whereby social actors interpret the situations, objects, events, and people they encounter in their lives and act accordingly (Blumer, 1986). By familiarizing ourselves with the reality of our Muslim participants, we have been able to grasp the symbolic and interpretive meaning of their actions in reference to the social climate in the post-September 11th America. To ask about behaviors alone and not about the meanings attached to them would produce a two-dimensional perception of reality experienced by Muslim participants. Thus, a detailed description of interpretations and the symbolic meaning of certain situations were necessary to not only remain true to the interpretive paradigm, but to also grasp the full depth of the experiences of our informants.

Symbolic interaction paradigm has been employed by a number of leisure scholars (Kelly, 1983, 1994, 1996; Samdahl, 1987; Shaw, 1985). As Shaw (1985) pointed out, leisure is inherently symbolic in nature. It is laden with meanings, symbols, and norms that are given by the individual participants as well as their social environment. Kelly (1996) also suggested that leisure is a form of interaction that has rich meanings embedded within the experience of participants. He claimed that our definitions of leisure are not solely the product of our individual thought, but rather they are derived from our membership in both the micro and macro levels of society (Kelly, 1983). Specifically, people internalize what actions are appropriate within their social environment and participate in behaviors deemed acceptable based upon these perceptions. Kelly (1983) maintained that social norms

regarding behavior dictate what activities can be freely chosen and which are constrained. Consequently, the goal of our study was not only to explore what leisure activities Muslims participated in, but also to understand the social and symbolic meanings associated with participation or non-participation in leisure.

Methods

Qualitative in-depth interviews were chosen as a source of data in this study. Several reasons guided us in the choice of this method. First, we believed that we could obtain more truthful responses if the contact with respondents was made face-to-face. Second, we anticipated that it would be difficult for non-Muslim researchers to create a comprehensive questionnaire that would capture experiences of members of a distinct ethnic minority group. Third, our goal was to obtain an understanding of the reality *from the perspective of informants* and to uncover how their religious beliefs affected their daily lives and the choices that they made in regards to their leisure. This research project was conducted by two women who were not members of the study population. Our interest in the topic was sparked by the uniqueness of experiences of Muslim immigrants in the U.S. following the events of the September 11th and by the apparent lack of studies tackling the effect of religious beliefs on leisure behavior of minority populations.

The work presented in this paper constitutes a part of a larger research project that had two objectives (a) to analyze the influence of Islam on leisure behavior of immigrant Muslims, and; (b) to explore the leisure behavior of Muslim immigrants in the context of the events of September 11th. These two objectives of the broader research project influenced the selection of study participants. They were selected based on the following criteria: (1) they had to be Muslim; (2) they had to be first generation immigrants; and (3) based on their physical characteristics (e.g., non-Caucasian, unique dress), they had to be recognizable as minority members.

We conducted interviews with 24 individuals from Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Pakistan, India, as well as one individual from Mexico and one from Korea. Twelve informants were women and 12 men between the ages of 18 and 64 (average age 35 years). They included computer engineers, graduate students, a communication specialist, a computer programmer/software designer, a nurse, housewives, an Arab language/culture teacher, a registered nutritionist, a car mechanic, an unemployed person, and an Imam (religious leader). All of the informants, with the exception of one, were given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. One informant—Najila, a female Iraqi Arab language/culture teacher specifically requested that her real name be used in publications resulting from the study.

All of the informants were first generation immigrants whose lengths of stay in the U.S. ranged from 2 to 30 years ($M = 11.8$ years). Informants were initially contacted through Illinois mosques. Local community leaders helped

to identify potential candidates for subsequent interviewing. Following the identification of initial participants, snowball sampling was used to identify the remaining informants. We intentionally strived to obtain a sample of people representing various nationalities, age groups, and occupations, as well as people residing in a large metropolitan center (Chicago) and a smaller city in Illinois (Champaign-Urbana).

In preparation for the interviews, we had visited local mosques on many occasions prior to the official start of the study. In order to familiarize ourselves with the setting and to establish rapport with the potential informants, we had participated in both formal and informal activities organized by the local Muslim community. We began interviewing during the spring of 2002 and finished the data collection in the late September of 2002. After the data collection had ended, we continued to maintain close contacts with the studied community for approximately one year. During this time, we obtained verification and feedback from the informants, and shared our results with the interested parties. Our interviews lasted between 25 minutes (1 interview) and 5 hours (5 interviews). They were conducted in the informants' homes, in homes of their friends, and in mosques and Islamic centers. All interviews were conducted in English, by two primary researchers. We speculate the language of the interviews may have affected the findings of the study, as only more assimilated immigrants fluent in English could be approached for an interview.

The informants were queried about the role that religion played in their leisure, the ways in which Islam constrained or facilitated leisure in America, and their views on the preservation of religious beliefs by their children. Interviews followed a semi-structured format in which the main topics covered remained unchanged, while the order of questions varied between the interviews. Each question was followed by probes designed to obtain more detailed responses. We were careful to separate the effects of religious beliefs from those of the specific cultures of informants' countries of origin. After each question pertaining to the effect of Islam on leisure behavior, informants were asked to evaluate whether it was their religious belief or their cultural background that was responsible for the observed patterns. Such questioning led, in several instances, to the informants' engaging in extensive discussions of various strands within Islam and origins of some of the customs.

Seventeen interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed. In cases where recording was not possible (7 interviews), detailed contemporaneous notes were taken. Moreover, we took detailed notes during the course of each interview. We also recorded contextual information as well our personal reflections on sheets that were subsequently attached to interview transcripts. The process of data analysis began as soon as the first interviews had been completed and lasted throughout the duration of the study. The data were analyzed using the constant comparison technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First, interview transcripts were read by both researchers to develop a broad understanding of the topic. Identified categories were

color coded and major themes were isolated. Subsequently, each transcript was re-read by both researchers to identify sub-themes and to ascertain that they accurately represented the information gathered during the interviews. As the research process progressed, the initially identified sub-themes were revised and other sub-themes were added to the findings. New observations, emerging themes and issues were followed up in subsequent conversations. After the completion of all the interviews, the transcripts were re-read and relevant information that confirmed, as well as contradicted, emerging themes was identified.

Care was taken to maximize trustworthiness of the study. In order to increase credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), interview transcripts were sent to the informants for verification and feedback. Member checking strategy was used in which themes that had emerged from the study and the interpretations of multiple interviews were presented to two informants who were asked to comment on the accuracy of the initial interpretation made by the researchers (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). We also consulted external sources such as media accounts, English-language interpretations of the Qur'an, as well as writings pertaining to the effects of Islam on the lifestyle of its followers. Moreover, informal conversations with individuals knowledgeable in the matters of the local Muslim communities including three local Imams helped us assess the trustworthiness of the data. In order to increase the credibility of the information obtained from participants, we also used prolonged engagement. Both researchers were engaged in the activities of the community for several months prior to start of the interviews, and for more than a year after completion of the study. In order to guard ourselves against threats to dependability, we used low inference descriptors (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982), including detailed fieldnotes with narratives of behaviors, activities, and events. Fieldnotes were subsequently used by the researchers to verify to what degree their interpretations "agreed" with the data. Lastly, in order to enhance confirmability of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), we kept a detailed journal in which we noted our findings, interpretations, thoughts, encountered problems, and the decisions that we made during the data collection process.

Findings

We identified four major themes with respect to the effect of religious beliefs on leisure of interviewed Muslim immigrants. Importance of strong family ties, the need to pass traditional values to subsequent generations, the requirement of modesty, and restrictions on certain foods and alcohol proved to have the most salient effect on immigrants' leisure in this study.

Importance of Strong Family Ties

Importance of strong family ties and family-oriented leisure was the first theme identified in our interviews. Informants stressed that not only the

culture of Islam was collectivistic in nature, but also that their families were united by strong ties. For instance, one of the male informants commented,

According to Qur'an you always need to be with the group—people alone think for themselves, a group can think together, they can solve problems together. Children here are educated, they think they can solve the problems by themselves, but it is not right. It is very important to take the wisdom of others. (Abd Al Rahman, early 50s, Egyptian, communication specialist)

Similarly, an Iraqi female described,

The family is a big responsibility in Iraq. We are always together, relations within the family are always very strong, your family should be your life. My sons obey me, even my daughter in law obeys me the same way I obeyed my mother. We live together, that's why I have a bigger house . . . We go for trips together, go to the park together. When we travel, we always go together, having nice time playing, having BBQ. We spend time together every Sunday. Every week we need to have time off together to discuss things as husband and wife. Every day after the evening prayer it is a time for us, this is the time for your rest, the time to take off hijab, according to the Book, we go to our room and discuss things, share our thoughts. Then even the children need to ask for the permission to enter the room. (Najila, early 50s, Iraqi, Arab language/culture teacher)

Moreover, informants stressed that the fact that children often left their homes at a young age (16-18) was an undesirable characteristic of the American culture that their families did not want to emulate. According to traditional Islamic values, children should stay in the same household as their parents and benefit from the advice and wisdom of older relatives. While all the informants commented on the effect strong family ties had on the leisure pursuits of Muslims, we could detect some disagreement with respect to the hierarchy within families among Muslim immigrants of different ages. Najila stressed the traditionally strong role of senior women in the household. At the same time, however, Hanan, a 38 year-old female nutritionist from India indicated certain changes in social relations among young Muslim families. In her own words: "It's not easy to live with another family. I don't know if it's the new age in Islam that we don't have to live with our in-laws . . . but it's better to have the in-laws live separate to avoid any problems." Her views were shared by several other young female Muslims.

The Need to Pass Traditional Values to Subsequent Generations

The second theme identified in this study was related to the belief in the need to teach and supervise children and to pass the traditional moral values onto subsequent generations. As Hanan, a mother of an 8 year-old girl and a 13 year-old boy commented, "The role of a mother in Islam is very important. From the very beginning when they are infants we train them, we teach them good things and manners, things like who they should be friends with, so children understand." Parents also reported scrutinizing their children's peers, monitoring their free time, encouraging them to stay

at home, blocking inappropriate TV channels, and arranging for chaperones to accompany teenagers during mixed gender meetings. A 36 year-old homemaker from India commented that movies that her children watched needed to be "within Islamic limits" and had to be approved by her. In her own words, Asia: "I make sure movies which my kids are watching are good. There are no scenes in there. When something is coming and the women are not wearing clothes or they are wearing something small we immediately say 'Oh shame, shame.'" Another female informant commented,

I have a dish and I have all the channels that could give them the idea about . . . you know . . . blocked. Because even in the Arabic channels you can find belly dancing and everything. [You need to] raise your child in such a way that they know it is not allowed. That this is bad. Because sometimes I will forget to turn the channel . . . that's why I try to raise that guard . . . so they not feel like you are telling them "no." They have to say "no" for themselves. (Najila)

By strictly controlling their leisure, parents tried to ensure that their children acquired a certain degree of resiliency and that they would make culturally and religiously appropriate choices when given the freedom to do so in the future. In the words of a father of two pre-school daughters, a teenaged daughter, and a 31 year-old son:

My son is 31 years old. Now he is going out and coming in late night. We always find out where he's going. He has to call us from wherever he goes. I call him back if it's like 12:00 AM and I keep on pestering him. When are you coming? We have everything, the sports and things like that at home, so why don't you and your friends come home? I want to be in control, I want to see what they are doing. And none of my kids drink, they don't smoke. And I am very sure they don't have girlfriends or boyfriends. (Muhamad, mid 50s, Pakistani, computer programmer)

Some Muslim parents also intentionally used leisure to limit their children's interactions with their mainstream friends and to protect them from unwanted influences of the American culture. Parents would make sure that the free time of their children was occupied, preferably with participation in leisure- and sport-oriented clubs organized by local mosques and secular Islamic organizations. For instance, as one of the graduate students commented,

We have lots of activities here at the Mosque, like children's activities, because the second generation sometimes loses the pronunciation of the language and the customs. [We offer] lectures on Friday nights, sometimes have politicians come and speak, this weekend the Mosque is hosting a youth/children sports program where children can play in the parking lot, they play games like basketball and soccer. (Mustafa, early 30s, Turkish, Ph.D. student)

By controlling their leisure and encouraging them to participate in activities organized by the mosques, parents ensured that their children were spending time engaged in culture-appropriate and "fun" activities that promoted their cultural values, allowed them to interact with other Muslims and thus facilitated in-group cohesiveness of the Muslim community.

Such restrictions on the pastimes of children are not only prevalent among traditional Muslim families, but also among followers of other religions. For instance, Poll (1962) discovered that passing along their faith and a way of life to their children was among the priorities among the Hasidic Jewish community. Furthermore, Kranzler (1972) observed that playtime among Hasidic children, and particularly among boys, was limited due to significant amount of time they were required to spend learning the Hasidic Jewish tradition. When children did participate in games and sports, parents made sure their recreational activities combined Hungarian, Yiddish, and English traditions. The Amish are another group which remains largely isolated from the mainstream American society. Similarly to the Hasidic Jews, they seek to pass along their religious beliefs and a way of life to their children. The Amish have also denied the entrance of secularism, or the mainstream American way of life, into their communities. In order to do so, they follow a specific set of rules called the *Ordnung*, which regulates and restricts aspects of life such as dress, behavior, and modern technology (Egenes, 2000).

For the interviewed Muslim parents, preserving their cultural values was a priority. However, at the same time, most of them wanted their children to become "good Americans," to succeed in school and to become accepted by the mainstream society. Informants showed pride in their children's school successes and on several occasions noted that they instructed them not to be confrontational about their religion as this could endanger their position in school.

Requirement of Modesty

The third theme that surfaced in this study was the requirement of modesty. We identified four sub-themes within this topic. First, the Islamic faith imposed certain direct restrictions on leisure activities of Muslims. Second, certain regulations existed with respect to the dress of Muslim women that affected their leisure. Third, cross-gender relations, and in particular the necessity to obey husbands, as well as restrictions on mixed-gender interactions significantly affected leisure lives of Muslim immigrants. Lastly, prohibition of unaccompanied travel among Muslim women affected their mobility, and their opportunities for overseas travel in particular.

Direct restrictions on leisure activities. First, our findings showed that Islam imposed certain direct restrictions on leisure behavior of its followers. Leisure activities had to be "modest," they could not involve violence, foul language, or nudity. Moreover, Muslims were prohibited from frequenting establishments that served alcohol. The effect of these restrictions was salient in the quotes of many informants. A Jordanian woman described leisure choices she had to make while in college:

I never drank, but I went to football games. This is my school, they rock, they are excellent, I am so going to go . . . There is this band; they played in the Canopy club. And I am like "No. I really like you guys, but you are playing in the Canopy and there's drinking till 2 in the morning in this club" and I didn't

go. You have to sacrifice things, but all around you feel a lot better. You have to evaluate what is more worth it to me. You just look at every situation . . . Everyone is going to watch a movie rated R. Why is it rated R? Violence, language, is there going to be some nude scenes in there? If it's going to be some really raw scenes I just won't go. I am not comfortable with that. It's not right. I think there should be some morals, some decency, some amount of modesty. (Khadega, 23 years-old, Jordanian, software designer)

Similar patterns have been reported in the religious studies literature. It has been observed that religions such as Hasidic Judaism and Christianity impose limits on the type and degree of participation of their followers in certain leisure pastimes. While among the Hasidic Jews, rules regulating Sabbath observance impose most significant restrictions on their leisure behavior, rules of *Ordnung* regulate the life of the Amish (Egenes, 2000; Kranzler, 1972; Poll, 1962).

As it is apparent from the quote from Khadega, participation in leisure activities required more than simply deciding what the appropriate activities are, but involved a constant evaluation of the content and context in which the leisure took place. The requirement of modesty permeated the entire leisure experience of this person and made her constantly aware of the boundaries she had to impose on her life. However, she did not seem to perceive those accommodations as constraints, but instead saw the deeper moral values behind the choices that her religion obliged her to make and stressed the positive aspects of her leisure experience. Khadega's behavior serves as a good example of the internalization process (Deci & Ryan, 2000). From her accounts in which she showed a strong understanding of the rationale behind some of the restrictions Islam imposed on her behavior, Khadega demonstrated that she internalized values of her culture and viewed them as important aspects of her self.

Dress requirements. The second sub-theme related to modesty focused on the special dress requirements (ranging from a simple scarf or hijab to a full face and body covering of burqa) which affected the leisure behavior of Muslim women. Female informants stressed that the Qur'an did not prescribe a specific type of dress, but merely required women to dress "modestly" at all times. Different kinds of wardrobes typically worn in Muslim countries originate from a variety of cultural traditions and date as far back as the pre-Islamic tribes. Most women in this study stressed that they did *not* perceive their dress to be a constraint to their enjoyment of leisure, but rather that they wore it because of their deeply held religious beliefs. As Noor, a Tunisian homemaker in her early 30s, described, "I wear those clothes to protect my body. This is my choice, even when is hot, but I want to preserve my body for Allah. This is an offering and I will be rewarded for that in Heaven." Some women were found to negotiate their need to wear traditional clothing and their desire to participate in mainstream leisure activities.

You need to take advantage of all these great things out there, you make it fit you, you make it happen. For example if I want to go to Six Flags because if I go on a fast ride my scarf is going to fall off, I'm just going to put an extra

safety pin, but I am going to go! I am going to get that rush and I am going to be happy! I will be me and I'm still going to do the things I want. (Khadega)

The issue of specific attire was a cause for concern for the older members of the Muslim American community. As some older people commented, they were deeply concerned about young women's visiting mosque without proper head covering and wearing clothing that was too tight. Some younger women revealed that they only dressed in traditional clothing while attending services at the mosque and in their everyday life they preferred to wear more modern clothes that did not attract the attention of their co-workers, clients, or fellow students.

Cross-gender relations. Specific gender relations imposed by the Qur'an were another sub-theme related to modesty. Necessity to obey husbands and restrictions on mixed-gender interactions, including those related to sport participation and dating, significantly influenced leisure behavior of Muslim immigrants. For instance, while several female informants commented that women should "obey" their husbands and that the household decision-making was the male domain, they justified this requirement by stressing the need to maintain healthy families and stability within the community. In the words of one female participant:

According to Qur'an woman was created equal to man. However, the role of the woman is to create a peaceful household, something that would resemble a paradise. Thus, a woman should obey her husband in everything. Thus if a husband, for example, refuses to invite some neighbors or forbids his wife to go somewhere, she should obey him . . . It happens that there are some mean men, unreasonable men, men who abuse their wives. Even then the wife should obey her husband and take the suffering as a religious duty. Even if a woman works and is a provider—she should obey her husband. There is a traditional division of roles in the household—cooking, childcare and taking care of the household is a female's duty. Man should be the provider. He provides money, but woman spends it. He, however, makes all the important decisions around the household. A final word is always his. (Najila)

We need to stress that the majority of the interviewed women did not oppose this requirement, but perceived it to be beneficial. At the same time they objected to the stereotypical view that Muslim women could enjoy few personal freedoms. They actively tried to dispel many stereotypes common in the Western culture that portray Muslim women as passive objects of men's desire (Hasib, 1996) and as oppressed victims of their religion (Nadir, 2003). For example, Asia, a 36 year-old Hindu female commented, "It's just the opposite, because Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, Islam stopped people when they were burning their daughters and gave rights to women. They didn't have rights to property; they didn't have rights to anything. Islam gave all that." Other informants, however, pointed to significant rifts within the Muslim community related to the emancipation of Muslim female immigrants. It was mentioned that having gained education and professional occupations, many immigrant women had begun to voice their opposition

to their traditionally subservient roles. Some informants commented that their communities were being impacted by a rising divorce rate, a problem that was attributed to women's seeking help of professional social workers or divorce attorneys instead of staying under control of their husbands and obtaining emotional counseling from (male) imams.

One has to point out there exists an ongoing debate among Muslim scholars, and among Muslim feminists in particular, about the role of women in the Islamic societies. According to a feminist writer Fatima Mernissi (1991), the Qur'an requires both men and women to dress and behave modestly, although in practice it has usually been applied to feminine modesty alone. In fact, the veil serves a positive function, as it allows women to enter the public domain. Other Muslim feminists disagree and claim that veiling has no justification in the Qur'an (Karam, 1998; Wadud-Muhsin, 1993). Some of the Muslim authors believe that the Qur'an has an egalitarian message and use the following quote to support it: "I waste not the labor of any that labors among you, be your male or female—the one of you is as the other" (sura 3:193, quoted in Walseth & Fasting, 2003, p. 55). The most common interpretation of the Qur'an, however, is that men should assert dominance over women. This view can be supported by two quotes from the Qur'an: "Men are the manager of the affairs of women for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another. Righteous women are therefore obedient, guarding the secret for God's guarding" and "those [women] you fear may be rebellious admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them. If they then obey you, look not for any way against them; God is All-high, All-great" (sura 4, p. 38, quoted in Walseth & Fasting, 2003, p. 55).

Another factor related to gender relations had to do with the restrictions that Islam put on mixed-gender interactions, including sport and dating. Informants pointed out that Muslims were not allowed to participate in mixed-gender parties or to socialize with the opposite sex "the way Americans do." As Asia commented, "We don't have a party where you dance together. We don't even dance in front of men. We can do it at home with our brother, or husband, or father." A Pakistani man explained some of the barriers Muslims faced in their leisure:

The sex relationship between two people is something which is very much common here [in the U.S.], but when you mix people, when you go out, you can dance with some girl, for example and we [Muslims] will not do that. It's just a small barrier. (Muhamad)

Similarly, Umar, a Turkish car mechanic, commented on some of the cultural differences: "You cannot have a girlfriend. You cannot date like Americans do. You *can* 'date' if you know that the goal is marriage." His views were shared by a female informant, who stated,

I don't date, I don't lie, its clear that I am not comfortable with it. The reasoning behind it is that you don't want your interaction to be based on garbage, on empty stuff, you want there to be some spiritual connection, some support-

tive, some intellectually stimulating things there. If you find that in someone, there is nothing wrong with pursuing that in a serious manner within Islamic boundaries. (Khadega)

Other people believed that not all mixed-gender meetings were prohibited since the restriction was placed on the behavior and attitude displayed by the participants, rather than on the activity *per se*. For instance, Abd Al Rahman, a middle-age Egyptian man remarked, "I do attend professional meetings where we sit in a mixed company, but, you know, there should be some limitations in terms of how people interact with each other."

Parents realized that simple prohibition would not prevent their teenage children from emulating the behavior of their American friends. Consequently, they invested significant effort into socializing their children into what constituted "proper" forms of conduct. Some parents commented that they did what they could to facilitate their children's marital happiness and ensure that they were not involved in the culturally-inappropriate behavior:

I told my son when he was in college "every time you feel you need somebody with you, I will be very happy to let you get married. I will help you with all that, just tell me whom you want and I will go and engage that girl for you." I asked him "if you want anyone, you can choose and I will go and ask," because, you know, it is the procedure that we do. And we chose this girl, and she sent us [her] picture and we knew her very well, she was from our family . . . I know this is not like the American way. In the American way they have to go together, like dating, but, you know, dating will not show you the real face of people. In the time of engagement . . . oh they are very nice, they don't have any disagreement, but [it changes when] they live together. (Najila)

The restriction on dating and mixed-gender interactions appeared to pose problems for informants who immigrated at a younger age and were immersed in the American high school culture that included dating and attending parties. For example, Hanan who immigrated at the age of 14, when asked how Islam affected her life in the U.S. when she was a teenager remarked, "Especially the prom. I think that maybe was the hardest part. It was so much peer pressure that everybody is going and has a boyfriend." Although Hanan was advised to ask her brother to accompany her to the prom, she finally decided to opt out from the celebration and spend an evening at home with her Muslim friends.

The issue of mixed-gender sport participation also surfaced in the interviews. Many women interviewed in this study were very keen on sport. As Hanan observed, "Our Prophet used to race with his wife. He encouraged physical activity. Horse riding and swimming were especially his favorite." Asia, another immigrant from India noted, "A Muslim should have a strong body. It's one of the sayings of our Prophet, peace be upon Him, that you have to teach your son three things—swimming, riding horses, and shooting." In most cases, participation in activities such as volleyball, softball, soccer and karate did not require any particular adaptations on the part of Muslim women, other than wearing sweatpants and scarves. Swimming, however, appeared to pose significant problems for informants. For instance, a

male informant described the problems his teenage daughter experienced while attending an American school in Egypt:

They forced her to attend co-ed swimming classes. She was a proficient swimmer, but her teacher did not want to excuse her from swimming lessons for religious reasons. It came to this point that I had to argue with the teacher's supervisor. I told her "If you had a disabled student you would have to excuse her from taking swimming lessons." The teacher replied to me that the religion was not a disability. And my daughter said "Religion IS a disability for me as I cannot participate in such activities in the company of men." I guess we must have convinced them, as my daughter was excused from attending swimming practice from then on. (Abd Al Rahman)

Both Abd Al Rahman and another male informant remarked that their daughters were not allowed to swim at public beaches and for that reason they installed private pools at their homes. Other, less affluent participants, when asked about possible adaptations to leisure facilities they would like to see in the future, commented that setting up specific times at pools during which only women could attend would significantly reduce their constraints on participation.

Restrictions on female solo travel. Another sub-theme associated with the requirement of modesty was related to restrictions imposed by Islam on females traveling unaccompanied. As Hanan, a female Indian commented, "Muslim women are not supposed to go out by themselves, especially to travel. We should have a brother or a father or husband or uncle [with us]. We need to have a male companion." For the majority of the female informants, however, this requirement was not considered to be a constraint limiting their leisure, but rather a reasonable precaution intended to ensure their safety. As explained by Najila: "When women traveled through the desert something could have happened to them—after all, they are women, they could be harmed by men or wild animals, they could have bleeding. Women are weaker than men and should be protected." While older informants seemed to mostly follow this religious requirement, younger females indicated that on many occasions they traveled alone since, as Asia said, "Here in America, you often have no choice—you have to move from one place to another." Moreover, some of the younger informants commented about the religious debates surrounding the applicability of this requirement in the modern world that provides opportunities for fast, safe, and reliable travel.

Restrictions on Food and Alcohol

The last theme that described the effect of Islam on leisure behavior of immigrant Muslims had to do with the restrictions on food and alcohol. First, Muslims are prohibited from drinking alcohol and from eating certain foods. As Hanan commented, "We can eat fish, we can eat vegetables and I know some people who eat chicken. But we don't eat pork it's a no no." Second, many Muslims eat only "hallal" foods. As explained by Asia: "Hallal means

that you slaughter in the name of God. The purpose of slaughter is that all the blood gets drained, it's more healthy and cleaner." This requirement imposed some restrictions on Muslims' interactions with the mainstream Americans. As a male informant explained,

We do not mix with other people, we don't drink and that's a problem, because there is a social drinking here. After office hours people say "oh let's go and sit down in this thing." I don't drink, so I used to cut off, but now I go and order a soft drink . . . I don't eat pork for example. That becomes another issue because people will invite you and you try not to go there because you don't know what they will serve you and it looks very embarrassing to call them and tell them, you know. So that's why we are not able to mix with the people here. (Muhamad)

Similarly Saad, a Turkish doctoral student in his late twenties commented, "You cannot go to a bar with Americans because you can't drink. I mean you CAN go to a bar, but what's the point? What am I gonna do? Sit there and watch them drink?" Some Muslim informants modified their behavior to remain true to their religious beliefs and, at the same time, to participate in the mainstream American life. When asked what she orders when she goes to McDonald's, Asia replied, "We will just get fillet of fish, you know." Several informants also added that there existed many Muslim organizations in major U.S. cities that provided information on hallal restaurants in the area and that hallal foods were now available in mainstream grocery stores.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that leisure behavior of Muslim immigrants was affected by some unique factors. At the same time, however, we have identified certain traits of the followers of Islam which are likely to condition leisure behavior of devote members of other faiths and denominations. For instance, similarly to the Amish, close family relations constituted a foundation of leisure among Muslim immigrants. Family was referred to as the "seed of the community" and constituted the primary way through which the cultural values were passed over to the next generation. Informants stressed the strong relationships they had with their children and the desire for them to retain the values of their culture. Similar findings were obtained in other research projects on Muslim populations (Tirone, 1999, 2000; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000).

The requirement of modesty was an important factor shaping leisure of interviewed Muslim immigrants. Specific dress requirements have also been shown to affect behavior of certain denominations within Christianity and Judaism. For instance, Amish people are required to dress modestly and in demure colors (Egenes, 2000), while Halachah (Jewish law) requires Hasidic Jews to be identifiable by their appearance. Thus, most Hasidic Jews wear brimmed hats and yarmulkes, as well as *payos* (sidecurls) and beards as a sign of obedience to one of the commandments of Torah (Kranzler, 1972). We can argue that the main difference between Hasidic Jews, Amish, and Mus-

lims stems from the fact that while Amish and Hasidic Jews remain spatially segregated, Muslims are not. Thus, the presence of Muslims within the mainstream society may require them to constantly negotiate their cultural values and behaviors.

The findings of this study suggest that care needs to be taken when employing the existing theoretical frameworks to analyze behavior of diverse ethnic/racial groups. Although the issue of restrictions on leisure permeated the findings of this study and, on the surface, could be easily interpreted in the context of constraints, after gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of informants, we rejected the notion of employing the constraints framework. It became clear to us that factors that *appeared to constrain* people's leisure were in fact not perceived as such by the participants themselves, and that adherence to religious norms during leisure was considered normal and appropriate within their religious framework. A majority of the interviewed women did *not* mind not being allowed to travel alone, wearing 'restrictive' clothing, or having to forgo some of the leisure activities enjoyed by their mainstream counterparts. This finding provides support to Deci and Ryan's (2000) concept of internalization of extrinsic motivation. As they pointed out, "internalization is an active, natural process in which individuals attempt to transform socially sanctioned mores or requests into personally endorsed values and self-regulations" (pp. 235-236). The case of Muslim women internalizing cultural restrictions on their behavior resembles optimally functioning internalization process in which "people identify with the importance of social regulations, assimilate them into their integrated sense of self, and thus fully accept them as their own" (p. 236). Our study has shown numerous examples of the internalization process—young adults expressing strong understanding of reasons for the need to behave modestly in leisure and women justifying their subordinate roles in the family in terms of family cohesiveness.

Similarly, in light of Kelly's (1983) work on the social environment of leisure, it would be reasonable to assume that some of the constraints on leisure could be considered as meaningful. Kelly claimed that constraints are symbolically constructed within a dynamic social environment that defines activities that are acceptable, which was clearly the case in our study. Our findings are also in line with research connecting symbolic interaction and cultural studies. For example, Reitzes and Reitzes (1993) argued that cultural and religious groups internalize norms, values, and symbols particular to their groups. They do so to avoid the reality of the mainstream society that may be inconsistent with their goals and desires, to further social networks, to utilize other members as allies in maintaining cultural identity, and to ensure the survival of the group. Similar motives might have influenced the internalization of values and norms by our Muslim informants, although such analysis is beyond the scope of this study. Our findings also mirror those of Shweder (2003), who provided an ethnographic analysis of the lives of Oriya Hindu women. His fieldwork revealed that Hindu women placed strong importance on values of chastity, modesty, self-discipline and domestic service,

but not on the Western concepts of liberty and social equity. As Shweder pointed out "these women [were] self-reflecting people who acknowledge the constraints they live with, recognize the choices available to them, and are well aware of the costs and rewards of conforming to cultural norms" (p. 237). He cautioned Western researchers not to attempt to "liberate" minority women from their "unjust" and "oppressive" gender roles. We suggest our findings be treated with similar caution in order to avoid imposing Western values on the lives of people from different cultures.

Our informants also presented a picture of Muslim immigrants' struggle to redefine their leisure lives and their religious duties in a new environment following immigration. A cross-cultural dialog, attempts to retain their values and, at the same time, to accommodate elements of the new culture were clearly articulated in interviews with Muslim immigrants. Such findings are in line with the interactionist theory. Darroch and Marston (1984) and Prus (1987) argued that cultural and religious groups operating within a specific social environment consistently reassess their stance and meanings associated with various issues. Relationships between racial and religious groups are also socially constructed and collective meanings are continuously being re-evaluated due to historical and structural changes that occur within societies (Blumer, 1954; Fleras, 1990). This was clearly the case among Muslim informants who, as a part of the Islamic diaspora within the predominantly Christian United States, had to constantly re-evaluate their social identity. Moreover, the events of the September 11th also forced many Muslim immigrants to re-evaluate their identity in relation to the mainstream society.

We analyzed the findings of this study with the help of two theoretical approaches to inter-group contact and post-immigration adaptation—ethnic resiliency and selective acculturation.

Ethnic Resiliency

Ethnic resiliency appeared to be the strongest adaptation-related tendency revealed among Muslim immigrants in this study. It was manifested through commitment to collectivistic values of the group, following the Islamic guidelines with respect to gender relations, obedience to elders in the group, adherence to dress requirements set by Islam, and compliance with the restrictions on the use of food and alcohol. In 2001, Gudykunst suggested that different models can be applied to understand the relationship between ethnic and cultural identity and collectivism. According to his model, Asian-Americans with strong ethnic identities were more likely to have collectivistic values, whereas a weak ethnic identity would yield to a more individualistic approach. Muslims interviewed in this study showed similar patterns, with those displaying stronger ethnic resiliency also being more committed to collectivism, while the more assimilated ones showing more preference for individualism.

Consistently with the predictions of Gans (1979), ethnic resiliency seemed to be strengthened by strong religious convictions of members of

this group. Gans predicted that religious minorities will assimilate more slowly than members of national ethnic groups. Although no cross-ethnic comparison was employed in this study, we tend to agree with his assertion. Our study shows that members of religious minorities, such as Muslims, possess additional and powerful motivation for the maintenance of their customs such as dress, diet, and leisure styles. Such customs are not only rooted in the traditional cultures of their homelands, but have strong spiritual underpinnings. Members of religious groups share a belief that it is the will of the Higher Power that is behind certain restrictions on their behavior. Thus, their actions acquire an additional meaning—celebration of deity, which goes beyond mere desire to preserve traditions of the group. Formal organization of the religious community and strong pressures from fellow members provide additional incentive to retain their traditional culture. Our findings suggest those incentives are strong enough to counteract pressures from the out-group that tends to isolate and often discriminate against members of religious minorities.

Most of our informants engaged in seemingly the same leisure activities as their mainstream counterparts (watching TV, fishing, traveling, playing sports, socializing), but did so “within Islamic limits.” Muslims in this study demonstrated a constant awareness of the boundaries set by Islam—clubs they could go to, company they could be in, movies they could watch, and food they could eat. These boundaries, rules and interpretations of Islam, however, were not clearly defined. People continuously reinterpreted them and reevaluated their religious doctrine in the new environment.

Some informants consciously used leisure to promote ethnic resiliency and to ensure preservation of the ethno-religious group. Muslim parents tried to prevent their children’s immersion into the American culture by limiting their contacts to people from the Muslim community and by closely monitoring their leisure. Similar findings were obtained by Tirone (1999), who observed that South Asian teens were encouraged to participate in ethnic social clubs that provided activities such as sports, dances, and festivals, and an opportunity to meet others who shared their religious and cultural backgrounds. Similarly, in a study by Carrington et al. (1987), South Asian girls were encouraged to spend free time in local ethnic clubs where they were safe from the undesired influences of the mainstream British culture. Our work provides support to the observation that ethnic recreational and sport clubs play an important role in facilitating leisure in the Muslim immigrant community.

At the same time, Muslim parents in our study were concerned that mainstream leisure and exposure to the Western media constituted threats to the preservation of the religious heritage and were the most readily available routes through which their children could adopt values of the American culture. Similarly, as in the early 20th century when immigrants lamented their children’s interest in baseball (Harney, 1986), leisure in contemporary America serves as a battlefield for the hearts and minds of the young generation of Muslims. Since only scant evidence exists on that matter (Bright-

bill, 1965; Kelly, 1996), we can only speculate that certain leisure activities may also be considered as threats to the preservation of other faiths and denominations.

Selective Acculturation

The extent of ethnic resiliency among Muslim informants was not absolute. Although a majority of the participants expressed a desire to retain their traditional lifestyles, they wanted their children to succeed in school and become productive members of the American society. As such, they served as good examples of generational consonance, in which "the immigrant community encourages selective second-generation acculturation" (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996, p. 241). Similar findings were also obtained by Gibson (1989), who provided evidence for selective acculturation of Punjabi Sikh immigrants in California. Parents of Punjabi students pressured their children against too much contact with mainstream Whites, yet they urged them to abide by school rules, ignore incidents of discrimination, and learn skills that could help them succeed in the mainstream society.

Similar to the suggestions of Keefy and Padilla (1987), our findings have shown that "selective acculturation" is not a straightforward process. Our study demonstrated that selective acculturation may involve people's assimilating non-essential elements of the mainstream culture, while simultaneously retaining traits that may slow down their advancement in America. This tendency has been visible among Muslim women who chose to retain their traditional clothing even though it identified them as "alien," but who, at the same time, adopted selected elements of leisure behavior of mainstream Americans. Muslim informants participated in traditional *or* new leisure activities that were fused with diverse cultural elements and oftentimes held multiple meanings. People were keen to make subtle changes to their lifestyles, including leisure and, as a consequence, created a world of cultural hybridity that allowed them to remain true to their heritage, while functioning successfully in the new environment. This notion of cultural hybridity is in some ways similar to Keefy and Padilla's concept of "cultural blends," used to describe people who "participate selectively in both cultural orientations, but [who] are not equally proficient in both cultures" (p. 96). However, while Keefy and Padilla's "cultural blends" "recognized that they are not Mexicans and [did] not identify as Mexican" (p. 96), Muslim Americans in this study were clear about their ethnic heritage, but chose to adopt certain elements of the mainstream culture. We may argue that by drawing from elements of two cultures, immigrants put themselves in danger of losing their foothold in the traditional cultures of their homelands, while not becoming fully accepted by the American society. Similar observations were made by Remennick (2002) with regards to Russian transnational migrants in Israel. She argued that, while in some cases, migrants were able to enjoy "the best of both worlds," many others lived in the state of "permanent uprooting," alienated from the culture of their homeland and unable to fully integrate into the life of the host society.

Not all of our participants adhered to the restrictions imposed by Islam to the same extent. The findings suggested that age and gender influenced the attitudes toward traditional customs. For instance, some of the younger female informants were reluctant to live in the same household as their in-laws. It is likely that not only the age of some of the female participants, but also their higher exposure to more liberal values of the American culture made them re-evaluate their family relations. Since in the Islamic culture younger generations, and particularly younger women, hold subordinate roles in the household, they might be more likely to embrace the Western values that further the possibility of improvement of their social position.

The findings of our study suggest that there are two ways for selective acculturation to manifest itself. The first, which may be referred to as *amendatory*, involves accommodation and peaceful coexistence of traditional and new elements (e.g., going to McDonald's, but ordering specific food or going to Six Flags, but wearing traditional dress). The accommodation is based on constant negotiation of the old and new elements and on the incorporation of traditional cultural values into the modern, secular society. The second mechanism is *conflictual* in nature. The conflict in this study manifested itself on the intra-group level and surfaced in several distinct ways. First, as evident in the first theme, it has emerged between younger and older immigrants and was related to the position within households. Second, it appeared between immigrants in circumstances when parents tried to isolate their children from the influences of the Western media and culture. Third, as has been shown in the third theme (the requirement of modesty), conflict surfaced between the more traditional Muslims and their more moderate counterparts. It was evident in the remarks of some people who criticized the 'less devout' Muslim women for visiting mosques without head covering, for contemplating a divorce, and for seeking the help of mainstream counselors. Our interviews have also detected some degree of intra-personal conflict, particularly among younger participants, related to their desire to retain ethnic values and to fit in within the mainstream environment. Some of our female participants recalled their high school years which were particularly taxing for young immigrants. A degree of tension was also present in our conversations with mothers of young children who commented that they wanted their sons and daughters to be successful in America, but also to avoid assimilating non-desirable elements of the local culture (e.g., leaving home at a young age).

Conclusions

This study has provided some tentative evidence of the ways in which Islam affects the leisure of some of its followers and has shown the extent to which religious background can affect leisure behavior. The results of this study indicate that leisure research on ethnic and racial minorities, and immigrants in particular, should move beyond the traditional assimilationist paradigm and embrace other theoretical approaches which model the post-immigration behavior of minorities. Our research has shown that the adap-

tation paths embraced by minorities are not necessarily exclusive and may coexist on different levels within a single ethnic community. According to our findings, selective acculturation is not limited to retaining non-essential elements of traditional culture and to adopting ones that promote the success in the host country, but can manifest itself as an exchange, incorporation, or exclusion of elements unrelated to minorities' socio-economic adaptation. Our study also has helped to expand the concept of selective acculturation to include the existence of *amendatory* and *conflictual* patterns of acculturation.

This study has several important limitations that could potentially be addressed by future research. Most importantly, it focuses on immigrant Muslims only, thus omitting non-immigrant followers of Islam. The study has also combined Sunni and Shiia Muslims in a single category and has made no attempt to differentiate among ideological tendencies within Islam (traditionalism vs. modernism and secularism vs. fundamentalism) (Walseth & Fasting, 2003). More importantly, even though care has been taken to separate the effects of religious beliefs from the distinct cultural background of informants, we need to note that Islam is practiced and interpreted differently around the world and that this national diversity of the participants may have affected the results of our study. For instance, some of the Pakistani informants indicated that their lack of ability to read in Arabic made them unable to study the original version of the Qur'an. They speculated that such language-related constraints may cause Pakistani Muslims to be more orthodox in their views than Muslims from Arab countries. Another issue that could negatively affect the quality of findings was related to the researchers' background. Both of the researchers were non-Muslim women who communicated with the informants in English. Although significant effort was made to establish a good rapport with the participants, our gender and inability to communicate in informants' native language could have influenced the outcome of this study. For instance, while female informants were forthcoming and willing to share their opinions with us, male participants seemed to be reserved and cautious. Lastly, it needs to be noted that although the researchers spent significant amount of time in the field, they were not the members of the studied community and, as such, there were many issues that could not be explored in-depth. For example, due to limited time in the field, subjects such as sanctions on interracial marriages, women breaking the dress code, or divorcing their husbands were not investigated. Lack of access to more orthodox Muslims and, at the same time, selecting informants through the mosques (which eliminated those less tied to the religious community and more liberal in their views), also potentially negatively affected the quality of the findings.

Two major recommendations can be articulated with respect to future leisure research pertaining to the subject. First, we believe that the strong need exists to focus more on the effects of religion on leisure behavior. In-depth studies are needed in order to further our understanding of how

different groups of Christians and Jews as well as followers of other religions spend their leisure time and how religious doctrine affects their leisure behavior. The results of our project also show a pressing need to incorporate religious beliefs as part of the cultural heritage of minorities. The researchers should avoid homogenizing minorities based on their common language or home country since there may exist significant cultural variations even among people who represent the same country of origin.

Lastly, our results provide recreation practitioners with useful information on how to serve their Muslim clients. Recreation providers should not only exercise cultural sensitivity in their dealings with Muslims, but should also make an effort to provide the growing population of Muslim immigrants with services that will meet their cultural needs. The need to have access to places to pray and to large, family oriented recreation facilities, as well as gender segregation of some activities, should be taken into account while providing leisure services to Muslim clients.

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