TV Viewing Motivations
Of Arab American Households
In The US: An Empirical Perspective

Elias G. Rizkallah, (Email: erizkall@lasierra.edu), La Sierra University
Nabil Y. Razzouk, (Email: nrazzouk@susb.edu), California State University, San Bernardino

ABSTRACT

The study surveyed a sample of 149 adult Arab immigrants in Detroit (MI) and Los Angeles (CA). The findings indicate that the five primary television viewing motivations, in order of importance for these Arab American respondents were: entertainment, relaxation, social Interaction, habit and information. The study however showed that the primary motive for watching Arabic TV was to keep informed about what is happening in the country of origin and around the world. The place of birth whether in the US or in the country of origin, and the length of time in the U. S. appeared to have an impact on the TV viewing habits of Arab Americans. The implications of the findings are also presented.

INTRODUCTION

*N*ew communication technologies are rapidly materializing, and today's world of communication is getting more dynamic and interactive; consumers have many more choices available to them, and greater control over which messages they will choose to process. This implies that, to attract customers, companies are forced to design attractive and creative messages that shine within the information overload. Simultaneously, the consumer landscape in the US is changing.

Today, non-Hispanic Caucasian Americans make up 70% of the U.S. population, but in the coming decades, this percentage will decline with the increase of ethnic minorities. Within the new ethnic mosaic of the American society, the Arab American community emerges as growing in population, visibility, and purchasing power. This paper revisits and utilizes the Uses and Gratifications theory to study TV viewing motivations of Arab Americans. Findings of this research can be used to assist marketers, policy makers, and advertisers in developing strategies to communicate effectively with the Arab American market, and to examine the Uses and Gratifications theory across ethnic boundaries.

Mass media has traditionally played a significant role in providing information and entertainment to various cultures around the world. Television, in particular, due to its audio-visual stimulating characteristics, is a popular form of communication enjoyed universally. Television viewers' motivations differ not only between individuals within a particular culture, but also across cultures. For example, a cross-cultural study of children's television viewing by Zohoori (1988) indicated that children of immigrants from East Asia tended to be more motivated to use television for information, social interaction and companionship than did children of Caucasian American families.

Hundreds of thousands of immigrants have entered the United States in the last three decades and even more are expected to do so in the coming years. This ever increasing presence of members from diverse ethnic identities is leading to what some have characterized as a permanently unfinished American society. Ethnic groups have grown active and have established institutions to sustain their ethnicity and ease their transition into American society with varying degrees of success (Viswanath and Arora, 2000). One of these is the population of Arab immigrants in the United States has as well increased significantly over the past thirty years. This study utilizes Rubin's (1983) Uses and

Gratification model to explore the underlying motivational factors that influence television viewing among adult Arab immigrants in the United States.

This study has multiple purposes: Explore TV viewing motivations of Arab Americans within the framework of the Uses and Gratifications theory utilizing Rubin's model (Rubin, 1983); examine this theory across cultural boundaries; highlight the importance of the Arab Americans as a growing consumer segment; assist marketers, advertisers, and policy maker in developing communication strategies to reach this community. The interest of the policy makers in this situation is to assist Arab Americans in their acculturation process within the American society, especially in light of so many important factors and major events. For example, Arab Americans faced many challenges after the 9/11 attack on the U.S. by terrorists of Arabic origin and in the ensuing war on terror launched by the US government. They also continue to be deeply affected by events in the Middle East where Arab Americans still have extended families and social and cultural ties.

USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

The Uses and Gratification Theory views the relationship between consumers and the media as a complex and dynamic one. The consumer is not simply a passive receptacle of information but instead imposes his or her own ideas and motivations on the message being delivered. The consumer, the media, and society form a complex system of interrelated and interdependent components, such as viewing behaviors, viewing patterns, and viewing motivations. A change in any component in this matrix affects the other system components and the system as a whole. The Uses and Gratification theory allows us to explore the way in which households and individuals use the mass media to gratify their needs and their motivations, or reasons, for specific media-related behaviors.

Historically, a uses and gratifications approach to the study of communication was first formally outlined by Katz (1959). He suggested that communication research should reverse the traditional question of what the media do to people, and ask instead what people do with the media. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), identified four tenets of the Uses and Gratification Theory: The first tenet suggests that media use is goal-directed. Audience members actively select certain media or types of media content to satisfy their certain expectations. Viewing audiences are not passive receivers but rather are actively involved in making conscientious and motivated attempt to seek various gratifications (McQuail, 1983; Anderson, 1987). Thus, because various purposes or gratifications are sought, the outcome of the viewing experience fluctuates among individuals engaged in similar mass media outlets (Anderson, 1987). For instance, McQuail (1972) identified four major types of gratifications (information, personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment) sought through the use of media. A decade later, Wenner (1982) identified four gratifications categories (surveillance, entertainment/diversion, interpersonal utility, and para-social interaction) among audiences of evening network news and the program, *60 Minutes*. More recently, Vincent and Basil (1997) noted four factors (surveillance, escape, boredom, and entertainment) as gratifications sought by college students while engaged in news media. Arab immigrants may also choose to watch television, or specifically Arabic television, programs to meet their needs for information on how to adapt to the American culture, or to obtain news that is specific to their relative countries in the Arab World.

The second tenet suggests that social interaction and cultural factors produce viewer expectations for gratifying needs through the use of certain media. For example, an immigrant with limited social interaction from the outside world may satisfy his/her need of companionship by viewing television.

Third, the audiences' initiative is a key factor in selecting which media outlet they utilize. Various media outlets tend to be sought for different gratifications. For example, newspapers are sought for sociopolitical knowledge, but greater understanding is obtained through books. Broadcast media such as interpersonal channels, film, and television programs grant "more affective gratifications" when compared with newspapers (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973). Television has also been associated with companionship and information (Rubin, 1981). Recently, Vincent and Basil (1997) indicated that newspaper reading resulted in better knowledge of current event when compared with newsmagazine reading among college students. Also, the television news network CNN was considered a source of knowledge for current events. Hence, it is apparent that individuals resort to different types of media to fulfill various

sought gratifications. For example, Arab adult immigrants may prefer TV programs in their own language so they can understand the message.

Fourth, individual audience members know and can account for their own motivations and preferences. Gratifications sought from the media include diversion and entertainment as well as information, and these will vary according to the social roles, demographics, and psychological disposition of individual audience members. Research suggested that TV viewing motivations were related to demographic traits, such as age. Greenberg (1974) studied television use by British children and adolescents, and reported seven primary viewing motivations: Learning, habit, arousal, companionship, relaxation, escape, and passing time. He noted that younger children identified more strongly with certain television viewing motivations, such as arousal, than did older children and adolescents who identified more with passing time. Rubin assessed television viewing motivation among American elders (1981), and American adults (1983). The goals of his investigations were to examine the relationship between viewing motivations, preferences, and audience demographics. The studies sought to determine whether TV user motives could predict behavioral consequences of television use. For instance, the individual seeking information may choose to watch a news program. In his sample of American adults, Rubin reported the following five primary television viewing motivations listed in order of their importance: Entertainment, relaxation, passing time, habit, and information. He concluded that the entertainment motivation resulted from the need for fun and excitement. Viewing for relaxation resulted from the need to reduce tension related to everyday problems. He also found that television seems to gratify entertainment and relaxation needs, regardless of program content.

In an earlier study, Rubin (1981) noted that the five primary television viewing motivations for older people were, in order of importance: passing time, information, entertainment, social interaction, and companionship. Passing time, he concluded, was motivated by a strong need for relief from boredom. He also found that older people use television for information based on a need to connect with the outside world. Moreover, due to their informational needs, older people preferred watching news program. Furthermore, Abelman and Atkin (2000) profiled young television consumers in light of the uses and gratification theory. They identified a variety of viewer motivations that reflect the utility, selectivity, and intentionality of children's viewing, which provided a strong support for the hypothesis that viewing motivations and viewing patterns are interrelated.

Based on these findings and other research efforts (Rubin, 2002; Haridakis and Rubin, 2003; Dobos, 1992; Vincent and Basil, 1997), the Uses and Gratification theory offers a useful framework to study the role of motivation and individual differences and its effects on the audiences' behaviors. Therefore, and according to the above four tenets, it is rational to assume that Arab adult immigrants are goal-oriented viewers and actively select certain television channels or programs to satisfy their needs. Within this environment of an interactive, multiethnic audiences and multimedia America, this research focuses on the Arab Americans' TV viewing motivations and their preferences of certain media channels. It will be interesting to study the Arab Americans attitudes and feelings inferred from their TV motivation. Such findings could be used by the policy maker to understand Arab Americans and enhance their assimilation/acculturation processes in the American society.

ARAB AMERICANS: A QUICK GLANCE

Based on Census 2000 data, about 1.2 million Americans claimed Arab ancestry, up by 38% from 1990 and double the number of 1980 (when the Census began tracking ancestry). The largest Arab-American populations are in California, New York, and Michigan and distributed by ancestry as follows: Lebanese (35%), Syrian (12%), Egyptians (12%), Palestinian (7%), Jordanian (5%), and 27% of other Arab countries. However, other sources claim that there are around five million Arab Americans, and they represent a wide spectrum of experiences ranging from third and fourth generation Americans to fresh green-card holders. It can probably be said that the Arab American community is far from ethnically homogenous.

The decision by the Census Bureau to report on Arab-Americans shows the growing political clout of Arab-Americans, a segment that is better educated and more affluent than the U.S. population as a whole. People of Arab descent living in the United States are doing far better than the average American. That is the surprising conclusion drawn from data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000. The census found that U.S. residents who report having

Arab ancestors are better educated and wealthier than average Americans --- statistics that are also reflected in the sample of this study of Arab Americans. Whereas 24% of Americans hold college degrees, 41% of Arab-Americans are college graduates. The median income for an Arab family living in the United States is $52,300 --- 4.6% higher than other American families – and more than half of all Arab Americans own their home. Forty two percent of people of Arab descent in the US work as managers or professionals, while the same is true for only 34% of the general U.S. (Naim, 2005).

Historically, almost all Arab Americans trace their origins to one of two large waves of immigration. The first started at the end of the 19th century, and consisted mainly of Lebanese Christians. The second wave of Arab immigration followed the reopening of America's gates to immigrants in 1965, and increased after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. This wave was more diverse than the first, including Palestinians, Yemenis and others fleeing from oppression in their home countries, such as Christians and Shiites from Iraq. They have tended to gather in big cities, i.e., Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Washington (Economist, 2001).

Arab immigration to the United States, a phenomenon largely neglected (Zogby, 1990), suddenly became a matter of widespread concern with the inception of the Gulf crisis in the early 1990s and after the 9/11 attack on the US early in this century. This has sometimes been to the detriment of Arab Americans, who became targets of prejudicial activity. It can be said that no single event shaped the destiny of Arab Americans more than 9/11. After 9/11 the Arab American community, was thrust into the spotlight and have gotten more attention than they wished. This attention represented a drastic change from the country's previous position, for during the times that Arab Americans attempted to be noticed, it was rare for mainstream forums to acknowledge them.

In his review of trends in research on Arab Americans, Theodore Pulcini (1993), concluded with three factors that are to be kept in mind when studying Arab Americans. First, one cannot lose sight of the size and composition (i.e., Christians and Muslims) of the Arab-Americans community. Second, one must always be cognizant of the internal divisions within the Arab-American community. In fact, multiple communities exist demarcated by religion, place of origin, political bent, or level of education. Third, and finally, one must remember that the voice of Arab Americans is muffled or magnified as a result of political developments in the Middle East. Perhaps no other American ethnic group is so affected by political and military events abroad.

It is to be noted that there are more than 10 Arabic TV channels broadcasted via satellite from the Middle East and most of their programs are in the Arabic language. In addition, you may find some local Arabic programs carried by local TV channels for few hours per week. However, none of the studies on Arab Americans have looked into their TV viewing motivations, and discussed mass communication strategies to effectively reach this growing segment of the society

TV VIEWING MOTIVATIONS AND ETHNICITY

Minorities' rate of growth supersedes that of the majority, and the emerging groups are expected to comprise about 36% of the population by 2020, and 47% by 2050 (Travel Industry Association, 1996). And the U.S. that was once thought of, culturally, as a melting pot, and later on as a salad bowl, will be a more colorful salad bowl in the years to come.

With regard to TV viewing motivations, ethnicity proved to be an important factor. Zohoori (1988), Ikeda (1992), and Albarran and Umphrey (1993) have all explored the role of ethnicity in television viewing. In his 1988 study, Zohoori examined the differences in television viewing motivations for immigrant children of various ethnic backgrounds. He concluded that both immigrant children and American children were motivated to use television for learning /information, social interaction, companionship, and escape. Compared to American children, immigrant children appeared to use television more as a tool for learning: First for learning English and, secondly, for gathering information about others and themselves. He also noted that immigrant children tended to be more motivated to use television for social interaction and companionship than did American children. Zohoori attributed these differences in TV viewing motivations between the two groups of children to the needs of the immigrant children to acculturate to

the U.S. society. Moreover, Zohoori suggested that over time, the intensity of immigrants' isolation decreases as social contact with residents of the host country increases.

Ikeda (1992) studied differences in television viewing motivations between Chinese immigrant children in the United States and American children. This study also noted that demographic traits such as ethnicity and primary language are important in determining television viewing motivations. He argued that immigrant children need to learn the language, behavioral patterns, and cultural norms of the host country in order to survive in a new culture. Since these children are often limited in the ways in which they could satisfy these needs in the host country, they relied heavily on television for adapting to the new culture. So, he reported that the primary television viewing motivations for Chinese immigrant children are: language learning, entertainment, and information. Moreover, he found that Chinese immigrant children enjoyed American TV programs more than Chinese TV programs. This finding he attributed to the observation that most Chinese television programs were geared toward adolescent or adult audiences, with very few developed for children.

Albarran and Umphrey (1993) found different TV viewing motivations for Hispanic and Anglo Americans. Hispanic in the U.S.A., reported stronger information and social interaction motives than did Anglo Americans. Watching television, for the Hispanic study group, was often a family activity. Comparatively, Anglo-Americans were much more independent in their viewing and didn't look at television as a family activity. He also noted a stronger motivation for information among the Hispanic group was a result of their need for acculturation. They were motivated to use television as a source of information about themselves and others, language acquisition, and as a way for observing mainstream society. Thus one could extrapolate that Arab American adult immigrants have a greater information motivation for watching television. Because Arabic television programming is geared more toward Arabic adults, Arab adult immigrants may prefer watching Arabic TV channels. Using both Ikeda's (1992) and Zohoori's (1988) studies, one might also infer that if viewing motivations for immigrants are different from mainstream viewers, and if those motivations vary depending upon how long they have lived in a new culture, then viewing preferences may also be affected.

Other studies (Stroman 1984; Matabane, 1986) investigated the TV viewing motivations of African Americans. Both of these studies showed that African American viewers were more likely to watch programs with dominant black characters. Matabane also noted that language affects program preferences among Black viewers. Black language is more often used by Black-character programs and it presents a meaningful insight into the homogeneous culture of the African American population. In an earlier work Lee and Browne (Lee and Browne, 1981) examined patterns of television uses and gratifications among various segments of black audiences. They found that different age groups of Black viewers have different TV uses and gratifications. Learning was of much less important reason for viewing television for the two younger groups (children and teenagers), who were also heavier television users. These findings seem to be consistent with Rubin's study of white children of similar ages (Rubin, 1977).

In summary, the studies suggest that ethnic groups exhibit different motivations for using television, and differences in the cultural backgrounds of immigrants lead to differences in viewing motivations, television program preferences, and exposure time. So, it expected that Arab Americans would use and get gratifications from TV viewing in a different way than mainstream Americans. Arabs are affectionate, family oriented, educated, and adaptable, so, one may hypothesize that Arab Americans' motivation for watching TV will be entertainment, social interaction, companionship, and information. However, their motive for watching Arabic TV is mainly to learn more about what is going on in their various countries of origin in the Middle East.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study was collected from 149 Arab adult (over 18 years old) immigrants (32 from Los Angeles Greater area and 117 from Detroit greater area). The respondents were randomly intercepted in Arabic Markets located in the greater Los Angeles areas of West Covina and Anaheim and in Detroit from Sterling Heights and Dearborn. These areas were specifically selected due to the high concentration of Arab immigrants in them. A total of 350 shoppers were approached, but only 149 returned completed questionnaires that were useful for the analysis.

The respondents were told that the primary purpose of the study was to obtain information about their TV viewing habits and about what motivated them to watch television. The questionnaire attempted to capture information relating to Rubin's TV Viewing Motives Instrument and demographic variables. Like Rubin's research instrument, this survey included 27 different TV viewing motives related to the following nine motives: relaxation, companionship, habit, passing time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape. Respondents indicated their levels of agreement with 27 statements depicting reasons for watching television. These were measured across four response options ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." To ensure the validity of the study, the respondents were offered translation of certain words if were unable to understand the word in English. Thirty nine respondents asked for help that varied from the Arabic meaning of one word to a translation of a whole sentence.

The study sought to answer three basic research questions: What are the primary motivations for adult Arab immigrants to watch television in general? What are the primary motivations for watching Arabic TV programming; and, what relationship, if any, exists between the viewing motivations and selected demographic characteristics?

RESULTS

The demographics of the respondents included 112 (75%) males, and thirty seven (25%) females. The age distribution ranged between 18 and over 70 with approximately 64% of the respondents reported an age between 26 and 45 years old. The majority of the respondents (82.6%) were born in an Arab country with only 17.4% reporting having been born in the United States. Those who were born in an Arab Country named Lebanon as their country of origin (52.3%) followed by Syria and Palestine with 13.4% each. Other less frequently cited countries of origin were Iraq, Jordan, and the North African Countries of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. Slightly over one third (36.2%) of the respondents reported having been in the U.S. under 10 years; 26.2% have been in the U.S. between 10 and 20 years, and 37.6% have been here for over twenty years. The majority of the respondents (73.8%) indicated their desire to stay in the U.S. permanently.

Most of the respondents (81.9%) reported Arabic as their primary language, and 17.4% noted English as their primary language.   More than three quarters (76.5%) of the respondents indicated that they have access to Arabic satellite channels, and slightly over half of the respondents (55.4%) reported spending between 40%-100% of their TV viewing time watching Arabic TV programs. Those born outside the United States were more likely to have Arabic Satellite TV (X=6.20, d.f. 1, p<.013) than those born in the U.S. Similarly, respondents with children at home were more likely to have Arabic Satellite than those who did not (X=3.52, d.f. =1, P<.061).

The majority (99.3%) reported watching TV daily, and 79.2% reported being in the habit of watching Arabic TV programs daily.   Most of the respondents (77.2%) watch TV in the evening between 6:00 and 11:00 P.M., followed by 13.4% who watch late night television after 11:00 P.M.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the mean ratings of the respondents' TV viewing motives vis-à-vis Rubin's 27 Likert scaled items that constitute the nine extracted motives. Entertainment, Relaxation and social interaction are the three most cited motives. Escape and Companionship are the least likely motives to watch television.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of the reasons why the respondents watch Arabic TV channels. In response to the question "Why do your watch the Arabic Channels?," "To learn about what is happening in my country of origin" was the most cited reason (59.1%), followed by " to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the world", and "to stay in touch with my heritage" (39.6%). As expected, those born outside the U.S., were more likely to state their reason to learn about what is happening in their respective country (X= 10.42, d.f. = 1, P<.001) than those born in the U.S.; Moreover, those born in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine were most likely to report their motive of wanting to learn what is happening in their respective countries. This is understandable given that all three countries have ongoing conflicts. Whether a respondent was born outside the U.S. also seems to impact the respondent's motive "to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the world." Those reported being born outside the U.S. were more likely to report this motive than those who were born in the U.S. (X=5.41, d.f.= 1, P<.020) Obviously, those born in the Arab

countries seem to trust Arabic Satellite TV more than U.S. television for learning on what is happening around the world.

Table 1: **The Mean Ratings Of Respondents' TV Viewing Motives**

TV Viewing Motivations	Composite Mean	Rank
Relaxation	2.77	2
Information	2.41	5
Entertainment	2.85	1
Companionship	2.22	8
Passing Time	2.40	6
Habit	2.42	4
Social Interaction	2.43	3
Escape*	2.08	9
Arousal	2.34	7

Table 2: Reasons For Watching Arabic TV Channels

Reason	Number of Respondents	%*
Learn what is happening in my country of origin	88	59.1
Language Familiarity	48	22.8
Remember the good old days	34	32.2
Stay in touch with my heritage	59	39.6
Get an accurate picture of what is happening in the world	65	43.6
Just to kill some time	8	5.4

* The percentages add to greater than 100 because the respondents could check as many reasons as they desired.

As expected, a significant difference in TV viewing preferences was noted between respondents who were raised in the U. S. and those who were raised in the Arab Countries. Those raised in the United States were more likely to watch television than those born outside the U.S. (P< 0.011). Those born and raised outside the United States, however were more likely to prefer Arabic TV (P<0.007), especially as the source of more accurate information on what is happening in the world.

Length of stay in the U.S. also proved to be a differentiating factor in TV viewing habits (P < 0.004). Those who preferred Arabic TV had been in the United States an average of 7-10 years. While those who preferred watching American TV had been in the United States over 20 years. This finding suggests that more recent immigrants prefer watching Arabic TV. Similarly, viewing habits appeared to differ by the reported primary language (P < 0.066). Respondents who claimed Arabic as their primary language were more likely to prefer Arabic TV than those who reported English as their primary language.

The relationship between length of time spent in the United States and television viewing motivations was also evaluated. Every one of the motives seemed to vary in importance with the number of years in the U.S. For example, Relaxation, Companionship, Passing Time, Information, and Arousal, all had higher occurrence rate among those who have been in the U.S. for six years or less. Habit, Entertainment, and Escape on the other hand showed increased importance ratings after having been in the U.S. for six years or more. The Social Interaction motive increased significantly after being in the U.S. for six years, but then dropped significantly for those who have been in the U.S. over 20 years (See Table 3 below).

Table 3: The Mean Ratings Of Respondents' TV Viewing Motives By Number Of Years Lived In The Us

TV Viewing Motives	Number of Years Lived in the US			
	≤ 6 Years	7 to 10 Years	11 to 20 Years	Over 20 Years
Relaxation	2.83	2.88	2.79	2.68
Companionship	2.51	2.21	2.14	2.06
Habit	2.33	2.48	2.27	2.57
Passing Time	2.50	2.48	2.26	2.40
Entertainment	2.82	2.78	2.89	2.86
Social Interaction	2.47	2.59	2.61	2.22
Information	2.48	2.45	2.47	2.31
Arousal	2.49	2.21	2.41	2.21
Escape	2.05	1.98	2.12	2.11

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this investigation suggest that the five primary motivations for Arab adult immigrants to watch television were: Entertainment, Relaxation, Social Interaction, Habit, and Information.   Of significance here, is the fact that these were the same motives and in the same order as reported by Rubin in his original 1983 study. However, the respondents had a different motivation pattern for watching Arabic TV. A close look at the results shows that the "information" motivation was stronger for watching Arabic television programs. This finding shows that the respondents are likely to meet their need for information by viewing Arabic television programs.

Other studies (Zohoori, 1988; Albarran & Umphrey, 1993) have also shown that immigrants have a greater information motivation for television use than do mainstream Americans. This greater need for information is believed to be a part of the acculturation process. The greater motivation for information among immigrants may result from their need to adapt to the mainstream culture. They depend more on television as a source of information about themselves and others, and as a way of observing the mainstream culture while they are still not fully acculturated. Stroman (1984), and Matabane (1986) indicated that ethnic groups prefer watching programs that represent their own culture, because they can obtain more information about experiences in the mainstream society related to their particular ethnic group. This was not the case in this study. Most likely, this is because Arab immigrants are some what educated about the U.S. in their own countries.

Traditionally, Arabs have assimilated in the American culture and accordingly they have been more readily integrated into the American culture. Given the relatively intense and persistent conflicts in the Arab world, Arab Americans appear to depend more on Arab TV to keep them informed of what is happening in their countries of origin and the rest of the world. This finding, though expected, presents both an opportunity and a threat to U.S. marketers and policy makers. Given that these respondents report spending approximately 40-50 percent of their TV viewing time watching Arabic TV, it behooves western marketers to use this medium to reach this segment of the population. Similarly, policy makers who are concerned about managing the attitudes of this group of immigrants also can benefit from utilizing this medium as well. Allowing these viewers to receive most of their news and information from Arabic TV without the American view, is a strategic mistake that does not contribute positively to building better relationships with the Middle Eastern countries.

As minority populations continue to grow in the United States, understanding the motivations and needs of these groups becomes necessary for inducing balanced acculturation and resulting integration in the mainstream culture. This study suggests that marketers would benefit from providing customized information about their products or services that pertain to the Arabic community market. A number of local cable networks now offer programming in Arabic among other languages represented in the U.S. population. Whenever available, such customized programs are more widely watched than the regular programs. Television stations could benefit from this information in attracting advertising of products aimed at the Arabic community market.

Another implication of the major findings in this study highlights the importance of providing information that could enhance the assimilation of Arab immigrants in the U.S.A. If more of these immigrants depend on information seen or heard on foreign satellite channels, then the process of acculturation and assimilation may be hampered. Given that the younger generation of Arab immigrants is more likely to watch regular English programs, the different TV viewing habits could threaten the traditional harmony of the Arabic family. Further research is necessary to identify trends that could impact the status of the pluralistic American family as we are in the new millennium. How will the viewing habits of the various ethnic groups impact their overall attitudes towards other ethnic groups, and their behavior in the host nation? These issues are of interest to marketers and policy makers alike.

As the Middle East continues to be the focus of American foreign policy as well as military strategy, it has become more imperative for U.S. policy makers as well as marketers to better understand this segment and better manage its attitudes towards public policy and national interests. The war on terrorism waged by the West should utilize such media as Al-Jazera TV, LBC, and similar Arab Cable Channels that are watched by millions of Arab Americans on a daily basis.

Finally, given the evolving diversity in American society and changes in the consumer landscape, all marketers should be reaching out to multicultural markets. Marketers must view ethnic minority consumers as a consumer segment within a segment of the general population and should invest the time and money to understand those groups both qualitatively and quantitatively. Marketers will otherwise miss out on the very lucrative multicultural markets and dollars. Acceptance of the active, reward-seeking consumer requires a fundamental re-orientation of the entire advertising-planning process. On the other hand, it is important for researchers to have a better understanding of how ethnic audiences consume television in contrast to one another. Such information would be useful to further our practical and theoretical knowledge of media use in ethnic households.

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