

Cultural Assimilation and Gender Role Attitudes in Middle Eastern First- and Second-Generation Immigrants

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Abstract

This study examines the cultural assimilation of Middle Eastern first- and second-generation teenage immigrants in the San Fernando Valley, focusing on changes in gender role attitudes in relation to US mainstream culture. By employing surveys that measure attitudes towards labor division, political participation, and women's workforce involvement, the research identifies significant generational differences. First-generation immigrants displayed more traditional views compared to their second-generation counterparts, who were more progressive. The research highlights the need for nuanced policies that address the heterogeneity of immigrant experiences to promote better cultural integration and understanding.

I. Introduction

Cultural Assimilation and the Immigrant Experience

Cultural assimilation is a researched phenomenon that regards generational progression as a predominant factor of assimilation and suggests a linear generational evolution in which various immigrant groups adapt the norms, cultural values, and characteristics of the dominant culture.¹ Cultural assimilation is an intricate procedure that implicates immigrants in learning the language, norms, and role expectations of the prevalent society, which fosters changes in perspectives.² Whether the assimilation of immigrants fosters greater positive or negative effects in society, this phenomenon has posed great controversy throughout the years. One may argue that cultural assimilation has decreased conflict and created a more cohesive national identity while providing profound economic opportunities for various minority groups.³ On the contrary, one may believe that cultural assimilation is ultimately detrimental to these immigrant

¹ E. O'Flannery, "Social and Cultural Assimilation," *The American Catholic Sociological Review* 22, no. 3 (1961): 198, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3709117>.

² H. Bunle, "The Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants," *Population Studies* 3 (1950): 9, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2172310>.

³ I. I. Kavass, "Migrant Assimilation," *The Australian Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1962): 58. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20633786>.

groups as they are forgoing their ethnic identity and abandoning their heritage which has endured over formidable generations.⁴ In existing scholarly research, multiple factors have been employed to measure cultural assimilation, such as language proficiency and participation in interracial marriages. However, as research evolves, more recent literature suggests that perceptions of gender roles can serve as an accurate measure of cultural assimilation.⁵

Several studies have examined gender role perspectives and their consequences among minority groups in the United States. A study measuring changes in gender role attitudes among Middle Eastern Muslim and Christian immigrants reported significant differences in the outcomes, reflecting differences in religious affiliation and, more prominently, the native and foreign-born populations. Middle Eastern immigrants who were born in the United States and have higher levels of education are significantly more likely to have egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles.⁶ According to a more recent study conducted in 2018, generational status and levels of education are consequential indicators of gender role attitudes.⁷ More specifically, this study compares the changes in attitudes between first and second-generation immigrants and finds a positive relationship since, as the generation progresses, second-generation immigrants are more likely to adopt a liberal viewpoint.

Since first and second-generation immigrants are more prone to the struggles of multiculturalism and navigating both ethnic and Western customs in America in comparison to their third and fourth-generation immigrant counterparts, this group of individuals is more likely to be conflicted with balancing either traditional or egalitarian ideologies.⁸ Research questioning the prediction of a gradual increase in cultural assimilation and the adoption of progressive gender role attitudes concluded that Mexican-Americans of the third or later generations exhibit more liberal gender role

⁴ Andrew Markus, "Attitudes to Multiculturalism and Cultural Diversity," in *Multiculturalism and Integration: A Harmonious Relationship*, ed. Michael Clyne and James Jupp (Canberra: ANU Press, 2011), 91, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24h7j6.11>.

⁵ D. Su, C. Richardson, and G. Wang, "Assessing Cultural Assimilation of Mexican Americans: How Rapidly Do Their Gender-Role Attitudes Converge to the US Mainstream?" *Social Science Quarterly* (Wiley-Blackwell) 91, no. 3 (2010): 772, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2010.00718.x>.

⁶ J. G. Read, "The Sources of Gender Role Attitudes among Christian and Muslim Arab-American Women," *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 2 (2003): 217, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3712371>.

⁷ L. Pessin and B. Arpino, "Navigating between Two Cultures: Immigrants' Gender Attitudes toward Working Women," *Demographic Research* 38 (2018): 981, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26457069>.

⁸ Richard Alba, "Immigration and the American Realities of Assimilation and Multiculturalism," *Sociological Forum* 14, no. 1 (1999): 13, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/685012>.

attitudes than those of the first or second generations.⁹ The existing body of literature and research conducted on Mexican American immigrants, the growing population of immigrants from diverse backgrounds, and growing concern about the correlation between gender role attitudes and cultural assimilation urges the demand for unexplored research. Consequently, there is implied motivation to further investigate the specific correlations and persisting change among first and second-generation immigrants and their perception of gender roles: either egalitarian, moderate, or conservative.

Research Question and Addressed Gap

This study assesses the cultural assimilation of teenage Middle Eastern first and second-generation immigrants in the San Fernando Valley by comparing changes in their gender role attitudes to the US mainstream culture, in retrospect to generational status. Such an approach will help investigate one of the prevailing sentiments often concluded regarding Middle Eastern culture—that it overemphasizes male dominance and misogynistic stances.¹⁰ This belief held by numerous Middle Easterners emphasizes the role of women as caregivers and separate from interfering in the public space. This ideology reinforcing patriarchy oppresses women to be kept at a lower social status than men and promotes a detrimental double standard of sexuality.¹¹

Historical narratives have correspondingly developed assimilation experiences of Middle Eastern American immigrants who represent a population at the convergence of both religion and ethnicity. Individuals of Middle Eastern background are an ethnic group created to represent individuals from seventeen Arabic-speaking countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia.¹² However in the modern day, Middle Easterners' exact population is unknown. Since the American government's racial definition categorizes individuals of Middle Eastern descent as "white," Middle Easterners are never explicitly conducted research on, and more predominantly research regarding cultural assimilation and gender role perception. Due to the overgeneralization and underrepresentation of this ethnic identity, this lack of research

⁹ Su, Richardson, and Wang, "Assessing Cultural Assimilation," 768.

¹⁰ Bruce Dunne, "Power and Sexuality in the Middle East," Middle East Report, no. 206 (1998): 30, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3012472>.

¹¹ Colin Mercer, "The Philosophical Roots of Western Misogyny," *Philosophical Topics* 46, no. 2 (2018): 194, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26927955>.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, "FAQ," last modified December 11, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/foreign-born/about/faq.html>.

has led to this study's purpose— to evaluate how rapidly Middle Easterners' gender role attitudes converge to the US mainstream culture.

This study primarily focuses on first and second-generation immigrants with Middle Eastern ethnic backgrounds. In this context, "first-generation" immigrants are defined as those born outside the United States who have relocated during their lifetime, while "second-generation" immigrants are those born in the United States with at least one immigrant parent.¹³ The term "Middle East" lacks a precise geographical definition due to its political implications; however, for this research, individuals who identify with countries in Southwest Asia or the Middle East are included, as these regions are historically recognized as part of the Middle East.

Middle Eastern Context and Hypotheses

Historically, Middle Eastern culture has been characterized by a clear distinction between the roles of men and women. However, as Middle Eastern immigrants in the United States navigate a different cultural landscape, their attitudes towards gender roles may shift to adapt to American customs. In developing a preliminary understanding of Middle Eastern culture and the expectations it emphasizes on men and women, it is crucial to take into account the research studies that explore the immigrant acculturation process which can lead to changes in attitudes of immigrants parents and their children towards gender roles, with second-generation immigrants exhibiting more of a progressive attitude in comparison to their first-generation counterparts.¹⁴ It is crucial to note that most studies in the current research field focus predominantly on Mexican-American immigrants, with few if any on Middle Eastern immigrants, highlighting a significant research gap.

Before data collection and with understanding from preliminary research, hypotheses included that there would be a significant difference in gender role attitudes between first and second-generation Middle Eastern immigrants in the San Fernando Valley. It is also inferred that second-generation immigrants will exhibit more progressive attitudes towards gender roles, taking into account their immersion and

¹³ "Second-Generation Americans," Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project, August 20, 2020, accessed November 14, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2013/02/07/second-generation-americans/>.

¹⁴ K. D. Wagner, A. Ritt-Olson, D. W. Soto, Y. L. Rodriguez, L. Baezconde-Garbanati, and J. B. Unger, "The Role of Acculturation, Parenting, and Family in Hispanic/Latino Adolescent Substance Use: Findings From a Qualitative Analysis," *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse* 7, no. 3 (2008): 324, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332640802313320>.

exposure to American culture. Additionally, it is predicted that there will be a significant difference in gender role attitudes between Middle Eastern immigrants and the US mainstream, as Middle Easterners will exhibit a more traditional attitude towards gender roles. Finally, it is expected that the level of acculturation of Middle Eastern immigrants will be positively correlated with more progressive gender role attitudes, which demonstrates the significant impact of exposure to American culture.

Theoretical Framework

In order to formulate a comprehensive perspective on the research question and the potential factors that may influence the outcomes of the study, a few theories related to cultural assimilation, gender roles, and immigration were utilized in this study. The acculturation theory, which describes the process by which individuals adopt and adapt to the culture of a new environment, is applicable to this study as it helps to understand the cultural assimilation of teenage Middle Eastern first and second-generation immigrants in the San Fernando Valley.¹⁵ The accumulation theory of immigrants asserts that immigrant cultural adaptation is a gradual and cumulative process that occurs over years, which can be applicable to this research as this theory involves changes in both the immigrants' own cultural values and their attitudes towards gender roles.¹⁶

Additionally, the social learning theory is relevant to this study as it suggests that individuals learn attitudes and behaviors through observation and interaction with others. Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn through observation, modeling, and reinforcement from the social environment in which they are raised. Thus, it can explain how gender role attitudes are transmitted from one generation to the next and how exposure to different cultural norms may influence these attitudes.¹⁷ As adolescents are still in the process of socialization, they are susceptible to the influences of their social environment, including their families, peers, and broader society.

Lastly, the intersectionality theory, which acknowledges that individuals belong to multiple social groups and experience unique challenges and privileges, is applicable to this study. The intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, and generation can

¹⁵ V. D. Lippit, "Social Structure of Accumulation Theory," in *Contemporary Capitalism and Its Crises: Social Structure of Accumulation Theory for the 21st Century*, (2010): 61.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (United States: Prentice-Hall, 1977): 1.

impact the experiences of Middle Eastern first and second-generation immigrants and their attitudes toward gender roles. Since this theory is a framework that acknowledges the interconnectedness of multiple social identities and how they interact to shape experiences of privileges and oppression, this theory recognizes that individuals hold multiple identities and experiences, which intersect and influence one another to shape lived experiences.¹⁸ In the context of this study, this theory highlights the importance of considering cultural backgrounds and other aspects of identity, such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status, and how these intersect to shape their experiences and assimilation.

II. Methods

Design Rationale

To evaluate the role of exposure to U.S. mainstream culture and American customs in the cultural assimilation of immigrants with Middle Eastern backgrounds, a survey was employed as the primary data collection method. This survey, which primarily utilized a quantitative approach, was designed to measure the cultural assimilation of immigrants based on their gender role attitudes. It was created using data from the 1972-2004 General Social Survey (GSS), administered by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Similar methods were previously used by researchers at the University of Texas-Pan American to study the cultural assimilation of Mexican-American immigrants based on their gender role attitudes.

Although interviews were an alternative research method for the given focus, surveys were chosen because they allowed for the measurement of cultural assimilation with respect to gender role attitudes. Responses were scored using a standard 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 indicates “strongly disagree” and five indicates “strongly agree”. This method effectively addresses the research question, as the quantitative design enables statistical analysis of trends and correlations through comparisons of scores between first and second-generation participants.

Sample and Recruitment

¹⁸ Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (New York: The New Press, 2017): 1.

The presented study focuses on first and second-generation students of Middle Eastern heritage so therefore the sample recruited is intended to represent the larger population of adolescents of Middle Eastern background in the Los Angeles San Fernando Valley area. This sample consisted of ninety participants who passed the specific demographic and preliminary characteristic requirements which were confirmed through an initial demographic survey given to participants before moving on to questions which measured three variables. In efforts to ensure that the sample size accurately represents the larger Middle Eastern population, a preliminary survey was conducted which inquired basic demographic information such as age, immigrant generational status, Middle Eastern ethnicity, and gender. The responses which did not fulfill the intended threshold of this study were discarded in order to maintain the integrity of this study. Initially, the survey was distributed among students involved in local academic and extracurricular groups, which primarily consisted of students from Middle Eastern backgrounds. Then, participants distributed the survey to appropriate peers, allowing for the snowball sampling method to be utilized in this study.

Instruments

The distributed survey was organized into one demographic questionnaire and three variable-measuring domains, each concerning the role of women in society: (1) demographics, the division of labor, (2) women's participation in politics, and (3) opinions on working mothers. For all three domains, variable scores were measured utilizing questions directly from the 1972-2004 General Social Survey (GSS) administered by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Responses were collected and quantified using a 5-point Likert scale.

The first domain measured the division of labor score and asked for respondents' opinions on the division of labor between husband and wife which was based on three questions: (1) whether participants agree that it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the family; (2) whether they agree that it is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself; (3) whether they agree that a married woman should earn money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her.

The second domain measured the women's participation in politics score and questioned respondent's attitudes toward women's participation in politics, decision-making, and representative organizations and included the following questions: (1)

whether respondents agree that most men are better suited emotionally for politics than most women are; (2) whether they are willing to vote for a female president if she won the party nomination and was qualified for the job; (3) whether they agree that women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country to men.

The third domain measures the Women Participation in the Workforce score and obtains two questions regarding the dilemma between work and childcare for working mothers: (1) whether respondents agree that a preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works; and (2) if they agree that a working mother can establish a relationship just as warm and secure with her children as would a mother who does not work.

Ethical Considerations

In attempts to eliminate any ethical concerns interrupting the distributed survey, the GSS questions were analyzed to ensure they contained no culturally sensitive phrases and strayed away from inquiring questions regarding the respondent's personal background such as income, family, conflict, and others. Additionally, in the beginning of the survey participants were provided with a form of consent which explicitly reminded participants that participation is voluntary and ensured full anonymity of the respondent. Additionally, the consent form provided participants with contact information and described the type of expected questions and the amount of time the questionnaire would take. In order for the participants to begin the survey, they were required to agree. If participants disagreed with the consent form, the questionnaire ended there. Participants were free to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time, and it was emphasized that the data collected would be solely used for educational purposes.

III. Results

Descriptive Statistics

Figure 1: Demographic Descriptives of Sample

Variable	Level	Count	Total	Proportion
Age	13	2	90	0.023
	14	4	90	0.045
	15	8	90	0.089
	16	22	90	0.245
	17	26	90	0.289
	18	12	90	0.134
	19	8	90	0.089
	20	2	90	0.023
	21	4	90	0.045
	22	2	90	0.023
Gender	Female	68	90	0.756
	Male	19	90	0.212
	Other/ Decline to say	1	90	0.011
Grade	Ninth Grade	6	90	0.067
	Tenth Grade	9	90	0.100
	Eleventh	18	90	0.200

Grade				
	Twelfth Grade	27	90	0.300
	College Undergrad	30	90	0.334
Ethnicity	Afghan	1	90	0.012
	Assyrian	3	90	0.034
	Egyptian	51	90	0.567
	Egyptian and Jordanian	1	90	0.012
	Egyptian and Lebanese	1	90	0.012
	Iraqi	2	90	0.023
	Israeli	1	90	0.012
	Jordanian	3	90	0.034
	Lebanese	10	90	0.112
	Moroccan	3	90	0.034
	Palestinian	1	90	0.012
	Persian	10	90	0.112
	Syrian	3	90	0.034

Generationa l Status	First Generation	33	90	0.367
	Second Generation	57	90	0.634

Note: Proportions tested against value: 0.05.

After distributing the described survey, *Figure 1* displays the distribution of descriptive statistics in the aspects of gender, age, grade, ethnicity, and generational status. The study collected responses from ninety total respondents, and in terms of generational status, 63.4% were second-generation immigrants, and 36.7% were first-generation immigrants. The respondents' overall ages ranged from thirteen to twenty-two, with 76.7% (sixty-nine) females and 21.2% (nineteen) males. The study included three domains: division of labor between husband and wife, women's participation in politics, and opinion on the conflict between work and childcare for working mothers. Each domain consisted of a set of questions where respondents were prompted to answer on a five-point scale labeled as strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

Figure 2: Descriptive Statistics of First-Generation Immigrants

	Division of Labor Score	Women Participation in Politics Score	Women Participation in the Workforce Score
Valid	90	90	90
Mean	3.080	2.970	3.289
Std. Deviation	1.412	1.644	1.496
Minimum	1	1	1

Maximum	5	5	5
Range	4	4	4

Figure 3: Descriptive Statistics of Second-generation Immigrants

	Division of Labor Score	Women Participation in Politics Score	Women Participation in the Workforce Score
Valid	90	90	90
Mean	2.599	2.757	3.161
Std. Deviation	1.358	1.582	1.327
Minimum	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5
Range	4	4	4

As shown in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the sample to obtain the mean, standard deviation, and range for both generational groups. This analysis provides the respondent’s division of labor, women participation in the politics, and women participation in the workforce score. The first-generation sample exhibited higher mean scores than second-generation immigrants in the division of labor and women participation in politics, suggesting a preference for more traditional viewpoints. Conversely, first-generation immigrants also recorded higher mean values for women participation in the workforce, indicating a less favorable view towards such values.

*Generational Comparisons**Figure 4: Generational Independent Samples T-Test*

	t	df	p
Division of Labor Score	- 2.79	274	0.003
Women Participation in the Politics Score	- 1.06	274	0.146
Women Participation in the Workforce Score	- 0.056	215	0.478

Note: For all tests, the alternative hypothesis specifies that group *The First Generation* is less than *The Second Generation*.

Figure 5: Generational Descriptive Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE
Division of Labor Score	First Generation	33	3.080	1.412	0.142
	Second Generation	57	2.599	1.358	0.102
Women Participation in Politics Score	First Generation	33	2.970	1.644	0.165
	Second Generation	57	2.757	1.582	0.119
Women Participation in the Workforce Score	First Generation	33	3.289	1.496	0.184
	Second Generation	57	3.161	1.327	0.122

To break down the statistical results of the two different generations, the results of each generational status were compared utilizing a statistical descriptive analysis divided by the results based on generational grouping. In order to determine

the statistical significance of each category of results, an independent sample t-test was used for each variable to determine various gender role attitudes. In regards to the similarities between the groups, the findings in *Figure 5* indicate that first-generation Middle Easterners consistently recorded higher average scores compared to second-generation immigrants. However, for the women participation in politics and women participation in the workforce score, their standard deviations show an overlap in the scores, which means the differences are not considerably large. Furthermore, the p-value for these two means from the independent samples t-test is above the standard 0.05 value, as shown in *Figure 4*, making these results statistically insignificant and rejecting the null hypothesis where group 1 would be greater than group 2, as inferred based on existing research.

As seen in *Figure 5*, individuals of first-generation immigration status also had a higher mean value for their division of labor score. The related p-values from the independent samples t-test, shown in *Figure 4*, are below the standard 0.05 threshold, indicating that these results are statistically significant and replicable.

IV. Discussion

Division of Labor

The present study aimed to assess the cultural assimilation of teenage Middle Eastern first and second-generation immigrants in the San Fernando Valley by comparing changes in their gender role attitudes to the US mainstream culture. The findings in this study align with previous research in the given Literature Review that has identified cultural differences in gender role attitudes between Middle Eastern immigrants and American society. In the first domain, the study asked questions related to the division of labor between husband and wife. First-generation immigrants showed overall mixed responses, with the majority of this group agreeing that it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home while women take care of the house and family. On the contrary, the second-generation immigrants were more progressive, with a majority disagreeing with this statement. In the division of labor domain, first-generation immigrants showed mixed responses, with a majority believing it is better if the man is the achiever outside the home while the woman takes care of the house and family. In contrast, second-generation immigrants displayed more progressive views, disagreeing with traditional roles. The original hypothesis, that first-generation immigrants would hold more traditional beliefs while second-generation

immigrants' beliefs would reflect more US mainstream values, was confirmed using an independent t-test, yielding statistically significant results. Building upon existing research, the findings of this study align with those of previous studies, including foundational sources discussed earlier and a 2010 study from the University of Texas-Pan American. This earlier study concluded that there is a strong association between traditional gender roles and first-generation immigrants.¹⁹ Furthermore, the hypothesized generational change was confirmed through statistically significant findings which illustrate a common trend where immigrants of Middle Eastern background are likely to obtain a more traditional viewpoint towards a woman's role in the division of labor.

Women's Participation in Politics

In the second domain, the study asked questions related to women's participation in politics. The second-generation immigrants showed more progressive attitudes in this domain as well, with a majority willing to vote for a female president if she was qualified for the job. They also disagreed that most men are better suited emotionally for politics. A majority of first-generation immigrants expressed the view that women should be less involved in political settings, aligning with their more traditional attitudes as hypothesized based on preliminary research. However, the findings regarding women's participation in politics were inconclusive, as the statistical analysis yielded insignificant results. Consequently, no definitive conclusions can be drawn about the impact of this factor, given the higher-than-standard p-value observed.

Women's Participation in the Workforce

In the third domain, the study asked questions related to the conflict between work and childcare for working mothers. The second-generation immigrants showed more progressive attitudes, with a majority agreeing that a working mother can establish a relationship just as secure with her children as would a mother who does not work. They also disagreed that a preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works. However, the study's findings are inconclusive, as the statistical analysis did not yield significant results. Consequently, we cannot definitively conclude that generational status influences opinions on women's participation in the workforce.

¹⁹ Su, Richardson, and Wang, "Assessing Cultural Assimilation," 771.

Implications

Although some portions of this research do not provide whole awareness on the topic being discussed due to inconclusive results, these findings do provide preliminary understanding of trends within gender role attitudes of immigrants of Middle Eastern backgrounds in order to understand whether generational status is a factor for cultural assimilation. The results of this study also provide foundational exploration and significant analyses of changing gender role attitudes based on generational status. If re-evaluated for possible representation of the entire population, it can be used to recognize the heterogeneity within the Middle Eastern population, as the findings suggest that first and second-generation immigrants may differ in gender role attitudes. Therefore, policymakers can take heterogeneity into account when developing programs and policies aimed at addressing the needs of this population. Policies that account for the diverse experiences and challenges faced by different generations of immigrants are likely to be more effective. First and second-generation immigrants may face different social and economic barriers; policies tailored to address these specific barriers can improve the overall efficacy of integration efforts. In contexts where there are significant cultural differences, such as those between traditional Middle Eastern values and Western societal norms, understanding and addressing the varied needs of immigrant populations can promote greater social cohesion and reduce potential conflicts between immigrant groups and the broader society.

The results of this study also have implications for future studies of gender role attitudes among Middle Eastern first and second-generation immigrants. When conducting a similar study, it is crucial for a multivariate framework to offer relative to a bivariate analysis. The findings that generational status poses a significant impact on gender role attitudes introduce the necessity of using multiple questions as instruments, as fewer questions can yield limited and biased findings.

V. Limitations

There were several potential limitations to the validity of this study that needed addressing to ensure accurate results. Response bias was a significant concern, as participants might not have answered truthfully or accurately, leading to potential overestimation or underestimation of cultural assimilation. To mitigate this, respondent anonymity was ensured; however, some participants may still have felt pressured to conform to certain expectations or might not have understood the questions. Self-selection bias was another issue, as the participant sample might not

have been representative of the broader Middle Eastern population, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Although random sampling was employed, bias could still have occurred due to a disproportionate number of responses from specific Middle Eastern countries. The wording and interpretation of questions could also have influenced the results, despite pretesting, as some participants might have interpreted the questions differently. Social desirability bias was a concern, as participants might have provided socially desirable responses instead of expressing their true beliefs or experiences. Cultural sensitivity was crucial to the survey design, as some questions might not have been culturally appropriate, affecting the validity of the results. Language barriers could also have impacted data accuracy, despite efforts to translate the survey, if some participants did not fully understand the questions. Lastly, participants' life experiences and historical contexts could have influenced their views on cultural assimilation, introducing further validity limitations. Despite efforts to mitigate these issues, they could still have limited the study's validity, and it was essential to consider these factors when interpreting the findings.

VI. Conclusion and Future Directions

The cultural assimilation phenomenon has been a long-researched topic when addressing the comparisons between immigrants of various generational statuses. The lack of references to Middle Eastern immigrants in the preliminary research made it challenging to formulate hypotheses for this study. Although the sample utilized for this study is disproportionately skewed and not an accurate representation of the larger Middle Eastern population, the results indicate that there is a difference in gender role attitudes among first and second-generation immigrants, as first-generation immigrants are more likely to obtain traditional viewpoints in comparison to their second-generation counterparts. When asked to share their opinion on the division of labor amongst a husband and wife, first-generation immigrants showed to be much more traditional while second-generation immigrants showed to be more egalitarian and progressive. When respondents were asked to share their opinion on women's participation in politics and in the workforce, although first and second-generation immigrants showed similar opinions, second-generation immigrants were slightly more progressive in comparison to individuals of first-generation immigrant status. Despite such conclusions, it is important to account that several results of the study were evaluated to be statistically insignificant, after conducting an independent sample t-test, due to the limitations of the environment when attempting to recruit a diverse

group of participants. This significant limitation urges further research on this topic to control the population skewness and utilize an alternate recruitment method that accurately reflects the entire Middle Eastern population.

The purpose of this study was to compare generational differences and evaluate the role of gender role attitudes as a changing factor of cultural assimilation. This research study emphasizes the need for more research to be conducted on the mental health of immigrants, particularly in terms of the challenges they face in balancing their parents' and ethnic cultural values with their own. Moreover, future research could explore the intersectionality of immigrant experiences, such as the impact of gender, socioeconomic status, and generational status on certain attitudes and experiences. By increasing research in this field, researchers can be provided with a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by different groups of immigrants and consequently inform more targeted interventions and policies. Overall, this research contributes to the existing literature on immigrant attitudes and provides insights on the challenges faced by different generations of immigrants, as these findings can inform interventions and policies that promote the mental health of immigrants in order to ease the burden of balancing two or more cultures simultaneously.