

An Exploration of Identity Narratives of Lebanese-Canadians Around the Time of the July
2006 War in Lebanon

by

Nabiha Rawdah
B.A., Concordia University College of Alberta, 2003

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

The focus of this qualitative study was Lebanese-Canadians' identity in the context of global media coverage of the July 2006 war in Lebanon. A narrative inquiry method was used to interview five Lebanese-Canadian participants living in Canada. A descriptive narrative was constructed for each participant, and interview data were analyzed for thematic content. Comments, opinions, and observations were related to media portrayals of Lebanese-Canadians, the government's response to the July 2006 war, and the political history between Lebanon and Israel. The results demonstrate that despite a shared ethnic heritage, conceptualizing a Lebanese-Canadian identity is an individual and interactive process that extends beyond citizenship or ethnic ancestry. Moreover, historical and contemporary socio-political issues are inextricably linked to how participants view themselves as Lebanese-Canadians and the meaning this identity status holds for them. These findings suggest that notions of identity and identity-related processes are multifaceted and operate within a highly political context.

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Chapter I: Introduction and Background to the Study

My research interests in ethnicity, culture, and identity development have not evolved separately from my own personal experiences. Growing up as a Lebanese-Canadian in Canada has provided me with an opportunity to reflect upon and question how members of diverse ethnocultural groups come to define themselves and how they make meaning out of their ethnocultural, national or global identities. *What are some of the challenges people experience in terms of general identity development? How do they negotiate their role and identity status within conflicting social and cultural contexts? What are the implications of dual or mixed ethnic ancestry on the development of a unified, coherent sense of self?* These are all questions that I have often asked myself and others. Therefore, I found myself naturally inclined to pursue in-depth qualitative research for my thesis work as influenced by my own ethnocultural background and reflective nature, both of which have allowed me to move freely between the position of an “insider” and an “outsider” within my diverse cultural and social contexts. In this chapter, I describe how these interests have informed and contributed to the development of my research study.

The present chapter provides the background and rationale for my research study. To begin, I explain how political ideologies and government policies have influenced conceptions of ethnocultural diversity in Canada. Then I highlight the major demographic trends in Canada’s current ethnocultural landscape, including a particular focus on the Lebanese community in Canada. I also discuss how recent globalization patterns have impacted the way individuals conceptualize identity within native, local and global contexts. To conclude this chapter, I identify the purpose of this research study as well as the key issues that have informed the overarching research question.

Cultural Pluralism: Ideology and Government Policy in Canada

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau's contribution to the preservation of cultural diversity was instrumental in shaping the current ethnocultural landscape in Canada. In his prominent October 1971 address to the House of Commons, he drew attention to the erosion of cultural diversity by explicating how rapid growth in industrial technology, mass communication, and urbanization contributed to the depersonalization of mass society and compromised an individual's sense of belonging (Trudeau, 1971).

Consequently, an investigation into the existing status of various cultures and languages, as well as ways of protecting ethnocultural diversity, underscored the work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism, and Biculturalism in Canada during the early 1970's. Under the guidance of Prime Minister Trudeau, a policy of multiculturalism was developed shortly thereafter in an effort to strengthen national unity by preserving the cultural and linguistic freedom for all Canadians. The main objectives of this policy included: 1) the preservation of human rights; 2) the development of Canadian identity; 3) the enhancement of citizenship participation; 4) the reinforcement of Canadian unity, and 5) the encouragement of cultural diversification within a bilingual framework (Trudeau, 1971).

Since its inception, this multiculturalism policy has culminated in various government programs aimed at the growth and development of various ethnocultural communities in Canada, the eradication of cultural barriers that preclude full participation in Canadian society, the promotion of cultural interchange among diverse ethnocultural groups, and the acquisition of one of the two official languages of Canada (Trudeau, 1971). Prime Minister Trudeau's investment to safeguard ethnocultural freedom in this way has granted Canadians a great variety of human experience and has also contributed to Canada's increasingly diverse ethnocultural landscape.

Population demographic data collected from the 2006 Census illustrate the current growth and composition of Canada's diverse ethnocultural landscape. The main highlights from these data reveal that over 200 ethnic ancestries were reported in Canada in 2006, with approximately 41.4 percent of the total population reporting multiple ethnic ancestries ("Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic: 2006 Census", Statistics Canada, 2006). Based on the definition used by Statistics Canada in the collection of census data, ethnic origin referred to the ethnic or cultural origins of respondents' ancestors. Similar to the growth observed in the number of ethnic ancestries reported, Canada's current visible minority population also continues to grow. This appears to be strongly influenced by the high proportion of newcomers who belong to recognized visible minority groups, which accounted for 16.2 percent of Canada's total population in 2006. The definition of visible minority provided in the Employment Equity Act (Ministry of Justice, 1995) was also used in the 2006 Canadian census data collection. According to this Act, visible minorities are defined as "persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." (p. 2). With respect to overall population growth rates, Canada's visible minority population increased by 27.2 percent between 2001 and 2006, which was five times faster than the 5.4 percent population growth rate of the total population.

Seventy-five percent of recent immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006 were members of a visible minority group. South Asian, Chinese, and Black were, respectively, the three largest visible minority groups reported in 2006. The most frequently reported ancestral background among Latin American visible minorities was Spanish; among Arabs, it was Lebanese. Iranian was the most frequently reported ancestral background among West Asian visible minorities, and Vietnamese among Southeast Asians ("Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic: 2006 Census", Statistics Canada, 2006). Prime Minister Trudeau's contributions in legislating

multicultural policy, coupled with Canada's increasingly diverse ethnocultural landscape, have helped to strengthen Canada's image as a nation recognized for its tolerance, support, and acceptance of ethnocultural diversity.

In Parkin and Mendelsohn's (2003) survey research on public attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity in Canada, many Canadians, particularly within the 18-30 age range, reported that they were very comfortable with diversity and would be open to include members of different ethnocultural groups in their communities and immediate families. The overall findings of this survey suggested that most Canadians, particularly those under 30, hold favourable views of multiculturalism and ethnocultural diversity. These views were also relatively consistent across respondents from visible minority and immigrant groups, respondents from non-minority and non-immigrant groups, and both rural and urban respondents (Parkin & Mendelsohn, 2003).

Globalization and Conceptions of Identity

Most would agree that the world today is more interconnected than ever before, and that the term "global village" encapsulates all the interactions that occur among the economic, political, technological, environmental, cultural, and personal dimensions of our world (Pais, 2006). Globalization itself is not a new social phenomenon, but its scale, speed and import have changed considerably in the present era (Kinnvall, 2004). For instance, the number of economic, ecological, demographical, political and social linkages is far greater than any previous time in history. As a society, we are also witnessing a compactness of space and time as our global world is perceived as an ever smaller place, and where events elsewhere have important implications for our everyday lives (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

A few favourable outcomes of globalization include that it has broadened our horizons, offered increased opportunities of international contacts, and fostered economic, ecological, educational, informational and military forms of cooperation (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). However, other streams of research conducted over the last decade have elucidated less favourable perceptions of globalization. For example, Woodward, Skrbis, and Bean's (2007) survey research on attitudes towards globalization and cosmopolitanism in Australia revealed that although 86% of respondents generally endorsed positive attitudes towards globalization, there was also a substantial minority who perceived more negative economic consequences of globalization, particularly in terms of prospective job creation for local workers. In this study, the most positive sentiments towards globalization were noted in the areas of personal consumption, choice, and cultural openness; however, concerns about the local economy and culture appeared to mitigate these positive sentiments. Their findings suggested that people's openness to globalization can only reach so far and can be easily influenced by perceived economic threats affecting the local culture.

The significance of economic factors was also confirmed in a related study by Wilkes, Guppy, and Farris (2007). In this Canadian-based study, the researchers investigated how individual-level characteristics and a changing national context over time affect individuals' attitudes towards immigration. They relied primarily on measures of economic position, occupational skill, economic context, and immigration rates to evaluate changes in Canadians' attitudes towards immigration. Their main findings demonstrated that the state of the economy, as indicated by the annual unemployment rate and GDP, has a significant effect on Canadians' attitudes towards immigration. Also, working in lower-skilled occupations, belonging to a union household, and having non-Liberal voting intentions increased anti-immigration sentiment

(Wilkes et al., 2007). Taken together, the findings from both of these studies suggest that attitudes towards globalization and increased immigration appear to be influenced most by economic factors related to prospective job creation, unemployment rates, GDP, and economic opportunities available in one's local culture.

The impact of globalization and its related social and psychological dimensions on the understanding of self and identity development has been a central focus of study in contemporary social science research. Over the last decade, we have become more aware that “when globalization alters and erodes traditional ways, identity has to be created and recreated on a more active basis than before” (Giddens, 2000, p. 65). Hermans and Dimaggio (2007) state that the experience of uncertainty in various aspects of people's lives has played a substantial role in the globalization phenomenon. For many people, the experience of uncertainty may be positive and can widen the space for potential actions and adventures of the unknown to include forms of international travel and intercultural cooperation. In contrast, however, when the experience of uncertainty intensifies and poses a threat to one's survival, it can manifest as a form of existential anxiety and insecurity about one's purpose and place in the world. Hermans and Dimaggio also assert that the experience of uncertainty in relation to our global world is described by four defining characteristics: 1) complexity – this refers to the great number of parts that have a wide variety of relations; 2) ambiguity – this refers to the suspension of clarity, as the meaning of one part is determined by the flux and variation of the other parts; 3) deficit knowledge – this refers to the absence of a superordinate knowledge structure that can resolve the contradictions between parts, and 4) unpredictability – this refers to the lack of control over future developments.

In my view, these features are important to consider for the context of this study because they create unique challenges for arriving at succinct articulations for multiple aspects of local, ethnic, and national identities. Catarina Kinnvall's (2004) research on the impact of globalization has emphasized the prominence of religion and nationalism as the two identity-signifiers that are used to re-affirm one's identity status in a global world. She argues that nationalism and religion supply existential answers to individuals' quests for security and certainty in the world. These answers are shared through especially powerful stories and beliefs that convey a sense of security and protection from others. In addition, both nationalism and religion are often portrayed as resting on solid ground, as being true, and therefore creating a fixed sense of the world and others as they appear to be (Kinnvall, 2004). In a similar vein, the growth of a self-selected culture, in which individuals form group or religious bonds with other like-minded individuals who aspire to maintain an identity free from the pressures of global culture and its values can be manifested, for example, in fundamentalist religious groups which tend to espouse anti-global rhetoric (Pais, 2006).

According to Pais (2006), every individual is psychologically affected by globalization, particularly in terms of identity development and integration of cultural values. The emergence of a hybrid, global identity, for example, develops in response to an increased awareness of one's native and local culture, as well as one's relationship to the global world. Other individuals, however, may experience identity confusion in response to feeling alienated and excluded from their native, local, and/or global cultures. Identity confusion is characterized by cultural uncertainty and a lack of clear guidelines about how life is to be lived and how to interpret life experiences (Arnett, 2004; Pais, 2006). One major consequence of globalization for adolescents and young people today is the developmental phenomenon of "emerging adulthood", a process

whereby it becomes more customary to engage in adult roles, such as marriage and parenthood, at a later stage in life, and where most young people participate in a longer period of identity, relationship, and career-related exploration prior to making long-term decisions about their lifepath (Arnett, 2004). In my view, the importance of contextual factors, including culture, gender and socio-economic status is critical for understanding how traditional pathways to adulthood have shifted over time, and more importantly, how conceptions of adulthood and what it means to be an adult has changed with respect to globalization.

In sum, given the significant impact of globalization processes on identity development and permanence, it becomes readily apparent that the challenges of creating a viable, all-encompassing identity are greater than they have ever been in the past (Pais, 2006). In my view, Pais' argument implies that traditional notions and perceptions of identity as an all-encompassing construct have changed with respect to the impact of globalization. Also, the interconnected relationships that exist among native, local, and global cultures are often communicated through the media, television, and Internet sources. Thus, any actual or perceived threats to the sustainability of these relationships have typically been communicated through these sources. For example, when tragic geopolitical events such as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the bombings in Bali, Madrid, and London, and the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia occurred, the imaging and information from the media, television and the Internet helped to ignite a widespread global concern for future safety and security. These events transpired in a global world filled with tensions, oppositions, clashes, and misunderstandings between people from different ethnocultural backgrounds (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Furthermore, persistent global attention to these events by the media and the anticipation of future threats prompted many individuals to re-examine their unique position and relationship to the global world. However,

Zarowsky (2000) has argued that deeply personalized meanings of these events and similar ones cannot be understood in isolation from the cultural, social, and political contexts in which they are embedded. In other words, how individuals interpret and make meaning of such events and the implications of these meanings on personal, local, national or global identities is greatly influenced by the contexts of native, local, and global cultures, and perceptions about safety, social connectedness and belonging in the world.

The Socio-historical Context of the Lebanese Civil War

Longstanding concerns over war and political unrest in the Middle East have inundated the Western media for years, particularly in reference to the politically, religiously and economically distraught country of Lebanon, which has endured a civil war for approximately 16 years. In this section, I describe the socio-historical and political context that contributed to the onset of the Lebanese civil war. This is important for understanding the religious, social, political and economic factors and conditions that led to increased emigration and settlement abroad by Lebanese people who fled during this time. The Lebanese civil war began in April 1975 and was finally settled in October 1989, under an accord of national reconciliation, known as the Tai'f Accord. Actual fighting did not completely end, however, until a year later, in October 1990 (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2003).

In their research on economics and politics of civil war, Makdisi and Sadaka discuss how religious fractionalization has been implicated as a crucial factor in the understanding of the causes of the Lebanese civil war. They argue that Lebanon's religious divisions during this time were akin to ethnic-linguistic divisions in other countries that have also experienced civil wars. They note the fact that at least one of the two main religious communities in Lebanon, Muslims, made up more than 45 percent of the total population at the onset of the civil war. From these

authors' perspective, religious fractionalization in Lebanon can be conceptualized by the division of the total population into various Christian and Muslim sectors. Currently, there are eighteen officially recognized religious communities in Lebanon, with the Christian Maronites, Muslim Shi'a and Muslim Sunni religious communities together comprising an estimated 70 to 80 percent of the total population.

Religious fractionalization can be traced back to the historical formation of the Lebanese National Pact of 1943, which was instrumental in shaping subsequent decision-making processes about appropriate systems of governance within a newly independent Lebanese nation and government. Binder (1966) documented the National Pact as an unwritten agreement that came into effect in the summer of 1943, following numerous meetings between Lebanon's first president, a Christian Maronite, and Lebanon's first Prime Minister, a Sunni Muslim. These negotiations focused on the Lebanese Christians' fear of being overwhelmed by the Muslim communities in Lebanon and nearby Arab countries, as well as the Lebanese Muslims' fear of Western hegemony. In return for the Christian community's promise not to seek foreign protection and to accept Lebanon's "Arab face," the Muslim community agreed to honour the independence and legitimacy of Lebanon in its own right, according to its 1920 geographic boundaries, and to also renounce any aspirations for a union with Syria (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2003).

Furthermore, the adherence to a rigid confessional system of governance during Lebanon's socio-political history impacted how distributions of political and institutional power were designated among high profile positions in the Lebanese government during this time. The distribution of political and institutional power was assigned proportionately among religious leaders based upon the relative demographic of various religious communities in Lebanon at the

time of the 1932 Census, which revealed a six-to-five ratio favouring Christians over Muslims (Binder, 1966). This confessional system of governance served as an expedient, interim measure intended to overcome philosophical divisions between Christian and Muslim leaders at the time of Lebanon's independence. It was hoped that once the business of governance got under way, and as national spirit grew, the importance of a confessional system in the Lebanese political structure would diminish (Binder, 1966). However, the frequent and longstanding political disputes in Lebanon since this time bear a striking testimony to the failure of the National Pact as a means towards achieving societal, religious, and political integration in Lebanon in its formative years as an independent nation.

Makdisi and Sadaka (2003) assert that religious (as opposed to ethnic) fractionalization, which has now been generally acknowledged as a significant precipitating factor in the onset of the civil war in Lebanon, has not yet been given the full attention it deserves in international research on civil war studies, at least relative to other indices of social fractionalization. Therefore, it remains unclear as to what extent religious fractionalization will continue to perpetuate the risk for future religious or political conflict in Lebanon. It is also worthwhile to reflect on how the National Pact in 1945 imbued an atmosphere of difference among the Lebanese people, and the question of whether the national identity of the Lebanese people continues to be delineated along religious sectarian or non-sectarian lines.

In a historical document about the Lebanese civil war, Nasr (1978) stressed the importance of situating religious fractionalization within the economic and social context that characterized Lebanon prior to the onset of the civil war. Because of its geographic location, specific history, and cultural characteristics, Lebanon has long been one of the principal points for economic penetration of the Middle East by Western capitalist industries. During this time,

foreign capital had contributed to increased rates of emigration to Lebanon on the part of the commercial, financial, and industrial bourgeoisie of nearby Egypt, Syria, and Iraq (Nasr, 1978). According to Nasr, just before the outbreak of the civil war, Western financial institutions made up nearly 75 percent of the total number of foreign companies operating in Beirut.

Nasr also claimed that the growing hegemony of the financial and commercial sectors as an intermediary of Western capitalist influence significantly contributed to the growing regional inequalities observed in Lebanon during this time. Specifically, rural areas in Lebanon entered into a state of decomposition and disintegration as capitalist measures were implemented to control the marketing and distribution of goods and produce. As a result, a significant portion of the agricultural surplus was extracted leaving small, local peasant farmers in rural Lebanon in debt and eventually impoverished. Furthermore, modifications in labour laws and practices at this time permitted employers to pay less than minimum wage to those employees younger than 20 years old, which, at the time, comprised nearly 36 percent of the Lebanese work force, while those over 40 years old comprised only 10 percent (Nasr, 1978).

Consequently, the industrialization process in Lebanon was unable to provide opportunities for employment and sustainable support for the numerous forced migrants who had deserted their homes and livelihood in rural Lebanon (Nasr, 1978). This course of events led to the increased deterioration of the overall standard of living for lower class Lebanese citizens over time, yet enabled the wealth of a small minority in Lebanon to continue to grow. Nasr (1978) concluded that such economic and social hardships during this period of time provided a fertile breeding ground for pre-existing religious sectarian movements, social class conflicts, and foreign interventions to rapidly flourish in Lebanon.

The Lebanese Community in Canada

During the civil war period in Lebanon (1975-1991), emigration rates soared as Lebanese civilians attempted to flee Lebanon and seek refuge elsewhere. According to retrospective data collected by the United Nations Development Programme (1998), approximately 895, 000 people fled Lebanon between 1975 and 1990. No reliable data has been found on the proportion of the population who remained in Lebanon during the civil war. Canadian immigration data reveal that approximately 41, 320 people from Lebanon immigrated to Canada before 1991, and the most recent census immigration data indicate that approximately 75, 280 people immigrated from Lebanon to Canada between 1991 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006), an increase of approximately 23%.

The most recent and accessible profile of the Lebanese community in Canada to date has been informed by the 2001 Census data, because the relevant 2006 Census data on ethnic community profiles has yet to be publically released. According to these data, approximately 144, 000 people of Lebanese origin were reportedly living in Canada in 2001, making Lebanese the 6th largest non-European ethnic group in Canada at this time. Also, nearly half of the Lebanese population living in Canada at this time had been born outside of the country. The provincial distribution of the Lebanese population was primarily concentrated in Quebec (34%) and Ontario (41%), yet smaller Lebanese communities were noted in Alberta (12%), Nova Scotia (2%), British Columbia (4%), and New Brunswick (2%). In terms of religious affiliation, 42 percent of the Lebanese population in Canada reported that they were Christian Catholic, while 30 percent reported they were Muslim (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Age distributions in the Lebanese population highlight that children under the age of 15 made up 29 percent of the Lebanese population in Canada in 2001 and 16 percent were between

the ages of 15 and 24. Seniors aged 65 or over accounted for only 7 percent of the Lebanese population, and 24 percent of the Lebanese population was between the ages of 45 and 54. According to the Ethnic Diversity Survey (2002) results accumulated during this time, Canadians of Lebanese origin were actively involved as members of Canadian society; nearly 7 out of 10 eligible voters polled had voted in the last federal and provincial elections. Also, over one-third of the Lebanese population participated in an organization such as a church group or sports team in the 12 months preceding the survey (Statistics Canada, 2001).

However, nearly one-third of Canadians of Lebanese origin reported experiencing some form of discrimination or unfair treatment based on their ethnicity, race, religion, language, or accent in the past five years, or since they arrived in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001). Likewise, a majority of those who had experienced discrimination in this regard reported that they felt it was based on their race or skin colour. Nevertheless, a large majority of Canadians of Lebanese origin reported a strong sense of belonging to Canada. In 2001, 89 percent of all those aged 15 and over reported they had a strong sense of belonging to Canada, and at the same time, 50 percent also reported that they had a strong sense of belonging to their Lebanese community (Statistics Canada, 2001). These statistics demonstrate that both Lebanese and Canadian aspects appear to be significant for a large majority of the Lebanese community with respect to feelings of belonging to their homeland and to Canada.

The July 2006 War in Lebanon

Political unrest between Israel and Lebanon during July 2006 ignited a brief but traumatic war which resulted in mass destruction of infrastructure, numerous military and civilian casualties, and extensive population displacement until an official United Nations sanctioned ceasefire was put into effect a month later. What was particularly dramatic about this

war was that approximately 50, 000 Canadians of Lebanese origin were vacationing in Lebanon when this war began. When this information was revealed, the Canadian government quickly implemented rescue measures to evacuate those individuals and families from Lebanon and transport them back to Canada. These actions quickly provoked contentious reactions among the Canadian public. Some challenged the sheer volume of vacationers in Lebanon at the onset of the war, while others broadly questioned the supposed leniency of Canadian immigration and citizenship policies (e.g., Worthington, 2006).

In my view, this particular situation involved a number of underlying dynamics that have made the July 2006 war in Lebanon unique. First, it represented the first time in Canadian history where evacuation and rescue efforts were mobilized to rescue Canadian citizens during an ongoing act of war. Second, it signified the first time in Canadian history where Lebanese ethnocultural group membership was at the forefront of public debate alongside the controversy of dual citizenship status for this group of Lebanese-Canadians. Third, this event raised several broader questions and issues about how ethnocultural group membership is or should be defined by Canadian policies and laws. Fourth, the several protest demonstrations and peace rallies performed across Canada by Lebanese communities provided a striking example of how globalization, mass media, and conceptions of identity have contributed to the formation of an interethnic, Canadian identity that fluctuates and responds to changes or events in native, local, and global cultures.

Impact of War on Lebanese-Canadians

From a systematic review of the available research literature on Lebanese populations and the impact of war, it appears that a substantial amount of this research has focused almost exclusively on the impact of the 1975-1989 Lebanese civil war. A majority of research published

during this time was based upon the firsthand accounts of Lebanese citizens living under war conditions in Lebanon (Farhood, Zurayak, Chaya, Saadeh, Meshefedjian, & Sidani, 1993). Similarly, other researchers who have studied the Lebanese civil war have investigated the impact of this war in terms of overall psychological functioning, and these studies often utilized Lebanese participant samples as a comparison group in the assessment of post-traumatic symptoms, such as anxiety (Al-Issa, Bakal, & Fung, 1999). In other streams of research unrelated to the civil war, Lebanese participant samples have been used in cross-cultural studies to delineate cultural differences in relation to psychological dimensions of self, worldview, and value orientations (El-Hassan, 2004).

Indeed, most of the research in this area can inform our understanding of the impact and aftermath of the civil war in Lebanon, and it can also illustrate how war and conflict have influenced the socio-political history of Lebanon and its people. However, it can be argued that the July 2006 war in Lebanon was surrounded by unique set of circumstances that were significantly different in many ways from the earlier civil war. Thus, the earlier civil war research findings may be of limited usefulness to the investigation of the impact of the July 2006 war in Lebanon. Moreover, outside of the media commentary and newspaper coverage of this war, to date, there has been very limited empirical research devoted to explicating the impact of the July 2006 war on Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada.

Despite this, contemporary research has demonstrated the significant sociopolitical influences in the articulation and conceptualization of identity (Croucher, 2004, Satzewich & Wong, 2006, Whitebrook, 2001). These influences are germane to this research study because of the diverse and often competing viewpoints on how identity status shifts in response to changing socio-political and global contexts. One particular study by Mahtani (2002) examined Canadian

citizenship and multiculturalism policies to evaluate how individuals contemplate allegiances to their ethnic and national identity. She argued that with its emphasis on ethnic diversity, multiculturalism policies effectively reduce individuals to their ethnic constituency. In her view, multicultural policies privilege ethnicity or descent over and above other social identities, thus obscuring the opportunity for people to conceptualize aspects of their identity on a series of multiple planes. For instance, perceiving oneself only based upon membership in a particular ethnic group rather than also considering membership in other social organizations or groups. Thus, it is important to consider the sociopolitical context in Canada during the July 2006 war in Lebanon and how this context shaped how members of the Lebanese community perceived themselves and the salience of being Lebanese in Canada during this time.

With respect to citizenship and its relation to the identity articulation process, Nyers (2010) asserts that citizenship functions by separating those deserving protection from the undeserving. This act of separation, as he refers to it, occurs both in law (citizen vs. non-citizen) and in political practice (worthy vs. unworthy citizen). One aspect that complicates the making and unmaking of safe citizenship however, is the rapid emergence of dual and multiple citizenships (Faist & Kivisto, 2007). This research suggests that the mobilization of rescue efforts to remove Canadian citizens in Lebanon may have been significantly affected by both political and public notions of safe citizenship and attitudes towards dual citizens. Thus, it would seem likely that the perceptions people held about those Canadian citizens in Lebanon inspired judgments about which segment of this population was considered to be worthy and unworthy of responsible protection and rescue by the Canadian government.

In light of the history of political unrest that continues to plague Lebanon and the Middle East, and the importance of citizenship issues, an exploration of the impact of the July 2006 war

from the perspectives of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada seems both timely and appropriate in order to glean a better understanding of how their particular conceptualizations of identity are situated within a larger global context. In addition, such an exploration could shed light on how threatening geopolitical events, such as war, prompt a re-examination of personal, cultural, national and global identities and the underlying meanings we attributed to these events based on deeply embedded, subjective interpretations and experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore how Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada described the impact of the July 2006 war in Lebanon. A particular focus was how self-identified Lebanese-Canadians have re-examined aspects of their ethnic and cultural identification upon learning about this war through the media. The overarching question that guided this research study was “*What are the subjectively constructed identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada at the time of the July 2006 war in Lebanon?*” The findings from this study can facilitate an understanding of how their identity status as Lebanese-Canadians has changed since the events of the war, and how the media coverage of the war impacted the highly subjective and personalized meanings these individuals attributed to the events surrounding the war and towards their group membership in the Lebanese-Canadian community in Canada.

A number of potential benefits could be drawn from this research study. The results can foster an advanced understanding of the impact of the media and globalization patterns on identity negotiation processes in response to threatening geopolitical events. This study adds a Canadian perspective to the existing body of cross-cultural counselling research on theories of identity and ethnocultural identity development. It also addresses the impact of mass media and

globalization patterns in the construction of identity narratives for members of diverse ethnic minority groups in Canada. On a more practical level, this research could contribute to current educational and counselling curricula, policies, and workshop training programs designed to promote cultural diversity and sensitivity in various academic and professional settings. It could also contribute to an understanding of cross-cultural friendships, personal and professional relationships and networks among members of the Lebanese community and other members of our diverse Canadian society.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my research study by first discussing Prime Minister's Trudeau's contributions to a cultural pluralist ideology in Canada. I also explored how recent patterns of globalization have contributed to the process by which conceptualizations of identity become more fluid and reactive to changes in native, local, and global cultures. Mass media was identified as a primary force that influences the interconnected relationships we hold within our world through the dissemination of information about the global events and happenings around us. Religious and economic factors associated with Lebanon's civil war history were also described. Lastly, an overview of the 2001 profile of the Lebanese community Canada, the details surrounding the July 2006 war in Lebanon, and relevant citizenship issues were included in this chapter to provide a framework for understanding the context and purpose of this research and the central problem that has informed the overarching research question.

Chapter II: Review of Selected Literature

This literature review provides a means to understand the foundation of the research question “*What are the subjectively constructed identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada at the time of the July 2006 war in Lebanon?*” In this chapter, I describe both quantitative and qualitative studies to illuminate major theoretical and research findings in the areas of ethnic identity development, biculturalism, the impact of news media, anti-Arab sentiment, and ethnocultural and religiously-motivated hate crimes in Canada. I will also make specific reference to those studies involving Lebanese and Middle Eastern/Arab populations.

Stage Model of Racial/Cultural Identity

The development of the Racial/Cultural Identity Model was first proposed by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1998) and later revised by Sue and Sue (2003). This theoretical model delineates five stages of identity development that members of ethnoculturally diverse groups tend to experience as they struggle to understand themselves in relation to their culture, the dominant culture, and the power dynamic that exists between these two cultures. The model is based on the premise that the experience of belonging to a racial group transcends all other experiences and emphasizes race as a definer of culture within contemporary American society (Sue & Sue, 2003).

Conformity, the first stage of this model, reflects an unequivocal preference for dominant cultural values and describes those individuals who have internalized the dominant societal definitions and stereotypes about their ethnocultural group status in society. Because these individuals may find it psychologically painful to identify with these definitions and stereotypes (assuming that, in their view, that most are negative), they tend to distance themselves from their own ethnocultural group.

Dissonance, the second stage of this model, refers to the experiences and information an individual will encounter that are inconsistent with his or her culturally held beliefs, attitudes, and values. For example, an individual of Asian descent who holds a belief that all Asians are inhibited or passive may suddenly encounter an Asian leader who appears to challenge this belief. Individuals who are experiencing dissonance are presumed to be in conflict as they attempt to make sense of disparate pieces of information that challenge their previously held set of beliefs, attitudes and values.

Resistance and Immersion, the third stage of this model, occurs when an individual actively endorses his or her own culturally held beliefs, attitudes, and values, while simultaneously rejecting the values and beliefs of the dominant culture. Furthermore, the active pursuit of self-discovery of one's own culture and history through information-seeking can be seen as a more reactive approach to self-definition, which consequently enhances an individual's sense of identity and belonging as a member of his or her ethnocultural group.

Introspection, the fourth stage of this model, describes a movement away from a reactive definition of self (as stated in the third stage) to a more positive and proactive definition of self facilitated through an introspective, critical comparison of an individual's own culture and the dominant culture. A heightened awareness of rigidity, oppression, responsibility, and allegiance are characteristic of the process of "sorting through" aspects of self-identity within the context of an individual's own culture and the dominant culture.

Integrative Awareness is the final stage of this model, and describes an individual who has reached a point of resolution through his or her introspective work, and thus demonstrates a greater sense of individual control and flexibility in negotiating self-identity and group membership within the context of his or her own culture and the dominant culture.

The Racial/Cultural Identity Model appears most applicable in therapeutic contexts. For example, West-Olatunji, Frazier, Guy, Smith, Clay, and Walter Breaux III's (2007) drew on this model to inform their case study analysis of a therapeutic interview with a Vietnamese-American immigrant. These researchers utilized this model to assess the client's level of conformity and idealized identification with the dominant culture as well as rejection of his own culture. Despite its usefulness in conceptualizing this client's cultural identity, West-Olatunji et al. (2007) illustrate several limitations inherent to its application in therapeutic contexts. First, potential therapeutic change for the client is dependent on his or her stage of development. Also, movement within and between stages of this model is dependent on specific dynamic circumstances, however, these researchers do not elaborate on these dynamic circumstances. Furthermore, individuals' responses to interpersonal interactions can trigger shifts from one stage to another. In a similar vein, Sue and Sue (2003) caution that choosing this model for conceptualizing or assessing an individual requires a culturally competent level of clinical professionalism.

Thus, West-Olatunji et al.'s (2007) research findings seem to suggest that the Racial/Cultural Identity Model can be useful as a guiding framework for understanding the relation between an individual and the relative degree of connectedness to his or her native culture and dominant culture; however, it also does not fully address how development, community, and family factors interact and influence the movement and progression within and between stages. It also does not address identity development for members of mixed racial and ethnocultural backgrounds. Therefore, there is limited relevance of these models for the context of this study. Contrary to this stage theory of racial/cultural identity, contemporary research efforts have begun to concentrate more on the underlying psychological negotiation processes

that govern ethnic identity development in diverse settings. In this next section, I draw attention to how this specific body of research has informed my understanding of these negotiation processes and the theoretical lens from which I view identity and identity-related psychological constructs.

Ethnic Identity Negotiation Processes

Mistry and Wu (2010) argue that developing expertise in navigating across cultures is an important task for the development of self and identity for children, for more recent immigrants, and for those who experience life as minorities on the basis of racial, ethnic, religious, or other social categories. In this study, Mistry and Wu describe how community characteristics interact with family and individual characteristics to create the conditions under which individuals develop expertise in navigating multiple cultural worlds and identities. They claim their conceptualization as more relevant to our current sociocultural milieu because it is a multidimensional, dynamic, and action-oriented developmental process. They also describe the process of navigating between worlds as multidimensional and as situated within particular sociohistorical contexts; therefore, it was reasonable for them to expect the trajectories and outcomes to vary depending on features of the immediate context. Mistry and Wu posit that for these particular groups of individuals, the development of racial, ethnic, or cultural identities takes on heightened salience and may be at the core of their sense of self and identity. Furthermore, since a ubiquitous feature of life for minorities is moving among multiple settings, these researchers maintain that developing expertise in navigating behavioral norms, language, and discourse styles may well be a unique strength prevalent among these individuals (Mistry & Wu, 2010).

Mistry and Wu's (2010) focus on the psychological negotiation processes of ethnic identification, and their recognition of the complex interplay between self, identity, and diverse sociopolitical and historical contexts coincides with a social constructionist perspective on identity and identity-related processes. Social constructionist notions of identity characterize identity as a process of becoming, rather than a fixed state of being (Gergen, 2000). Similar to Gergen's view, Hall (1992) claims that "if we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or 'narrative of self' about ourselves" (p. 227). This quote eloquently reflects my personal views on identity-related processes, and the narrative aspects underlying these processes. For example, I perceive the articulation of my own Lebanese-Canadian identity as a dynamic process, and this process changes and responds according to shifts in the environment. Within the context of this study, my connection to my Lebanese heritage became more salient during the July 2006 war in Lebanon. Thus, I do not conceptualize and perceive of myself as a Lebanese-Canadian in the same way from day-to-day. The way I articulate, conceptualize and navigate aspects of my Lebanese-Canadian identity will remain to be a dynamic and evolving process. The narrative I also share with my peers about my experience as a Lebanese-Canadian will not be told in the same way each time it is shared with others.

I now refer to a few select studies that have been conducted over the past decade to further develop a contextual understanding of the relevant identity negotiation processes and issues concerning Lebanese and other Middle Eastern/Arab populations. Due to a limited amount of empirical research in this area, it is important to mention that four of the five studies below were conducted in the United States. Thus, the implications of these findings may not sufficiently contribute to a nuanced understanding of identity-related processes for this segment

of the Middle Eastern/Arab population in Canada, given the different political ideologies and systems of governance between these two nations.

Social relationships appear to impact how individuals approach and construct meaning out of their conceptualizations of ethnic identity. For example, Ajrouch (2000) conducted twenty semi-structured interviews with adolescent children of Lebanese immigrants in Michigan to discern the process of acculturation and the negotiation of ethnic identity. The adolescents' responses suggest that social relationships within an ethnic community are an important feature of positive ethnic identity negotiation, which has also been confirmed in previous research studies (e.g., Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Ajrouch (2000) maintains that the foundation of ethnic identity is not simply understood as an ascribed status, but rather a product of social ties among family and reference groups that facilitate personal identity development, adaptation, and meaning-making through enhanced feelings of group belongingness.

Ajrouch and Jamal (2007) have presented a more nuanced understanding of assimilation by clarifying how ethnic traits associated with descent and culture contribute to the announcement of a White identity among those of Middle Eastern/Arab ancestry in the United States. In this study, the researchers utilized a survey research design to investigate how ethnic traits of immigrant status, national origin, religious affiliation, and Arab-Americaness contributed to the announcement of a White identity. This study revealed a number of findings. Perhaps the most critical is that religion continues to shape immigrant experiences, particularly the ability to announce or denounce a White identity. For instance, those respondents who are affiliated with Islam, although legally classified as White, do not necessarily classify themselves as part of that privileged group. Also, Muslims were more likely to claim an *Other* identity and resist a White classification. When interpreting these findings however, it is important to

acknowledge the inherent complexities associated with labels such as “White identity” or “Middle Eastern/Arab ancestry”, and to what extent these labels are constructed along racial, geographical, or ancestral lines.

In terms of differences in national origin, Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians were more likely to secure a White identity for themselves. The researchers hypothesize that these three groups all resemble each other phenotypically, and are more likely to be Christian and have a longer history of migration to the United States, which may have influenced their announcement of a White identity classification. Another noteworthy finding is that the label *Arab American* does not reflect a homogenous attachment to the identity, that is, although the label implies homogeneity, differences do exist. For example, those respondents of Arab descent whose ethnic identity traits directly influence how they identify, how they represent themselves, and how they structure their social relations are more likely to identify as White (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007).

Ancestry is increasingly considered as an important dimension because of its significant implications for economic opportunities and the extent to which ancestry may signify cultural, social, and political incorporation into dominant US society (Bamshad, 2005). Dallo, Ajrouch, and Al-Snih (2008) recently investigated the use of the ancestry question in the United States census to examine changes in the demographic, socioeconomic, and acculturation profiles of Arab Americans over the last twenty years. The findings of this study uncovered heterogeneity on several key demographic, socioeconomic, and acculturation indicators among Arab Americans according to an Arab-only versus an Arab/non-Arab ancestry. For instance, individuals who identified with an Arab-only ancestry were less acculturated compared to those who identified with an Arab/non-Arab ancestry. Moreover, these researchers caution that the ancestry question is variable; individuals identifying with a particular ancestry changes over

time. In light of these findings however, it appears that Arab Americans follow similar acculturation trajectories of other distinct immigrant groups in the United States.

In Wald's (2005) study, he poses the question of why some ethnocultural communities cohere tightly around homeland political interests while others do not. He addresses this question by comparing the level of politicized ethnic identity displayed by three ethnocultural communities in the United States: Arab-American Christians, Arab-American Muslims, and American Jews. The model of "politicized ethnic identity" proposed by Wald included two broad sets of determinants: the strength of individual-level ties to the ethnic group, and the social conditions that attended each group's departure from the society of origin and its reception by the society of destination. The purpose of this study was to explore differences within and across these groups in the disposition to make United States homeland concerns central to their own political agendas. The results of this study demonstrated that ethnic attachment in the realm of culture, social interaction, and cognitive identification all contributed to a politicized ethnic identity. Also, Arab-American Christians were less likely than Arab-American Muslims or American Jews to assign political priority to the Middle East conflict. Wald speculated that religion is likely to play a key role because it is an important signifier of cultural difference. In other words, individuals who share the dominant religion of the host society are able to socially integrate by virtue of a shared societal norm, whereas outsiders are segregated in niche environments and are more likely to develop doubts about their membership in the national community.

Lay and Nguyen's (1998) earlier research on acculturative stress has indicated that, in addition to daily stressors experienced by native-born individuals, immigrants face acculturative daily hassles that can affect well-being well above and beyond the scope of stressful life events.

These occur due to the pressure encountered from the out-group and from maintaining cultural heritage and cohesion with the in-group. In a relevant Canadian-based study, Gaudet, Clement, and Deuzeman (2005) examined the relationships among ethnic identity, discrimination and adjustment through a model proposing acculturative daily hassles as mediating among these factors. It was hypothesized in Gaudet et al.'s study of 100 first and second generation Lebanese that these acculturative daily hassles would mediate the effects of ethnic identification and discrimination on psychological adjustment, specifically that strong identification to the in-group Lebanese identity and out-group Canadian identity would attenuate acculturative daily hassles experienced in each group. Participants completed a survey questionnaire measuring ethnic identification to their in-group and out-group, discrimination, hassles experienced with their in-group and out-group, depression, and self-esteem.

The results of Gaudet et al.'s (2005) study demonstrated that acculturative daily hassles served as a channelling point where both ethnic identification and discrimination either increased or decreased the number of experienced daily hassles, which then further influenced psychological adjustment. It was interesting to note however that these researchers observed a direct and positive relationship from Canadian identity to depression, so when a respondent felt like the out-group, there were higher levels of depression. The researchers speculate that this positive relationship may be due to an implied isolation from the Lebanese in-group. In a similar sense, the more respondents felt a Canadian identity reflected upon them, the less a Lebanese identity was reflected upon them. Also, the more respondents actually felt Canadian, the less they felt the Lebanese identity reflected upon them. In sum, these findings suggest that a strong attachment to the in-group Lebanese identity promoted a decrease in experienced acculturative

daily hassles, both in the in-group Lebanese identity and out-group Canadian identity, and this ultimately related to higher levels of adjustment.

Taken together, the collective findings from these research studies illustrate the range of differences experienced in the lives of Lebanese-Canadians and other Middle Eastern/Arab communities. Negotiating aspects of ethnic identity is a highly subjective process. Immigration status, ancestral origin, religion, daily hassles, and acculturative stress all seem to be intricately involved in the identity-negotiation processes undertaken by Lebanese-Canadians and members of other Middle Eastern/Arab communities.

Biculturalism

Sue and Sue (2003) use the term *biculturalism* to describe membership in two different ethnocultural groups, and bicultural identification has been found to impact individuals in different ways. For some, this may reflect a conflict in attempting to maintain continued membership in both ethnocultural groups (Gushue & Sciarra, 1995). Within family contexts, this conflict may begin to emerge as self-identified bicultural children become more invested in the dominant culture, whereas their parents may still be allied with the native culture. The following quote by a 19 year old second generation Indian-American poignantly captures the inherent challenges in negotiating her own bicultural identity:

Being bicultural makes me feel special and confused. Special because it adds to my identity: I enjoy my Indian culture, I feel that it is rich in tradition, morality, and beauty; confused because I have been in many situations where I feel being in both cultures is not an option. My cultures have very different views on things like dating and marriage. I feel like you have to choose one or the other (Haritatos & Benet-Martinez, 2002, p. 2).

Early research in the area of biculturalism has focused primarily on the developmental models of second-culture acquisition (e.g., LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993). Although five models have been proposed (assimilation, acculturation, alternation, multicultural, and fusion), research has suggested that the alternation model of second-culture acquisition has been most effective in facilitating the psychological functioning of individuals operating within two cultures. In other words, alternating between both cultures and maintaining active relationships within each culture assists the individual in acquiring and maintaining competency in both cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Specifically, the alternation model operates under the basic premise that individuals can indeed strive toward a sense of belonging in two cultures without having to compromise their sense of ethnic identity because they have the ability to determine the degree to which they will affiliate with each of the two cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993).

One of the particular strengths of the alternation model was that it implies that individuals who effectively alternate between two cultures may possess an innate capacity for higher cognitive functioning and mental health, in comparison to the other four models (Garcia, 1983; Rashid, 1984; Rogler, Cortes & Malgady, 1991). This is attributed to a process called “code switching” which describes the “sensitive process of signaling different social and contextual relations through language” (Saville-Troike, 1981, p. 3). Contemporary research studies that have explored the role of language as a signaling cue in the code switching process have suggested that bicultural identity scripts may be stored as separate knowledge structures, and each structure becomes activated by its associated language (Ross, Xum, & Wilson, 2002). In a similar vein, proficiency in both the dominant and ancestral language and the activation of these languages in different social contexts has been related to a more positive attitude towards one’s ethnic heritage and bicultural experiences (Imbens-Bailey, 1996).

Veronica Benet-Martinez and her colleagues have made significant contributions to the existing body of scholarly research on biculturalism by introducing a quantitative measure of Bicultural Identity Integration (BII; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). This measure was developed to better capture the variations among bicultural individuals and the extent to which they perceive their mainstream and ethnocultural identities as compatible or integrated, rather than oppositional or difficult to integrate. In prior experimental studies, the BII measure has been found to moderate cultural frame-switching behaviour (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000), and was positively associated with personality traits such as openness to experience and low neuroticism (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Bicultural individuals who typically score high on the BII appear to identify with both cultural systems without internalizing their intersection as conflictual. In addition, these individuals also display higher levels of identification with, and linguistic fluency in the mainstream culture (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005).

Chen, Benet-Martinez, and Harris (2008) have recently investigated how increased immigration-based and globalization-based acculturation impacts the formation of bicultural identity, bilingualism and psychological adjustment among members of diverse ethnocultural groups in multicultural societies. Chen et al. (2008) distinguish between globalization-based acculturation from immigration-based acculturation by noting that the central issue for globalization-based acculturation is the selective incorporation of cultural elements from various cultural worldviews and practices to which a person had been exposed during his or her life. Immigration-based acculturation, on the other hand, refers to the addition of a new identity of the receiving culture to the identity of the ethnic culture. The findings of this recent study lend further support to earlier research findings that have generally stated that “biculturalism is

a complex and multidimensional phenomenon: there is not just one way of being bicultural” (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997, p. 19). Bicultural individuals select various methods of integrating their two cultures, including behaving biculturally in all situations, or shifting their behaviors to be consistent with the cultural context of the situation (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

In their study on biculturalism and context, Schwartz and Zamboanga (2008) contend that biculturalism is most adaptive in a bicultural environment. For example, large and diverse cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto all receive large numbers of immigrants, and as a result, being able to navigate within multiple cultures provides a distinct advantage. On the other hand, in more monocultural areas, such the American Midwest, being bicultural may actually be a disadvantage, especially when a bicultural individual has created a blended culture of her or his own that combines elements of native and host cultures.

The Impact of News Media

Many would agree that the so-called information age in which we live has enabled us to easily access multiple options for up-to-the-date news broadcasts from all over the world. However, cable news media and other related mass media sources have long been accused of presenting the general public with biased and often misleading information (Morris, 2007). Contemporary research has begun to explore the impact of cable news media in terms of perceived media bias, cable news exposure, and their subsequent effects on the formation of political attitudes. For example, Vallone, Ross, and Lepper (1985) describe the *hostile media phenomenon* as the tendency to label political news as antagonistic towards one’s own views. In their experimental analyses, these researchers observed that, when evaluating the news coverage of the 1982 Beirut, Lebanon massacre, both pro-Israeli and pro-Arab participants interpreted the

same news stories about this event as hostile to their own personal opinions. The social psychological theory of social judgment, when applied to better understand the hostile media phenomenon, supports the perspective that individuals tend to evaluate the legitimacy of media coverage from personal latitude of acceptance (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Thus, media statements that are considered agreeable and congruent to an individual's attitudes fall within the acceptable latitude of acceptance, while counterstatements fall into the latitude of rejection (Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1994; Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

When evaluating the implications of these findings, Morris (2007) suggests that as negative perceptions towards the media increase, individuals will continue to take advantage of perhaps more diverse, albeit fragmented, news environments to find sources of news that better fit with their own political views. He further emphasizes that unlike the past, where homogenized cable news provided the general public with a greater ability to hear rhetoric from both sides of a political debate, our current choices for cable news media may only serve to exacerbate the discrepancies in how our political world is depicted from the perspectives of different cable news media sources.

In a similar vein, Kim (2005) recently observed how the use and disuse of contextual primes in dynamic cable news environments relate to the attitudes and judgments of US President George H. W. Bush's handling of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Drawing from news priming effects theory, which refers to "changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 73), Kim's study extended beyond the pattern of short-term accessibility effects that tend to occur in response to a contextual prime (in this case, the "air war"). Instead, the results revealed how attitudes towards military action or diplomatic solutions impacted subsequent judgments of the president's performance and

handling of the war. The findings of this study demonstrate the strength of associations between attitudes and subsequent judgments. For instance, the association between attitudes favouring a diplomatic solution and judgments were stronger than those between attitudes favouring military action and the same subsequent judgments, despite the abundance of pro-war primes presented in news media discourse.

Furthermore, Dunn, Moore, and Nosek (2005) recently queried how linguistic differences in reporting impact how people perceive, understand, and make judgments about terrorism content in news media. They performed a content analysis of newspaper articles describing violence in Iraq, which later revealed that words implying destruction and deleterious intent were typically used in reference to or association with Iraq, whereas more benign words were used in reference to the United States or its allies. Dunn et al. (2005) posit that word usage helps to create cognitive schemas that guide individuals' perceptions of violence as terrorism or patriotism, thereby impacting their attitudes towards and memory for violent events. From a social constructionist perspective, the findings from this study would imply that multiple and diverse interpretations and meanings of events can be constructed and derived from news media. The language used in news media appears to be an important guiding mechanism in the creation of individual perceptions, attitudes and memory for violent events.

Anti-Arab Sentiment

Prejudice and discrimination directed towards Arabs is not a new phenomenon. According to Johnson (1992), anti-Arab sentiment in the United States increased during the Persian Gulf War, and as it became apparent that the perpetrators of September 11th, 2001 were connected to an Islamic extremist group, there have been reported increases in the rekindled prejudice and discrimination directed towards individuals of Arab or Arab-appearing ethnicity,

especially within the United States. The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC; 2001) noted that, in the weeks following September 11th, there were 27 confirmed cases where flight passengers of Arab ethnicity were banned from flight. Also, the ADC reported increased incidents of public harassment, hate mail, and workplace discrimination directed towards individuals of Arab ethnicity.

In an effort to advance current social psychological research on anti-Arab prejudice, Oswald (2005) investigated the role of threats, social categories, and personal ideologies in the espoused anti-Arab reactions following the events of September 11th in the United States. Oswald notes that the role of threat was manifested in the formation of the Office of Homeland Security, in addition to the development of a terror-alert code system and increased security in airports and large public venues. In this light, it appears possible that both perceived and realistic threats may have contributed to an increased need for individuals to distinguish themselves from the out-group, namely individuals of Arab or Arab-appearing descent. This differentiation process was often exhibited in terms of increased in-group loyalty as well as increased derogation and hostility directed at the out-group.

Similarly, the configuration of social categories in the United States was impacted by the infiltration of media discourse aimed at voicing a strong, collective, American national identity. For example, Oswald (2005) refers to the widely displayed symbols of American patriotism in the media and to political statements made by President Bush that reinforced the distinction between “us” versus “them” in American society. Moreover, the social and political climate in the United States at this time has been thought to have heightened the salience of an American national identity over any other social and group identities.

The consideration of individual differences was proposed by Oswald (2005) to ascertain the extent to which *just-world beliefs* and social dominance orientations have been associated with prejudicial responses directed at members of the out-group. *Just-world beliefs*, which reflect a philosophy that one gets what one deserves, are thought to characterize individuals who would be more likely to denigrate members of an out-group as a means of rationalizing intergroup injustices. The fact that the events of September 11th took the lives of many innocent civilians might have violated an individual's sense of a just world, thereby leaving a strong sense of justified retaliation for anti-Arab reactions (Oswald). According to social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), societies develop ideologies that minimize intergroup conflict and maintain group inequality, as well as legitimize group discrimination. Legitimizing myths in society are developed when beliefs, opinions, and personal ideologies are constructed to provide a moral and intellectual justification for status differences and the domination of one social group over others.

An important, but largely unanswered question in the research literature in this area has asked how the climate following the events of September 11th has impacted Arab Americans living in the United States. In this respect, Padela and Heisler's (2010) study is noteworthy because it one of the only representative, population-based investigations of the association between perceived abuse and discrimination following September 11th and the psychological functioning and health status among Arab Americans. These researchers used survey questionnaires administered to a representative sample of Arab Americans in Michigan to obtain data on a number of psychological and health-related factors. The main findings reveal that self-reports of post-September 11th abuse and discrimination were associated with lower levels of happiness and worse self-reported health status. 62% of Muslims reported substantial stress, and

Muslim religious affiliation exhibited the strongest association with stress than any other demographic variable.

Ethnocultural and Religious Motivations for Hate Crimes in Canada

From 2001 to 2002, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, in collaboration with twelve major Canadian police forces, conducted a pilot survey of hate crime to assess the feasibility of collecting national police-reported hate crime statistics (Statistics Canada, 2004). Survey findings were publically released in early June 2004. These survey results revealed that a total of 928 hate crime incidents were reported in Canada between 2001 and 2002, and just over half of these incidents were perceived to be motivated primarily by race or ethnicity (57%). These findings were believed to be linked to the short-lived increase in the number of hate crimes reported following the events of September 11th, 2001 in the United States. Specifically, Canadian police reported a total of 232 hate crimes involving race or ethnicity during the two months following September 11th, as compared to the 67 hate crimes of the same nature reported during the same two month period in 2000 (Statistics Canada, 2004).

Another significant motivation for hate crimes appeared to be religion, where nearly 43 percent of all hate crimes incidents reported during this time involved Jewish and/or Muslim targets. Moreover, results gathered from 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey demonstrated that 11 percent of visible minority Canadians aged 15 and over were concerned about being a victim of an ethnoculturally-motivated hate crime. In particular, those members of the Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim communities expressed levels of concern that surpassed the 5 percent of all Canadians aged 15 and over who shared these concerns (Statistics Canada, 2002). Thus, it appears that differences in ethnicity and religion continue to be a source of contention in Canadian society. Despite the atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance imbued in our national reputation, these

findings suggest that our nation is also not immune to these issues, particularly in light of threatening geopolitical events whereby religious and ethnic differences are sensationalized by the media.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the relevant research literature and theoretical background in the areas of ethnic identity development, biculturalism, the impact of news media, anti-Arab sentiment, ethnocultural and religious motivations for hate crimes in Canada. This research has informed the development of my research question and the methodology for my study, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter I describe the methodology used to address my research question “*What are the subjectively constructed identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada at the time of the July 2006 war in Lebanon?*” This includes a discussion of the general paradigm in which this research study is situated, as well as the research design and its ontological and epistemological assumptions. The participant sample, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures are presented in the Research Method section.

Research Paradigm

Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2002) are two prominent scholars who have made monumental contributions to the qualitative research field. I have highlighted some of their contributions below to better elucidate how working within a qualitative research paradigm corresponds with the nature of my inquiry and research methodology. A qualitative research paradigm is appropriate for this particular study because working within this paradigm will provide me with the exploratory space I need to construct a contextualized understanding of the experiences of the July 2006 war for Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada. Two defining characteristics of qualitative research paradigms are open-mindedness and curiosity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002), which I believe are reflected in the development of my research interests and particular approach to understanding individuals’ life experiences. A qualitative research paradigm facilitates an exploration of a wide array of aspects of the social world, including the understandings, experiences, and imaginations of research participants in their social context. Researchers adopting a qualitative research methodology strive to produce full, contextual understandings of phenomena based upon rich, nuanced and detailed data (Mason, 2002). This

paradigm also facilitates an in-depth understanding of social processes, discourses and relationships, and of the meanings attached to these phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002).

In essence, a qualitative research paradigm provides researchers with an opportunity to explore how people understand their experiences and actions. In doing so, this necessitates a highly active level of engagement by the researcher in the intellectual, practical, physical and emotional aspects of the research process. To support this level of engagement, qualitative researchers engage in the process of self-reflexive practice, whereby they reflect critically on what they are doing in order to recognize how their thoughts, actions, decisions, assumptions and biases all shape their particular approach to research (Mason, 2002). The process of self-reflexivity differs from the objective, impersonal stance espoused in quantitative social science research in that it invites the researcher to explore his or her interpretative lens, manifestations of power, and positionality as they relate to the particular research method used (Pillow, 2003). Moreover, the extent to which the researcher is physically and emotionally invested in his or her role in the research process is contingent upon the particular methodological approach used in the study, which can range from an observer role to that of a collaborator or emancipator (Mason, 2002).

Research Design

A narrative inquiry approach was employed for this study, and the suitability of a narrative approach and accompanying reasons for choosing a narrative-based inquiry are outlined below. A narrative, in this particular research design context, is a story of events and individual experiences, recounted most often in a chronological fashion for the purpose of understanding, conveying, and creating the meaning of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative story-telling provides access to the richness of an experience or encounter,

which includes the situations, perceptions, and feelings that guide the individual, and through the storytelling process, individuals can often experience transformative healing and growth (Stuhlmiller, 2001). This storytelling experience emphasizes that as human beings, we create order and construct meaning in particular contexts, and thus, narrative research has been frequently used as the organizing principle for researching human action and experiences (Kohler-Reissman, 1993). Narrative research designs have also been used within contemporary identity theory to further elaborate upon the various aspects of identity and the question of belongingness (Kraus, 2006). One fundamental assumption of a narrative approach is that individuals give meaning to their lives through the stories they tell, and therefore, it is appropriate to use a narrative research design to study how individuals construct meaning of life experiences (Oliver, 1998).

Central Features of Narrative Research

One of the central features that distinguish narrative research designs from other research designs is that narrative researchers are most interested in exploring the experiences of individuals, and seek to understand and represent these experiences through the narratives and stories individuals live and tell (Creswell, 2005). Another feature focuses on the voice or voices narrative researchers use as they interpret and represent the voices of their participants (Chase, 2005). Since most of the information about the July 2006 war in Lebanon has been disseminated through the media, it seemed appropriate to utilize a narrative research design to co-create the voices and of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada in order to understand how they described the impact of the July 2006 war, and how the media and current socio-political context in Canada affected them during this time.

Humans in all known cultures use language and tell stories. Stories are often used to describe and understand emotional upheavals and language is used in a powerful way to organize and describe complex emotional experiences (Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006). Narrative research is centered on how actions and the subsequent meanings of these actions are understood. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) caution that without a narrative history of the participant, the significance or meanings attached to actions or signs remain unknown. Thus, there is an interpretive pathway that occurs between action and meaning in relation to narrative histories.

Characteristics of Narratives

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe life as being “filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities” (p. 17). Arvay (2002) states that “the narrative is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; the history of the narrative begins with the history of mankind. There does not exist, and never has existed a people without narrative” (p. 207). Narratives are often viewed as meaning-making strategies to be used by individuals; they also tend to be highly personalized and offer important insights into the storyteller as well as the story (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Therefore, providing Lebanese-Canadians with an opportunity to honour their narratives encourages them to become active agents in their own meaning-making processes. In doing so, this type of active participation can elicit newfound revelations and insights in relation to the narrative itself, the life and culture from which it came, and the participant/storyteller. As a co-constructor of these narratives, I assumed a role in listening to participants and encouraging dialogue throughout the interview process to elicit deeper and contextualized understandings of their experiences.

Philosophical Underpinnings of Narrative Research

Narrative research is rooted in interpretive hermeneutics and phenomenology, and one of the major philosophical aims of a narrative research approach is to preserve the complexity of what it means to be human and to situate observations of people and phenomena within society, history, or time (Josselson, 2006). A hermeneutic circle has often been used as a metaphor to capture this interpretive research process. In this circle, the research participant, who tells a self-story or personal story, is placed at the center; the researcher, who reads and interprets this story, is placed in the center of his or her own interpretation of that story. In effect, the two circles overlap to the extent that the researcher is able to weave his or her way into the participant's own self-story or personal story. Through this interpretative, hermeneutic process, researchers can often form interpretations of their participants' actions that the participants themselves would not necessarily give, mainly because the researchers are now in a position to view patterns and relationships that the participant may not see or be aware of (Denzin, 2002). Narratives are also considered as interpretative themselves – “they do not speak for themselves or provide direct access to other times, places, or cultures” (Kohler-Reissman, 1993, p. 22). Thus, the primacy of interpretation is a major philosophical hallmark of narrative research designs. This raises an important question concerning the quality of interpretations. I addressed the quality of my interpretations by employing data credibility strategies and practices that are commonly used in qualitative research approaches (e.g., Creswell, 2005) to articulate strong interpretations that are grounded in the data and appropriate within the context of this research study. I have addressed this point in further detail at the end of this chapter.

Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions of Narrative Inquiry

The ontological and epistemological assumptions governing narrative inquiry cannot be understood without first surveying the nexus between constructivism, social constructionism, and narrative theoretical frameworks. Despite the distinctive foundational tenets that describe these theories, they also overlap and are comparable in regards to their views on truth and reality (Gergen, 2001; Hoskins, 2002). All three approaches promote the notion that truth is based on contingent, transient, partial, and situated realities, and at any given time, multiple versions of reality can exist, since these versions are socially constructed and shaped by individual, temporal and sociohistorical factors (Arvay, 2002). Additionally, these three theories all claim that the self has agency, and operates within self-systems and cultural systems, and makes meaning by contrasting differences both dialogically and through human activity (Arvay, 2002; Hoskins, 2002).

Research Method

In this section, I provide details regarding my participant sample and recruitment process. I also discuss my data collection method and analysis procedures.

Participants. The target population for participant recruitment was Lebanese-Canadians who were either born in Canada and currently reside in Canada, or who have maintained permanent residence in Canada for at least 7 years prior to their participation in this research study. I chose my hometown community of Edmonton, Alberta for recruiting participants because of my knowledge and access to potential participants. According to 2006 Canadian Census data, 8935 respondents from Edmonton endorsed Lebanese as their ethnic origin (Statistics Canada, 2006). Therefore, these data reveal that there is a sizable Lebanese

community in Edmonton, and it may have likely increased since the 2006 Census was completed.

The primary recruitment approach used in this study involved obtaining access to a participant pool through the Edmonton Druze Community Association (EDCA), located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (please see www.edmontondruze.com). This religious-based community association provides various social networking opportunities and religious instruction for Lebanese-Canadians in the Edmonton area. A sub-sector of this community association, the Young Edmonton Druze Association (YEDA), was recently developed to introduce the younger generation of Lebanese-Canadians to their ethnocultural heritage, including their religious faith, and to foster social ties among these individuals in an effort to promote membership and participation in the Lebanese-Canadian community. As a self-identified member of the Lebanese community and EDCA, I directed my recruitment efforts towards this specific organization.

A letter was sent to the Edmonton Druze Community Association (EDCA) to request permission to advertise and recruit participants (please see Appendix A). After receiving written approval, three primary recruitment strategies were employed: 1) an invitation to participate was distributed via email through the EDCA email listserv; b) poster advertisements were displayed in the EDCA office, and 3) word-of-mouth. Please refer to Appendix B and C respectively for samples of these recruitment materials. All participants contacted me directly to express their interest in participating in this research study. I was contacted by a total of eight individuals who expressed their interest in this research study; however, only five inquiries led to active participation and involvement.

The final participant sample in this study was comprised of four males and one female, most of who had heard about my research through word-of-mouth. Four participants lived in the Edmonton area, and only one resided in Victoria, British Columbia. The first interview conducted for the purpose of this research study took place in Victoria and was intended as a pilot interview to check interview process and viability. However, because the data was similar to subsequent interviews, and the interview question and process remained the same, this first interview was later included as participant data in this study. The age range for the sample was from the mid-20's to early 50's. Personal details have been omitted or modified to protect participant anonymity and confidentiality within this relatively small community.

Narrative Interviews. The data collection procedure used in this study was narrative interviews. The primary interview question posed to elicit these data from the participants was “*Can you tell me your story of being Lebanese-Canadian during the July 2006 war in Lebanon?*” Kvale (1996) notes that the personal contact and the continuously new insights and learning into the participant's lived world make narrative interviews a particularly enriching experience. I used narrative interviews so that I could glean an understanding of all the interrelated themes embedded in the nature of my inquiry, such as identity, group membership, context, meaning, and experiences. Narrative interviews often include pre-identified themes to be covered, but they also allow for an openness to change of sequences or questions as appropriate within the interview setting (Kvale, 1996). This openness is especially important as new narratives are constructed within the context of the interview. I adopted a collaborative researcher stance in my interviews with participants. The creation of narratives from the interviews was interactive and co-constructed with each participant and myself in the role of a

co-narrator. Thus, the narratives that were constructed within the interview process were co-constructed and co-experienced by both the participant and myself.

One interview took place in Victoria, British Columbia, and four interviews were conducted in Edmonton, Alberta. They were arranged in collaboration with participants on an individual basis, depending on their academic, work, or personal commitments. Whenever possible, participants' preferences for interview dates, times, and locations were accommodated. The venues used to conduct the interviews included an unoccupied classroom at a university campus, the primary investigator's private residence, and in one instance, the participant's home. In accordance with the University of Victoria's ethical regulations for human subjects' research, utmost consideration was given for participants' safety, privacy, and travel time to and from interview venues. Please see Appendix D for a sample of the participant consent form.

The length of interviews ranged from approximately 35 minutes to 1.5 hours. To ensure that my primary research interview question was addressed, I placed an index card that contained my question within eyesight of each participant prior to beginning each interview. I then invited each participant to briefly review two news articles to help set the context and elicit their thoughts on the July 2006 war in Lebanon. These two articles included Peter Worthington's newspaper article entitled "Convenient Canadians" (2006) and Neil Finkelstein's article entitled "Measured Response or War Crime?" (2006). I chose these two articles because of how important I felt it was to address the terms used in news media to describe aspects related to the July 2006 war (i.e., "measured response", "convenient Canadians"), and the influence of media portrayals on how participants perceived themselves as Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada during this time. The term "*convenient Canadians*" was first introduced in media discourse during the July 2006 war in Lebanon. This term initially described an individual of Lebanese

origin, but more recently, any member of a diverse ethnocultural group, who is perceived as residing in Canada only out of convenience. Israel's retaliation against Hezbollah was described by Prime Minister Stephen Harper as a "*measured response*" in the news media. Both of these terms elicited comments, reactions, and opinions from participants in relation to how they perceived themselves as Lebanese-Canadians and what they perceived as unfavourable media portrayals of their community during this time.

Two of the five participants made brief notes upon reviewing these articles to remind themselves of important content to mention during the course of the interview. Other questions and statements made by me during the interview served to facilitate the interview process, encourage dialogue, and to clarify meaning. Some of these questions and comments included: *Are there any other thoughts as we're talking about this that you'd like to share before we end?* and *A little bit of what I'm hearing is...*, and *I just wanted to check with you about what you meant by...*

Transcription. Each interview was recorded using a digital audio-recording device and the interviews were manually transcribed by me. Each interview transcript was assigned an identification code that was also applied to all corresponding electronic and paper files. To honour each participant's authentic voice, the interviews were transcribed verbatim to the best of my ability. I referred to Oliver, Sorovich, and Mason's (2005) research to help guide my transcription practices, and in turn, became more aware of how pronunciation, slang, diction, grammar, and ethnic accents affect the way participants are understood and the information they share. When a word or phrase was unclear, it was labelled as so in the interview transcript. Verbal encouragers, such as "mhmm," "yeah," and "ok" were included as a separate line spoken by me, the interviewer. To respect each participant's authentic voice, all grammatical errors were

maintained in the interview transcript. Pauses and articulation of passing thoughts or statements (eg., “as it became more...it was the last”) were identified by a series of dots (.....) in the interview transcript. After each transcript was completed, it was sent to participants for comment and feedback. Participants were also asked to clarify any incoherent words or statements used in the initial interview at this time. All five participants confirmed that their respective interview transcripts were accurate and trustworthy accounts of their interviews. The later construction of each participant’s narrative (see chapter 4) however, required me to make minor editing changes to remove undue pauses and correct grammatical errors for legibility purposes.

Data Analysis. Three levels of data analysis were employed in this study. The procedures for conducting each stage of analysis were informed by Mason’s (2002) approach to organizing and indexing qualitative data, Creswell’s (2005) coding and analyzing interview transcript data, and by the analysis procedures used by Dr. Anne Marshall’s research team (Marshall & team, 2010). The first level of analysis occurred following the completion of each interview. Brief post-interview impressions were documented immediately by myself. These impressions were written in a chronological manner and provided a quick snapshot of the general overview of the entire interview process. It also allowed me to quickly identify any major content areas and general themes discussed in each interview.

Participants also provided background details about themselves, their families, and work life that were either shared at the beginning or integrated throughout the interview. Some of these details were used to compose a brief profile of each participant while upholding their right to privacy and confidentiality. These profiles appear at the beginning of each participant’s narrative, as observed in the next chapter. All participants referred to three broad content areas in their interviews. These included: 1) commentary on the July 2006 war; 2) the media coverage of

the July 2006 war, and 3) their perceptions of themselves as Lebanese-Canadians. These three content areas became the organizing framework for the within participant analysis.

The second level of analysis was *within participants* and involved multiple readings of the interview transcripts, one participant at a time. In this study, the narratives were condensed portrayals of the participant interviews. This process involved an in-depth review of each interview transcript in order to identify groupings of phrases or statements that best reflected the three broad content areas. These groupings were identified primarily by main words, statements, or phrases used by the participants, for example, “my identity”, or “the news media really showed only one side of issue”. I constructed these narratives from the perspectives of the participant while preserving their own voice. Phrases and sentences included in the narratives closely mirrored what was shared in each interview transcript; however, minor editing changes were made to correct grammatical errors for legibility purposes.

The third level of analysis consisted of identifying themes *across* the five participant interviews. This level of analysis involved a series of steps. The first step was to read through each transcript and identify key words, phrases, and references. For example, “Canadian government has a duty to rescue” was one such phrase that was highlighted in one participant’s transcript. The second step involved assigning a code to a set of similar key words, phrases, or references for each participant’s transcript. For example, all key words, phrases and references related to the Canadian government were coded as blue in each participant’s transcript. The number of codes identified in each participant’s transcript varied depending on the length of the interview and on the content discussed. The number of codes identified across participant transcripts ranged from 9 to 23.

Once the codes for all transcripts were identified, I generated a listing of these codes in preparation for the next step. Codes that were similar to and shared by at least 3 participants were grouped together into sub-themes and major themes (see Table 1. in Chapter Five). Each sub-theme included several different codes. For example, ethnic pride and the Lebanese community were two codes that were grouped together to formulate the Lebanese Heritage sub-theme. This sub-theme was then later categorized under the major Identity theme. In total, four major themes were then identified. Each of these four themes is discussed in Chapter Five.

Researcher Reflexivity. The nature of this thesis research has prompted me to navigate among several roles and identities, including graduate student, researcher and Lebanese-Canadian woman. The interactions among these different roles and identities were challenging at times, and my awareness of these challenges was most salient as I began my participant recruitment process. I observed that my Lebanese identity could not be separated from my role as a researcher, although at the time I felt that it should be, because of my graduate training and perspective on how to conduct research. I soon learned that my Lebanese-ness was all that the participants saw in me. At each phase of my data collection process, my Lebanese identity was salient. This contributed to a strong sense of connectedness I felt to my Lebanese heritage and to my experience of working on this thesis research study. The negotiation processes that I undertook in conducting this research has advanced my understanding and connection to the Lebanese community. This has also enabled me to empathize more deeply with others, particularly other women who are challenged by maintaining a strong connection to their heritage and a high level of educational attainment.

I utilized a reflexive journal to document my personal reactions, observations, queries, thoughts, and insights over the course of this research process. I used my journal in the early

stages of developing my research study to articulate my thoughts and struggles related to identifying a clear thesis topic and the motivation for conducting this research. I also used my journal to document some of the challenges I encountered in conceptualizing the breadth of my research inquiry. While gathering relevant literature for this study, I became particularly fascinated by the political aspects of the identity articulation process and my journaling process allowed me to critically examine how I have conceptualized my own identity as a Lebanese-Canadian. *How have I arrived at defining myself as a Lebanese-Canadian?* In the later stages of my research, my reflexive journal writing helped me become mindful of the impact of my own subjectivity throughout this research process.

Data Credibility. Through the process of data collection and analysis, I employed the following strategies to ensure the accuracy and credibility of all relevant data sources for the purpose of this research study. Following the strategies outlined by Creswell (2005), I adopted a triangulation approach to corroborate data from my reflexive journal and from participant interviews to ascertain evidence of the major themes discussed in this research study. I also utilized a member checking strategy whereby I requested that each participant carefully review his or her interview transcript and accompanying narrative to ensure the descriptions are realistic and complete accounts of their experience. At this time, any unclear wording in the interview transcripts were addressed and corrected.

Once all the data was analyzed, participants were contacted once again and provided with an update regarding the sub-themes and major themes that had been identified in the across participant analysis. This enabled a second opportunity for participants to confirm the accuracy and credibility of these data. It was important to implement these actions to verify that the

interpretations and findings were grounded in these data, and the identified themes were appropriate within the context of this research.

Another important feature of this process involved reflexive journal writing. This writing process was helpful because I shared a common ethnocultural heritage with participants, and writing about my thoughts and insights helped me become mindful of the impact of my own subjectivity throughout this research process. Thus, during the participant recruitment stage, my reflexive journal writing helped me envision my particular interview approach with participants. I reflected on whether I should speak any Arabic with my participants during the interview process, and to what extent other aspects of my Lebanese heritage should be made salient in order to develop rapport. I also contemplated how to manage my reactions to their statements or opinions. For example, some participants concluded their statements with “.....right?” or “.....you know what I mean”, accompanied by a knowing glance or smile. These circumstances prompted me to articulate what I perceived to be the underlying assumptions made because I shared a common ethnocultural heritage with my participants. *Because I was also Lebanese, did they think I would fully endorse their views? Will I be perceived as less Lebanese if I express disagreement or concern about their statements or opinions?* I also was curious whether the participants themselves thought I was expecting specific responses because of our shared heritage. *Did they only share the views that they thought I wanted to hear as a Lebanese-Canadian?* Hence, I employed critical and reflexive questioning in my journal writing, which is a consistent practice in qualitative research approaches, to carefully consider these issues in relation to my interactions with participants. It was important that these strategies were employed to strengthen the methodological rigour of this study and to help minimize any assumptions made due to shared life experiences as Lebanese-Canadians with the participants.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, narrative inquiry was introduced as the primary research design for exploring the research question. Detailed descriptions of the participant sample and recruitment process, research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures were included.

Chapter Four: Results

In this chapter, I included the five constructed identity narratives from my participants. Each narrative is introduced by a formal header identifying each participant's story and brief background profile. Selected personal details and background information for each participant have been omitted or modified to protect their anonymity and privacy. The narratives presented in this chapter were ordered according to participant involvement in this study and were constructed according to three major headings: 1) Commentary on the July 2006 War, 2) Media, and 3) Identity.

R's Story

R is a male in his mid 20's from Ontario and is now living and attending university in British Columbia. He first came to Canada in 2003 to continue his postsecondary education, but doing so meant that he had to leave behind his family in Lebanon. R speaks English, Arabic, and French fluently. He has been living mostly on his own in Canada for approximately seven years, but has relatives back in Ontario that he visits occasionally. R plans to return to Lebanon once he is completed his education.

Commentary on the July 2006 War

I found it difficult being in Canada while the war was going on in Lebanon because of having to deal with people from Israel and Southern Lebanon here in Canada. When it comes to your family's safety and country is at risk, you have to consider the politics of the situation, and this is something you can't run away from. I feel drawn to it because of the interactions with other Middle Easterners or Lebanese who are living in Canada. Compared to Lebanon, here in Canada I had to deal with Arabs, Israelis, and other Lebanese with different political views, and

these interactions challenged me to have to accommodate all these political opinions in a sensitive manner, and not create tensions in order to keep my friendships alive and my ties with the Lebanese community and Middle Eastern community strong.

Media

I felt stressed about witnessing the news coverage of the war in Lebanon via the Canadian media because of the pictures and images on the news. The news coverage made it seem that the whole country was at war, and that everybody was out of food or supplies or medical attention, which I know was true for some parts of Lebanon, but for my hometown, from the outside looking in, I felt like the worst has happened, and that makes matters worse.

I felt uneasy that the media was portraying such a bad image of Lebanon, my country, and of Lebanese-Canadians in general – that we're using Canada only for peace and refuge during times of emergency. I was grateful for the Canadian government to have provided such a peaceful refuge and for their rescue efforts to help evacuate Lebanese-Canadians during the July 2006 war in Lebanon. I was also privileged to be living in Canada, such a peaceful country, especially when I look at people living in Lebanon in fear and under the occupation of Israel.

The media's introduction of the term "convenient Canadians" created an issue of pride for me, in that it gave the idea that Lebanese people are mooching on the Canadian government, that they're "freeloaders", where in fact most Lebanese people are hardworking and are very successful in businesses all over the world – "wherever they go they produce". The term "freeloaders" didn't reflect well on the Lebanese community in Canada, and it hurt just hearing this in the news all the time. I thought it was unfair because only a small fraction of Lebanese people who own a Canadian passport but who don't live in Canada use it as a convenience, as a

“can be exit”, but for the rest of Lebanese-Canadians, they are hard workers and contribute as much as any other Canadian to society.

I thought the Canadian government had a duty to rescue those Canadians that were vacationing in Lebanon, but at the same time, a lot of the Lebanese who are “getting a free ride” should not be getting this kind of preferential treatment because they have not contributed as much to the country of Canada as other people have. They didn’t pay any taxes because they haven’t lived in Canada, and they are just choosing the Canadian government as a plan B, so when things go bad in Lebanon, they just choose the Canadian government to rescue them. But at the same time, for the Canadians just vacationing there, they shouldn’t be stuck there because of this.

Identity

I initially saw myself as an outsider in Canada because of how Lebanese were portrayed in the media during the July 2006 war in Lebanon – as “freeloaders”. The bad image associated with being a Lebanese-Canadian at that time didn’t help matters, and another idea that had been introduced by the media was the terrorist emphasis put towards Hezbollah, so people started to associate Lebanese with the term terrorism.

My perspective on the July 2006 war is shaped by my strong ties to my family back home, and my perspective may be different than other Lebanese-Canadians’ perspectives, especially those that have lived in Canada for a long time and have minimal ties with Lebanon. This experience has made me think about life in general, my parents, and what is the best decision for me and for them in the future – to leave Lebanon and just settle down somewhere else, or to stay in Canada and make a living here, or to return to Lebanon and take care of my parents just in case something like this happens again. I also think about whether I should choose

my academic or career pursuits, my future, being with family and helping them in a time of need, or even bringing them over to Europe or Canada or another safer place.

Z's Story

Z is a male in his mid 30's and has completed advanced educational training in economics. He currently lives and works in Edmonton (other details omitted because of confidentiality purposes).

Commentary on the July 2006 War

I felt that the "so-called hard Canadians" still think we're not the hard Canadians, we're not the tough strong core Canadians, and we are still half and half. When we leave our country (Lebanon), we don't leave just to leave for good, we leave to come back, because our culture requires that and maybe our blood is like this. We have a lot of history and history is always attractive, and it's a part of the past, and carries a lot of the past, which is the nostalgia in people's mind, it's always to go back that direction.

Media

The amount of complaints that were received about the Lebanese in Lebanon was not perceived well by the community. What if anything happens to Chilean or to Spanish origins or to any Europeans, what does the government do? The reaction of the Canadian government in bringing people back to Canada was a slow process because they had to ask Israel permission to get the ships close to different places or different ports to be able to load these people or get them on a ship. That was a diplomatic process that takes time too. One thing we need to understand was that it was very difficult and tough on the children to have the experience in this period of time. The fear that they never seen or heard an airplane hitting or pounding in any areas. The

fear that was created, that really affected the new generations. The amount of convincing to get them back there is not simple, so that also must be taken into consideration and the picture of the result of the war on Lebanese-Canadians.

Identity

Canada is a multicultural society and we have a lot of links to families in our cultures, the ties are always there, so that's why they (the mainstream Canadian media) can't understand the purpose. The Lebanese have lived here for years, and they go and build houses, and establish families, they go get married from that other end, so this is a fact of life, or a matter of fact of life, it's the reality of our lives, that's the way we live, the way we experience our culture, the way we experience other cultures, it's always the way in our mind, in our act. People's memories are always short, especially the Lebanese, because our country is used to the conflict all the time. So that, really, psychologically speaking, that helps me to cope with this. But when you take any new generation Lebanese-Canadian to Lebanon, they experience the culture, and the place, and the landscape of the country, and they come back with a beautiful impression about how relaxing the atmosphere is there and how much desire to go and continue the relationship with the homeland of their parents.

Lebanese are pioneers when it comes to business, they get busy making money to go back home and basically, to keep the relationship and the connection there. They spend a big portion of their money and life worrying about the homeland - it's the history, it's nothing new. It's been like that for thousands of years, yet I also believe that is affecting basically our presence here (in Canada) and it's making it difficult to explain quickly our position if a political crisis happens, similar to what just happened in July 2006. The community can be more pro-active, I mean, we can rely on the new generation to always open the subject, to always talk about it, or at

least even during a peaceful time, that we always have to keep this in the media, to keep people understanding slowly who we are, how we think.

S's Story

S is a male in his mid 20's and currently works as an engineer in Edmonton. Over the years, he has been actively involved in several Lebanese-Canadian community organizations and events. S has a strong connection to his Lebanese heritage and community, and advocates for the importance of educating others on politics and matters related to Lebanon and the Middle East.

Commentary on the July 2006 War

Due to a misunderstanding of Middle Eastern, Arab and Islamic culture in the Middle East, Canadians need to understand that those Lebanese-Canadian citizens that were rescued were extremely grateful to be saved, rather than ungrateful (as depicted in the media). People have to realize that this is how we (Arabs) are as a culture. It's the same thing within East Indian culture, with other cultures, like people will come back and they will have something to talk about, and they will complain. This is part of our culture; it does not mean we hate you or we're against you. This is how Arabs are. It does not mean that we're not grateful. Canadians should not understand that as being not grateful, like if the rescued were complaining about the condition of the ships, they have a right to complain about the condition of the ships. Inside their heart though, they are grateful that they were brought out, but the manner it was done, that they have a right to complain about it.

Media

With the events surrounding the July 2006 war, I felt once again, as I've realized before, that when it happens to involve Lebanese or Canadian or Muslims or Arabic-speaking people,

that the Western media are incredibly biased. I believe that they did not report anything accurately, except for maybe the death casualties in the war. They completely failed to address the other side or the other point of view, and what the other side is doing wrong. The Western media just seemed to concentrate on the Lebanese, the Arabs and the Muslims, and made them all sound like they're evil, and like they're a bunch of devils, and that they must be tamed.

I was bothered that the average Canadian failed to give any credibility to the other side, failed to see the other side of what's going on. I believe that if people were just given the facts about what was going on, every innocent person, every peace-loving person, every good person would have 100% been with the Lebanese people and against what the Israelis were doing. I was also disappointed by the media's dumbing down of North Americans. You know just right now Michael Jackson just died and he was a great singer, of course he was great singer, he was one of the best, but the media's been covering him for 5 days in a row, like he should have some coverage, but you know, there's other more important events going on. They're just having people concentrate on this one issue, and the news media is loving it, because that way they won't see what else is going on in the Middle East, what other massacres are going on, what other government bills are being pushed through, what's happening to the economy, etcetera and so on and so forth, you know, they're just trying to distract the American people, they're dumbing them down with Britney Spears and Michael Jackson.

Despite this, I noticed that slowly, people become more understanding. The people that are born in Canada and raised in Canada and educated in Canada, I start to see them become more understanding about what's going on. For example, a lot of people asked me questions, like "What's going on? Can you explain to me?" After I would sit down with them and explain to them what's going on, and show them both sides, I tell them here's the situation, you know. I

walked away feeling pretty confident that their beliefs about the entire thing changed. They started seeing things that they didn't before.

Identity

I feel like a Lebanese-Canadian. First, as a Canadian because I was born in Canada. I also realize that as a Canadian, I am given freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, because Canada is a signatory to the UN and enforces the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I pay my taxes, I volunteer in community organizations, I help out a lot, and my opinion deserves to be counted equal to everyone else's opinion. I feel like a Lebanese first in heart though because that is the country that I originated from, that is the country that my people originated from, the country where my religion, my faith, my background, my culture, my practices, my beliefs, all came from the entire Middle Eastern area. It does not mean that I am gonna become a traitor to Canada. It means that my loyalties lie in Canada for Canada, but it doesn't mean my loyalties also don't also lie in Lebanon. I don't see them as being counteractive or counterproductive because I feel that real Lebanese people want the same thing as real Canadians want, which is equality, freedom, justice, respect, so for me, I don't see a conflict at all. I am a Canadian and I am a Lebanese.

I like Canada, right now Canada is my favourite country in the world. Even though I also love Lebanon, Canada is my favourite country because it's one of the few countries left in the world where I can express myself. At the same time though, it's slowly turning into the US, but I am hopeful that it will keep going in the opposite direction. I would much rather live in Canada than in the US. I'm much more proud to say I'm Canadian than I'm American. In Canada, I only have half of what I want and in Lebanon, I have the other half of what I want, so right now I keep both halves, because in Canada, I don't feel I have that background, that culture, that

whatever that connects me the way Lebanon connects to many Lebanese in Canada, so I want the best of both worlds, and that's been my goal here.... to build that connection.

A's Story

A is a female in her early 50's and works as a business owner in Edmonton. She first came to Canada when she was 17 years old. A discussed her experiences of adapting to Canadian culture and shared the struggles she faced to balance her professional identity and her pride in being a Lebanese-Canadian.

Commentary on the July 2006 War

I heard what some people in Canada thought about the July 2006 war when I was speaking with them the other day. They said to me, how can they (those Lebanese-Canadians) afford to be there? One of them told me to check the statistics. She said the Lebanese people are the poorest in Canada according to Canadian statistics. So that means they're on welfare and they're taking money from Canada and going and spending it over there in Lebanon? She also told me maybe their jobs are paying them too much money because they're having too many kids and they're living off the system. That is what I had to face as a result of the July 2006 war because a group of 50, 000 Lebanese-Canadians were saved and rescued. Whether they were living there, whether they live 6 months over there, or 6 months here. It's like any other culture, Italian, Greeks, everybody wants to say I spend more time with my culture so I can take back something. At the end, it's nice to have your culture because what do we do here in Canada? We go to work everyday. I hardly see anybody in my Lebanese community, and so, for me, one of the insults of July 2006 is that people could not even think that we were well off enough to travel

in the first place. So we don't deserve to be there? We don't deserve to travel? We don't deserve to be saved?

Media

I have lived here for 35 years, and I see toys that are against Arabs. The toy with the bad guy has the Arabic *kafeyah*. I see media against Arabs. I see headlines in the newspaper against Arabs, Lebanese, it doesn't matter what it is, as long as it's part of the Middle East. I see the wording, for example, someone would ask me, "Why would you go to that part of the world...danger areas". They called them danger areas. This is where my cousins, my family, my sister, many people live, and so they couldn't understand.

The media takes one story, inflates it, and makes it into two. I wish they would take that same energy and actually show the truth. To this day, with all this openness that we have, almost everything from July 2006 that I saw, it's people. They're so scared and they're running, they show us people running, they show them under so much fear. So in one way, there's an openness in the world and the world is open to all of us to see what is happening, and it gives us a piece of mind when we look and see a better Lebanon. But on the other hand, nobody can get it in their bones and in their mind as reporters to bloody report the real facts.

Identity

Around September 2001, when 9/11 happened, I got calls from people. They were angry and saying things like, it's the Arabs...it's like you... you! And I said, what do you mean me? I was also told by some close friends "don't show too much enthusiasm about it...downplay it". I tried to tell them that I am not saying it is good what happened in New York, but we always have to ask why? I think you can only put a society down so much before they have to rebel, and I know they couldn't even believe that the Arabs have the mindset to be able to create and do

something like this. After that time, and even in July 2006, people reacted to me by saying, “Oh you’re also Lebanese. Oh, you must have been here such a long time, you can’t say to us you’re Lebanese, you’re really a Canadian”. They didn’t want to give me my heritage. I wasn’t allowed to have my heritage because I don’t fit what the criteria of what they thought would be a Lebanese. They stripped me from everything, so I cannot celebrate...we cannot celebrate who we are. They only accept me with my physical being, with the services that I offer, and all the greatest qualities that they think of me as having is all the greatest qualities that the Arabs have already. When I tell them, here I am really, I’m Lebanese, look at me and my qualities, they say it’s only because you’re married to a Canadian. So I have been working and taking that extra step constantly and fighting my existence. I have to leave a mark. I don’t want it to say my name on my tombstone, and not know that I’m an Arab. I want to know that I left a mark in my existence, and I don’t want anybody stripping that away.

J’s Story

J is a male in his late 40’s and works in the government sector in Edmonton. He first came to Canada when he was 11 years old. J discussed how he perceives himself as a Lebanese-Canadian and the way he thinks that politics and contemporary media have shaped his views.

Commentary on the July 2006 War

I think the Canadian government’s reaction and the Canadian government had turned very much from being mildly pro-Israeli, from their perspective it was called even-handedness, to being outwardly pro-Israeli. Canada’s reaction was very negative, in terms of what the Prime Minister said, that it was a measured response. By any standard it wasn’t, but that’s the way it was done, and that’s what will come back to haunt him. I think that the reaction reflects more on

the question of who is a Canadian? What's the responsibility of the Canadian government to Canadians? Are Lebanese-Canadians any less Canadian than other Canadians if they get into trouble? Is the fact that a number of Lebanese who are Canadian citizens but live in Lebanon, does that make them any less Canadian than either British people or Americans that have dual citizenship and that live in either in Britain or the US? Those are some things that sort of come up and question my place in this country.

When do you become 100% Canadian? When are you accepted as Canadian? And what does it mean to be Canadian? Is it the paper or is it something more? I know a lot of Lebanese, when they get older, they go and they retire there, or they spend 6 months over there and then they come back in 6 months, does that make them any less Canadian than people that go on cruises for months at a time? Or go down to Mexico and live in Mexico? Nobody questions that right? I'd like to go to Mexico for 6 months and come back here. Does that make me any less of a Canadian? Nobody questions that. But if you go to Lebanon, there's questions. There is sort of a double standard there that shouldn't be.

Media

Things had been brewing over there, and the media sort of focused on the short term, focused on the event. The general impression from the media was that everything started because Hezbollah kidnapped these soldiers, whereas things had been brewing for a while and certainly Israel wasn't without fault. The other thing is that, from the Lebanese side, there wasn't a cutoff in communication. I could see reports from Lebanon and I could actually see that the Lebanese were holding their own, even at a great cost, but they were holding their own. They weren't giving up and there was no way that the Israelis were going to come in and take over the country, that wasn't on anymore, so that was a very positive thing. It wasn't positive how the media was

reporting on it, because I always see this imbalance in terms of is one Israeli life worth more than a 100 Lebanese? I think in this war it was 10:1 that were killed that were Lebanese. In terms of the Israelis that were killed, most of them were military, but for the Lebanese, most of them were civilians.

Identity

I'm not Lebanese. I don't belong there because I wouldn't know how to survive there. I wouldn't know how to get a job. I wouldn't know anything, and my language isn't good enough, and I don't have a formal citizenship over there. My parents are Lebanese, but that's it. I've been here for over 30 years, but it's never 100% accepted because I'm not of the Founding Peoples. I'm not British, I'm not European, and I'm not French. The problem is that however long I lived here, I'm never going to be accepted as 100% Canadian in a whole bunch of things, and at the end of the day, it's almost natural for humans to think that way. It's almost like an us vs. them relationship. I do think differently, at least I think differently why it happened (July 2006 war) and what to do about it, and how to sort of to resolve it. But if I didn't sort of follow the line that we support whatever happens, this was particularly true during 9/11, for example, *let's go after Al-Qaida and all those people*, if I didn't agree with that my thinking was questioned, my commitment to Canada was questioned.

Chapter Five: Thematic Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the themes that were identified in the data analysis across all five participants, and link these findings to relevant literature. Table 1 illustrates the sub-themes and major theme groupings identified through comparison across the participant transcripts. The left column lists all the sub-themes that were identified across interview transcripts. These were then grouped together into major themes based on similar content.

Sub-themes	THEME
	HISTORY OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived Reactions from the Canadian Government - Emotional Responses to the July 2006 War - Recommendations from the Lebanese Community in Canada 	COMMENTARY ON THE JULY 2006 WAR
	MEDIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lebanese Heritage - Acceptance and Legitimacy Issues - Defining Canadian Identity 	IDENTITY

Table 1. Sub-themes and Major Themes

I examine each major theme to elucidate how it was relevant to the experiences shared by participants, and how it relates to a specific socio-political and cultural context. I refer to current research literature to support my discussion of these themes. I also draw attention to any noteworthy findings, exceptions, and gaps in what has traditionally been documented about these themes in the research literature, and what topics or issues require further clarification. Several participant quotes are integrated into this discussion and were labelled in italics. Particularly

lengthy quotes were shortened when appropriate to reflect the most germane illustration of each sub-theme and major theme.

History of Relations with Israel

The history of relations with Israel theme described aspects of the longstanding history of political strife between Lebanon and Israel. All five participants offered a synopsis of the history between Lebanon and Israel prior to discussing how the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah precipitated the events surrounding the July 2006 war. Thus, this theme was significant in providing an understanding of how participants viewed the historical context prior to this event. This indicates how important they thought it was for me, as an interviewer, to understand their comments in the particular context of the July 2006 war. To acknowledge this important history, and how it has contributed to the onset of the July 2006 war, I have identified it as a major theme. This theme allowed me to better understand the longstanding political strife between Lebanon and Israel.

One participant stated that *the July 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel is not the first conflict in the region. Hezbollah has their own way to deliver their political agenda, and Israel, on the other hand, also have their way. The Lebanese border has always been a very weak and fragile border between the two countries. Since 1948 the conflict was always the border. It was always an issue.* Lebanon has long struggled with achieving political sovereignty. Barak (2010) has stated that over the past few decades, Israel has become increasingly skeptical of Lebanon's effective sovereignty. This has led to significant and longstanding political tensions over control of the Israeli-Lebanese border. In Barak's view, Israel's outdated and ambiguous policies regarding issues pertaining to the border have further underlined Lebanon's weakness by preventing it from imposing its authority in border-related matters.

Furthermore, after the civil war in the 1990's, Lebanon was deemed unfit to rule itself. This prompted several militia forces and groups, including Hezbollah, to organize attempts to restore the country to its former independent state (Barak, 2010). One participant identified Hezbollah as a forceful political organization, one that in his view, acted independently from the Lebanese government during the July 2006 war and did not represent the political views or agendas of the majority government in Lebanon. *They acted independently of the Lebanese government, and they placed the whole country in jeopardy because of their irresponsible actions.* He admitted that there are still, however, some areas in Lebanon which do support Hezbollah, and this only contributed to the increased political tension in that area. He also referred to a small agricultural area of land called Shabaa Farms located near the border between Lebanon, Israel and Syria that has served as another source of contention, with each country fighting for its control and occupation. *Hezbollah claim that it's Lebanese land, and that they should free this land from the occupation of Israel, but the majority of Lebanese people, they don't share the same opinion. They think it's Syrian land, and it's the responsibility of Syria to negotiate with Israel about the possibility of regaining that land.* Barak added that, in addition to the Shabaa Farms controversy, Israeli planes' frequent incursions into Lebanese airspace was another example of a direct challenge to its neighbor's effective sovereignty. Consequently, Hezbollah continues to assume the role of Lebanon's "protector" from Israeli "aggression".

Two participants asserted that Israel and Hezbollah should be held accountable not only for their actions during the July 2006 war, but also for past war crimes, bombings, damage to infrastructure, and environmental issues that have plagued Lebanon during the civil war and for several years afterwards. *They committed a lot of war crimes - the Israelis and Hezbollah - in Lebanon, not to mention the environmental problems in the Mediterranean sea, dumping a lot*

of oil, killing all marine life across, like along the Lebanese coastal line, so none of these parties were held accountable after the war.

Based on these findings, it is clear that there is still controversy in what the participants described as part of the history of political relations between Lebanon and Israel. Accountability is a significant issue for these participants. For these Lebanese-Canadians, attention to history and issues of accountability may be particularly salient because it creates a common allegiance and loyalty among members of the Lebanese community. This may vary, however, according to other members of the larger Lebanese community in Canada. It may be meaningful to know that, in addition to a shared ethnocultural heritage, part of the Lebanese identity and how these participants viewed themselves during the July 2006 war may be shaped by a reverence for Lebanon's enduring struggles for political sovereignty, and what the participants perceived as injustices and hostilities towards their homeland by Israel and Hezbollah.

Commentary on the July 2006 War

This theme reflected the insights, opinions, reactions, and feelings of participants about several aspects of their lives related to the July 2006 war. This theme encompassed comments from all the participants and comments from others made towards the broader Lebanese community in Canada in relation to the July 2006 war. The Commentary theme is comprised of three more specific sub-themes. Each of these three sub-themes is described in more detail below.

Perceived Reactions from the Canadian Government. This sub-theme concentrated primarily on participants' opinions regarding Prime Minister Stephen Harper's support of Israel's actions as a "measured response" to Hezbollah. All of the participants were extremely disappointed in what they saw as the Canadian government's reaction to the July 2006 war.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper referred to Israel's retaliation against Hezbollah and the bombing of major infrastructure and civilian areas in Lebanon as a "measured response", whereas the participants vehemently disagreed with this view and argued that it was a severe aggressive reaction and caused significant destruction in Lebanon.

All of the participants agreed that the majority of the Lebanese community in Canada did not support the Canadian government's stand to justify the Israeli retaliation and attribute blame to Hezbollah for kidnapping two Israeli soldiers. One participant emphatically stated, *that's not a measured response, you know what I mean, that's a provocation, that's an attack. His side is obviously biased and it's quite obvious why.... He's calling Israel's response a measured response, which is you know, absolutely wrong! Their army destroyed half of Lebanon, if it's just a response - a measured response to Hezbollah - why did they kill on a magnitude of many times more than Hezbollah had killed, why did they destroy all the bridges, why did they bomb that power plant or an oil refinery, and spilled oil onto the Mediterranean sea? Why did they put a blockade all around Lebanon?* Another participant said *that reaction was very negative, in terms of what the Prime Minister said, that it was a measured response, by any standard it wasn't, but that's the way it was done, and that's what will come back to haunt him.* Other participants echoed these responses to some degree.

Oren, Rothbart, and Korostelina (2009) examined the decisions by the Israeli leadership to engage in a military campaign that caused extensive suffering of Lebanese civilians during the July 2006 war. These authors suggest that, according to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), Hezbollah's actions may be perceived as immoral, criminal, and uncivilized. Consequently, Israel's responses carried moral worth in the minds of its members. In the course of prolonged hostilities between Lebanon and Israel, denigration of the militant enemy, Hezbollah, can be

extended to non-militants as well in order to weaken the identity boundaries between Hezbollah and Lebanese civilians. In other words, Lebanese civilians may have been stigmatized as malicious because of this perceived association with Hezbollah. Oren et al.'s (2009) findings may describe part of Prime Minister Harper's response to the July 2006 war and the way this "measured response" was perceived by the Lebanese community in Canada. Participants may have vehemently disagreed because Prime Minister Harper's support of Israel perpetuated the generalization that Lebanese people in Canada supported Hezbollah's actions. Furthermore, Shields (2005) asserts that those who hold power in government determine which issues and groups are favored in political conflict. In other words, when there is a prevailing vision of what constitutes the majority view, the minority response is marked as one of questionable validity. It seems likely that participants perceived that their unfavorable reactions towards the Canadian's government response would be challenged and questioned by members of the Canadian public. This is important within the context of this research because of the charged political climate in Canada and the mixed feelings participants expressed about identifying as Lebanese-Canadians during this time.

They also referred to the double standards that exist in any Arab-Israeli conflict. One participant said, *Let's say there was an Arabic country that was bombing the holy hell out of Israel and there were Canadians living there, how fast would the Canadian government have reacted to that, and what's the answer? Everyone know the answer is extremely fast, ok, so why the double standard?* Another participant perceived this double standard as an imbalance between the value of an Israeli life and the value of a Lebanese life. *There is sort of a double standard there that shouldn't be. You see that right, you always see this imbalance in terms of, you know, an Israeli life is worth more than a 100 Lebanese.* This perception of double standard

was important to acknowledge because participants were perhaps more sensitive of how Prime Minister Harper had the power to impact the Canadian public's judgments about Hezbollah, Lebanese people, and perceptions of wrongdoing in relation to the July 2006 war. This may have likely garnered further support from the Canadian public for Israel's "measured response" and consolidated Canada's allegiance to Israel in matters of Arab-Israeli conflict.

Emotional Responses to the July 2006 War. This sub-theme related to the range of emotions participants experienced throughout the duration of the July 2006 war. One participant spoke about the increased tension he felt in his interactions about politics with peers. *Speaking to people from Israel or from South Lebanon that have different opinions, it can very challenging, a sensitive issue to discuss.* Yet he felt drawn to these political debates, and tried to accommodate different opinions in a sensitive manner to maintain his friendships and ties to the larger Arab community. Another participant exclaimed, *anger was the predominant feeling for me at the time because, you know, it's a war that we could have easily avoided.*

Other participants stated that they were embarrassed to call themselves Canadian after learning of Harper's position and were bothered by how the Canadian government has dealt with Middle Eastern politics. *Stephen Harper made me embarrassed to be a Canadian. I'm embarrassed by Stephen Harper. I'm embarrassed to call him my Prime Minister....he doesn't represent me nor does he represent the majority of Canadians, because if he did he would not be acting like this.* This finding in itself raised awareness of how the identity issues faced by Lebanese-Canadians during this time had a significant political link to their national identity as Canadians. In sum, these findings demonstrate that being Lebanese in Canada during the July 2006 war created significant challenges for *both* Lebanese and Canadian aspects of participants' identity. Participants' reactions were varied and experienced in relation to different contexts.

They perceived negative associations between the Lebanese community and Hezbollah. They also commented on how they perceived the Canadian government's response to the July 2006 war as indicative of Canada's allegiance to Israel, and this contributed to the embarrassment they also felt about being Canadian during this difficult time.

Recommendations from the Lebanese-Canadian community. This sub-theme reflected participants' suggestions about the need for mainstream Canadians to understand more about Lebanese culture and politics through education and ongoing dialogue. *It's difficult to explain quickly our position if a political crisis happens similar to what happened in July 2006. So definitely the Lebanese community can be more pro-active. I mean, we can rely on the new generation, new students, like yourself, to always open the subject, to always talk about it, even during a peaceful time, that always we have to keep this in the media, to keep people understanding slowly who we are, how we think...*

Another participant stated that *education is plenty of power. People need to educate themselves, that's it. If people can get anything out of this, it is to educate yourself. It's also about being diplomatic, when you make the other side feel like you understand where they're coming from, and you understand their problems and issues, there would not be this much tension in the world. It would not exist. Understanding is a major key.* This demonstrates how important the participants felt it was for mainstream Canadians to understand their history and to initiate ongoing dialogue about multiple perspectives on contemporary sociopolitical issues involving Lebanon and the Middle East.

Media

This theme related to participants' statements about how the July 2006 war, Lebanese-Canadians, and the Lebanese community were perceived in Canada by the media during this time. Information related to the war was primarily disseminated through various media sources. Therefore, this theme was significant in illustrating participants' statements and their peers' perceptions about these media portrayals and other related media dissemination issues, including media bias and ownership. All participants spoke about Western media depictions of Arabs and of the Lebanese-Canadian community following the July 2006 war.

For one participant, the headlines concerning the July 2006 war only confirmed for him that the Western media is incredibly biased regarding many socio-political events that involve the Middle East or Arabic-speaking people. He felt that the media failed to address multiple points of view, especially *what the other side is doing wrong*. He suggested that it all came down to ownership of the media and who stood to benefit. *If you go to each news organization, you find who their CEO is, what his allegiances are, you find who the president is, who the shareholders are, who they give money to, who they contribute money to...* He also observed that *the news media is under no legal obligation to report the truth to viewers. The news media is there to advance the interest of its shareholders.*

This participant also revealed that he felt disappointed about the severe lack of information and perspective on current world events in our society. *So what disappointed me was that it showed me the dumbing down of North Americans.* Cable news media and other related mass media sources have generally been accused of presenting the general public with biased and often misleading information (Morris, 2007). In effect, media biases reduce the likelihood of thoughtful debate and deliberation, and this may also explain why disagreements over values and

ideology increasingly define our political culture (Keum, Hillback, Rojas, De Zuniga, Shah, & McLeod, 2009). Moreover, selective exposure to political information is thought to influence how much people know about politics, and how they feel and think about politics (Prior, 2009).

Participants seemed to agree that the media's reaction to July 2006 was nothing new or unexpected. For them, the coverage of the July 2006 war was assumed to reflect a pro-Israeli stance and revealed the hidden allegiances of Canadian media consortia. *There was always a pro-Israeli bent, but it was never outright, but now it had turned very much from being mildly pro-Israeli to being outwardly pro-Israeli. The priority of these allegiances are not the welfare of the US citizens, or Canadian citizens, it's not, no matter how you look at it.* Jones (2002) claims that partisan political messages can have a significant reinforcing effect on audience members' attitudes and judgments. This suggests that the present participants were concerned that the mainstream Canadian public received a limited perspective of the July 2006 war based on their own perceptions of a pro-Israeli stance in the news coverage. In other words, a significant aspect of the "other side's story" was less emphasized.

What was missing from the media coverage, according to one participant, was a follow-up investigation that should have been conducted shortly after the United Nations sanctioned a ceasefire on the situation in Lebanon and on the Lebanese people whose lives were affected. *In some areas, the media could have gone a little bit beyond and basically check on how people are living now, how they're experiencing difficulties, if there is any, and whether there is a fear or not.* Another participant expressed frustration with the Western media's tendency to inflate and sensationalize a news story without any due concern for accurate factual reporting. *Nobody can get it in their mind as reporters and bloody report the real facts!*

According to Grabe, Zhou, and Barnett (2001), media sensationalism is often defined in terms of its capability to provoke attention or arousal responses in viewers. They also argue that in journalistic discourse, the increase in sensationalism has generally been attributed to market-driven journalism. Thus, it was likely that the dissemination of media information about this war concentrated on specific newsworthy items intended to provoke emotionally-charged reactions and responses from viewers. Vettehen, Nuijten, and Peters (2008) also claim that the degree of emotional arousal elicited in news viewers plays a significant role in the effects of sensationalism on liking of news stories. This point suggests that media coverage of the war, particularly during the month of July, provoked intense interest because the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict was at its pique, and likely elicited strong emotional reactions from viewers.

One news story that dominated the news coverage of the July 2006 war involved the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah. One participant described how this news story implied that nothing was going on before this happened, that the political climate in Lebanon and Israel was stable, when in fact the political tension has been brewing for a long time. *What happened when Hezbollah kidnapped those soldiers wasn't the beginning of anything; it was the continuation of a number of things. Israel was continuously coming into Lebanese airspace, continuously coming into Lebanese territory, so it wasn't that nothing was happening at that time, and all of a sudden Hezbollah went across the border, kidnapped soldiers, came back, and this is what started things. Things had been brewing over there, and so the media sort of focuses on the short term, focuses on the event.* Stein, McCluskey, Boyle, Devanathan, McLeod, Hillback, and Shevy (2003) describe the journalistic *protest paradigm* as a framework of common news attributes that contribute to the marginalizing of protesters as social deviants. McLeod and Hertog (1999) claim that journalists tend to marginalize protest groups through

various conventions, such as focusing on events rather than underlying issues, and featuring the most radical individuals in representations of protest groups.

Detenber, Gotlieb, McLeod, and Malinkina's (2007) recent research on high-visibility protest issues has demonstrated the increased ability of television news stories to shape audience perceptions of the groups and issues. Specific framing effects are often used to ensure that the biases of individual journalists, professional conventions and practices, organizational goals, ideologies, economic considerations, and sociocultural world views are effectively transmitted in mass media. In the present narratives, it would appear that participants thought that specific framing effects, particularly episodic frames that focused on discrete events and their influence on individuals, were used to depict the Israeli-Hezbollah protest during the July 2006 war. One participant recalled, *....that's all we saw, it's people, they're so scared and they're running to the street, to the boat but they show them under so much fear.*

These framing effects perhaps enabled viewers to make inferences about Hezbollah as a "radical protest group". Furthermore, perceived support for Israel's retaliation against Hezbollah may have also been shaped to some extent by what Oswald (2005) has referred to as "just-world beliefs". Without more information and a critical analysis of facts and history, it seems likely that some Canadians would have endorsed the view that Hezbollah's actions warranted retaliation by Israel against Lebanon based on a belief of a "just world"; that Lebanon deserved what was coming because of what Hezbollah did to Israel. It remains unclear however to what extent Canadians may have endorsed opposing views on this particular conflict. This is important to acknowledge since these underlying beliefs may have influenced how comfortable participants' felt identifying as Lebanese during this time in their interactions with Canadian peers, and the impact of these beliefs on how accepting their peers were of them as Lebanese. In

terms of counselling practice, it is important for helping professionals to recognize the significance of underlying belief systems about our global world, including just-world beliefs, and media influences in how members of diverse ethnic groups perceive themselves and how others perceive them.

Identity

The identity theme was of particular importance for this research inquiry. It represented a depth and variation of experiences, reactions, and issues faced by this group of participants in conceptualizing their Lebanese-Canadian identity, and how their interactions with others have shaped these self-perceptions. It is important to note that participants' statements, opinions, thoughts, and emotions demonstrated considerable overlap in the data analysis. This overlap was influenced by the richness of detail and context in participants' statements and the multiple meanings that were identified in these statements as related to the July 2006 war. For example, the range of emotions described in response to the war was often expressed in relation to Lebanese-Canadian identity. Thus, some statements were included in more than one theme. Because the focus of this study was on identity, some coding judgments favoured this particular theme. There were three sub-themes in the larger Identity theme. These sub-themes included Lebanese Heritage, Acceptance and Legitimacy Issues, and Defining Canadian Identity. Each of these sub-themes is discussed in more detail below.

Lebanese Heritage. All five participants referred to their Lebanese heritage and identified positive associations with being Lebanese. One participant explicitly shared an ethnic pride in being Lebanese first and foremost. *My pride was such a huge thing. I needed tell everybody who I am.* Participants described other members of the Lebanese community in Canada as generally hard workers and positive contributors to Canadian society. They spoke of

their identity as something that was deeply rooted and connected to their families, their homeland, and their culture. *The ties are always there. The Lebanese go to Lebanon to experience the culture and the landscape of their country. They come back to Canada with a beautiful impression of their homeland, and for most, they desire to continue this relationship with the homeland of their parents.*

Le Espiritu and Tran (2002) describe the concept of a homeland for the Lebanese not only as a physical place for return visits, but as a concept and desire that can be returned to through the imagination. They claim that for many Lebanese living abroad, ties to the homeland may vary from annual summer vacations or business trips to Lebanon, to supporting charities, or even watching Lebanese national television channels. It appears that these participants perceived the importance of maintaining a connection to their homeland in some way as a vital aspect of their Lebanese identity.

One participant emphasized his identity as Lebanese because *that is the country that I originated from, that is the country that my people originated from, the country where my religion, my faith, my background, my culture, my practices, my beliefs, all came from the entire Middle Eastern area.* Another participant who emigrated and lived in Canada for most of his life said *when we leave our country, we don't leave just to leave for good, we leave to come back, because our culture requires that and maybe our blood is like this. We have a lot of history and history is always attractive, and it's a part of the past, and carries a lot of the past, which is the nostalgia in people's mind. It's always to go back that direction.*

Participants articulated multiple aspects of their Lebanese identity and heritage - ancestral origins, history, connectedness to their homeland, their families, and to their community were all important aspects in this identity articulation process. Their statements lend support to Ajrouch's

(2000) claim that ethnic identity is a product of social ties among family and broader reference groups. Moreover, maintaining a strong attachment to one's Lebanese heritage in these ways has also been shown to promote a decrease in acculturative daily hassles, and contributed to higher levels of adjustment (Gaudet, Clement, & Deuzeman, 2005).

Four of the five participants perceived the Lebanese and Canadian aspects of their identity as a complementary, as described in a simple and eloquent statement by one participant: *Real Lebanese people want the same thing as real Canadians want, which is equality, freedom, justice, and respect. So I don't see a conflict at all. I am Canadian and I am Lebanese.* Another participant also described how important he felt it was to be able to openly express Lebanese aspects of his identity in Canada. *My loyalties lie in Canada for Canada, but it doesn't mean my loyalties don't also lie in Lebanon. Canada is a multicultural country, therefore I should be totally fine to live in Canada, to respect the Canadian rules, but with my style, my individuality, my Lebanese way of doing it, just like every other ethnic group can do it, right? Canada is my favourite country.... because it's one of the few countries left in the world where I can express myself. I would much rather live in Canada than in the US. Much more proud to say I'm Canadian than I'm American.* Berry, Westin, Virta, Vedder, Rooney, and Sang (2006) state that national perceptions of Canada and Canadian national identity includes a sense that it was "built on immigration" and is a "nation of immigrants." Thus, it may be that this participant felt comfortable enough to express Lebanese aspects of his identity, alongside his pride in being Canadian, because of how integral these pre-existing views are in current formulations of a diverse Canadian national identity and society. Future research would benefit from exploring to what extent members of diverse ethnocultural groups feel supported by Canada's multicultural policy in negotiating and expressing dual aspects of their particular ethnic and national identity.

One exception concerning the conceptualization of a Lebanese-Canadian identity came from a participant who did not consider himself as Lebanese per se, because he did not have a Lebanese citizenship, nor could he survive there because he was not proficient enough in the language to secure a job and function as regular citizen. This participant did not consider himself to be Lebanese, even though both of his parents were Lebanese. *I'm not Lebanese, ok. I don't have a citizenship, a Lebanese citizenship. I don't have anything like that. My parents are Lebanese, that's it.* This suggests that Lebanese identity and notions of belonging to the Lebanese community did not only include ancestral roots. Instead, this specific participant identified Lebanese citizenship and language proficiency in Arabic as necessary to "be Lebanese". Since he perceived himself as not proficient enough in speaking Arabic, this may have influenced his ability to socialize and foster strong bonds with members of the Lebanese community, and in effect, perhaps left him feeling less connected with his ethnocultural heritage. Nonetheless, he still identified as a Lebanese-Canadian for the purpose of this study. This was somewhat surprising to me, since I anticipated that participants who inquired about this research study would presumably self-identify as Lebanese-Canadians. Ultimately however, this participant's disclosure but did not affect my decision to include his data as part of this study.

According to public opinion polls, Raney (2009) states that most Canadians view "citizenship" as an important marker of national identity in Canada, while other markers of civic nations, such as respect for political institutions and how democracy works, have become less important to "being Canadian." Moreover, prior research by Isajiw (1990), and Kalbach and Kalbach (1999) has demonstrated that heritage language retention acts as a stronger connector to one's ethnic community. Chow (2001) also argues that language is the central marker of ethnic identity within minority groups themselves, as well as within the context of the broader,

dominant society. Taken together, these findings suggest that the latter participant perceived his language proficiency in Arabic as important to identify himself as Lebanese.

Dallo, Ajrouch, and Al-Snih (2008) caution that the notion of ancestry itself is variable because individuals identifying with a particular ancestry changes over time. Mahtani (2002) also argues that the primary focus on ancestral origin in Canada's multicultural policy implies that ethnic identity is only defined by ancestral origin, rather than by one's own current set of ethnic allegiances. Thus, future research is needed to explore whether notions of ancestry change over time, especially when individuals do not consider ancestral origin as a significant marker in conceptualizing their ethnic identity. Moreover, the opinions and reactions of others towards individuals who have alternate conceptualizations of their ethnic identity can enrich the understanding of multiple and diverse negotiation processes regarding how ethnic identity is defined and conceptualized.

Acceptance and Legitimacy Issues. Having these shared perceptions however did not necessarily mean that there were no challenges to identity. One participant thought that the news stories gave the Lebanese community a bad reputation, that they were perceived as “freeloaders” and getting a “free ride” from the Canadian's government's rescue efforts. *It hurts. It didn't reflect well on our community, just hearing this in the news all the time.* He started seeing himself as an outsider, just by being identified as a Lebanese-Canadian. He was worried that people had started associating the term terrorism with being Lebanese, because of the heavy media focus on Hezbollah's actions against Israel.

Another participant shared the reactions she received from some Canadian peers in relation to the July 2006 war. They questioned whether the Lebanese in Canada were living on welfare assistance here and spending their allowances over there. *So that means they're on*

welfare and they're taking the money from here and going to spend it over there and they can afford to save money? Maybe they're paying them too much here because they're having too many kids and they're living off the system. Peers also questioned this participant's desire to return to Lebanon in the future, making reference to Lebanon as a danger area or suggesting that traveling there would involve a huge risk. *I'm going to Lebanon, and they would say, Oh my God, are you sure? You know, are you sure you want to take that risk?* Lebanon represented none of these things to her; rather, it was her homeland, her culture, and her family.

Participants also described the mixed reactions they received about their identity status as Lebanese-Canadians by Canadian peers. One participant shared that, in his view, many mainstream Canadians believe that Lebanese-Canadians are not pure, "strong core" Canadians. He reflected on whether he would ever be perceived as legitimate 100% Canadian in the eyes of others. *I mean, maybe the hard Canadians, so-called hard Canadians, still think we're not the hard Canadians, we're not the tough, strong core Canadian, that we are still half and half.* Another participant stated, *You're never going to be accepted as 100% Canadian in a whole bunch of things, at your work, you know, when you pay taxes, in a whole bunch of things. At the end of the day, you know, it's almost natural for humans to think that way, it's almost like an us vs. them relationship.*

The notion of "us vs. them" has been documented in Oswald's (2005) research on American patriotism in the media and the salience of a national identity over any other social, ethnic and group identities. In his study, Oswald found that both perceived and realistic threats to national identity contributed to an increased need for individuals to distinguish themselves from members of the out-group. His finding suggests that the present participants' peer reactions may have stemmed from an underlying perception of threat and contributed to

participants' awareness of being different from, and not completely accepted by, their Canadian peers.

Participants also shared their thoughts about the negative perceptions that some people hold towards various immigrant communities in Canada. *Since most of Canada's community is an immigrant community, and if they're saying you know, we're staying in Canada because of war in our homeland, then fine, maybe we should all just leave and Canada's population will drop to 2 million or 3 million or whatever. It is because it's the immigrants that contribute to the economy, it's the Arabs, the Muslims, the Blacks, the Hispanics, the Chinese, the Orientals, they are the ones contributing.*

Another participant spoke about the need to "prove herself" to others, to work hard and excel in all aspects of her life, and to present herself in the best possible light to gain acceptance as a Lebanese-Canadian from her Canadian peers. This participant spoke at great length about establishing herself as a business professional, and commented on how her commitment to professionalism and ethics helped her excel in forming solid business relationships. However, these accomplishments were not acknowledged by her peers as emanating from someone with a Lebanese background. Rather, her peers seemed to see her as Canadian rather than Lebanese. *You've been here for such a long time, you're not Lebanese, you're really Canadian now.* This reaction seem to imply that at least some mainstream Canadians expect that individuals should consider themselves to be Canadian when living Canada over many years.

Consequently, she felt that her Lebanese identity had been "stolen" from her. She grew familiar with her Canadian peers and business clients respecting her for her professionalism and work ethic, but expressing shock and surprise when they learned of her Lebanese heritage. *Oh! I cannot believe you're Lebanese! The minute they realized I was Lebanese, there was a pause.*

Not once did I ask them why. I didn't need to ask them anymore, what does that mean? They didn't even have the audacity to give me my heritage, like I wasn't allowed the right to have my heritage because I don't fit the criteria of what they thought would be a Lebanese. She described this experience as a fight to justify herself at every level in order to maintain her business success and relationships, but more importantly, to maintain pride in her Lebanese heritage.

For this sole female participant, it appears likely that at least some of the *surprise and shock* demonstrated by her Canadian peers could have originated from media and gender stereotypes of Arab women as conservative, subservient, and who are attached only to their homes and families. *Everybody keeps on saying the only reason you are who you are as a person, it must be because of this or that. They don't think of me as Lebanese, as somebody who's outspoken, or really can talk and do this and can run a household, can go get a job, can get an education...*

The issues of legitimacy and acceptance that these participants spoke about can be framed under what Mahtani (2002) referred to as the “stark contrast” between multiculturalism as a way of life versus its status as a policy for Canadian citizens. For example, contemporary research has revealed that a number of significant individual and community level-determinants impact perceptions and attitudes towards multiculturalism, immigration, and members of diverse ethnocultural groups in Canada. Wilkes, Guppy, and Farris (2007) found that the state of the economy, as indicated by the annual unemployment rate and GDP, have a significant effect on Canadians' attitudes towards immigration and acceptance of diversity.

Mulder and Khran (2005) found that educational progressivism accounted for some of the individual variability in Canadian's attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity and

multiculturalism in Canada. Community-level determinants were also important. Mulder and Khran found that those who evaluated their own community more positively were more supportive of ethnocultural diversity. These researchers propose that the relationship between positive community attitudes, support for immigration and ethnocultural diversity may reflect a greater sense of security within the community that, in turn, translates into a more favorable response to newcomers.

Their findings suggest that both individual and community factors inform Canadians' perceptions, attitudes and what they see as the benefits and consequences of immigration and multiculturalism policies. In turn, these perceptions and attitudes are likely to influence their reactions to, and openness towards, cross-cultural interactions with diverse members of Canadian society. This is salient for the purpose of this research study because according to these participants' experiences, the interactions among these factors may have significantly contributed to how they felt as Canadians, the grounds upon which their identity status was challenged by their peers, and most importantly, how accepting their peers were of them as "Canadians".

Defining Canadian Identity. Over the course of data analysis, it became more evident in the participants' narratives that there are diverse views about what represents an authentic Canadian identity. One participant claimed that *in Canada, you don't have that background, that culture, that whatever that connects you back the way Lebanon connects to many Lebanese here.* Part of this participant's perception of himself may be related to the challenges inherent in defining Canadian culture and background.

Indeed, several questions were raised by participants concerning other people's perceptions of them as Canadians, including *What is a Canadian?* and *What does it mean to be*

Canadian? From the interview data, the closest response to the crucial question of what is a Canadian came from one participant who distinguished between those Canadians who are members of more recent immigrant communities in Canada, including the Greeks, the Italians, and the Lebanese, and those who are descendents from the early European settlers to Canada, (whom he called the Founding Peoples of Canada), namely the British, the French, and the Europeans. *It's very interesting because you're not of the Founding Peoples right? You're not British, you're not European, you're not French. But I think it's the same thing with Italians, the same thing with Greeks, it's all the same thing.* It is clear that two distinct social identities are mentioned: 1) Canadians who originated more recently from immigrant communities, and 2) Canadians who are descendents from the early settlers. This seems to suggest that there is some perception of importance of historical residence and long term residency over centuries in defining what is a “Canadian”.

Another participant also conceptualized a Canadian identity as having evidence of a “pure” or “founding” lineage or history in Canada. It is noteworthy, however, that the other participants used the term “Canadian” more broadly to refer to all members of diverse ethnocultural groups in Canada, including the Lebanese. With no reference to length of residence, it is interesting that even among this small group of participants, there are different perceptions of “being Canadian” and the value placed on how Canadian identity is legitimized. For some, it seems that acceptance from “pure” Canadians is one way of securing their identity status as a Canadian. For others, the term Canadian appears to be an inclusive one that extends towards all individuals, regardless of ethnocultural background. These participants held multiple and diverse perspectives about what constitutes a Canadian identity, and the meaning this identity status holds for them. Such multiplicity of views would suggest

that it is important for educators, counsellors, and cultural workers and others interacting with Lebanese people and any other members of diverse ethnocultural communities to ascertain how the person they are working with views “being Canadian”.

Multiple factors have also been identified in other research on Canadian national identity. For instance, Jedwab (2003) argues that assuming a Canadian identity clearly depends on more than one's ethnic origin/ancestry. In his view, Canadian identity also depends on other aspects such as time and distance, personal commitment and motivation arising from socialization experiences in the family, school environment, as well as in peer groups outside the home and at work. Dib, Donaldson, and Turcotte (2008) state that the experience of “common spaces”, described as locations in time and space where visible and religious minorities and other Canadians meet and interact, contributes to the development of a strong sense of being Canadian. In their view, these common spaces in Canada comprise the foundation for creating and enhancing a strong Canadian identity, regardless of ethnic heritage.

Another interesting aspect of Canadian identity articulation is what Winter (2007) refers to as longstanding myths and images Canadians use to distinguish their society in certain key ways as "better" than Quebec and the United States. He claims that these perceptions are essential for constructing a unique Canadian identity, particularly one that wants to be seen as both national and multicultural. Thus, it seems likely that for many Canadians, a strong sense of nationalism and appreciation for multiculturalism may be perceived as distinguishing features of a Canadian identity, and what qualifies someone as a “Canadian”. For instance, public perceptions and international reputations of Canadians as generally open and accepting of religious and ethnic diversity can be viewed as one feature

that is typically perceived as Canadian. Also, a generally strong image and adoration of hockey as a national winter sport illustrates what can also be perceived as a distinct element of a Canadian national identity.

Nakhaie (2006) documents that many ethnic minorities have an emotional connection to both Canada and their own ethnocultural group. He found little difference when it came to a felt sense of belonging and attachment to Canada; in fact, visible minorities had a strong sense of attachment. Nakhaie argues that members of diverse ethnocultural groups can be proud of their ethnicity, and at the same time, have a strong sense of belonging to Canada. This finding demonstrates how important it may be to consider how emotionally connected members of diverse ethnocultural groups feel to Canada in relation to articulating aspects of their Canadian identity. It seems likely that participants may have felt that their connection to Canada was challenged by their Canadian peers' reactions to the 2006 war and the actions undertaken by Hezbollah during this time.

What makes someone a Canadian? Is it the paper or is it something more? When do you become 100% Canadian? When are you accepted as a Canadian? Do you sort of try harder to become a Canadian? Participants' queries demonstrate the potential differences that exist in how, as a society, we identify ourselves as Canadians. The reference to "the paper" illustrates the significance of achieving legitimacy as a Canadian through the rights and privileges granted upon a full Canadian citizen by the government. Raney (2009) states that most Canadians view "citizenship" as an important marker of national identity in Canada, and in my experience, many people would agree that obtaining citizenship in Canada helps consolidate people's self-perceptions as Canadians and enables them to "feel more Canadian". Nyers (2010) also asserts that citizenship is designed to make sense of the multiple

connections and feelings of belonging to one's country. The present participants would seem to think that our identity as Canadians involves something more than citizenship. Beyond the rights and privileges granted by the government, defining what is a Canadian is complex and remains open to interpretation and to further research. It might also be expected that being born in Canada would be identified more by participants as an indicator of true Canadian-ness. Since most of the participants were born outside of Canada, it appears likely that this was not considered as critical in how they perceived themselves as Lebanese-Canadians.

Jedwab (2003) suggests what he believes may be an important source of further information on the perceived differences between how a person feels and how a person identifies him or herself in terms of ethnicity. In his view, future Canadian census could shed light on the evolving nature of our population and the emergence of a Canadian social and psychological identity by asking both an ancestry question and an identity question. According to Jedwab, these two questions, along with questions on birthplace of parents, religion, mother tongue and language spoken at home, would reveal more about the process of nation building and becoming Canadian than any other questions one could ask.

Another important aspect identified in the present research relates to how perceptions of national identity can change in relation to threatening events. Davies, Steele, and Markus (2008) investigated the impact of foreign threat on American's tolerance for diversity. They concluded that a nation being challenged can impact people's endorsement of assimilation and multiculturalism as models for domestic and foreign intergroup relations. In this study, the researchers claim that during a period of national challenge, embracing one's national identity can be highly adaptive; however, it is equally important to consider that intolerance for out-groups is usually a response to factors that threaten in-group functioning. Based on these

findings, some important questions can be raised about whether people resort to categorical markers of identity during times of crisis. In the present study, it may be important to consider how Canadian citizenship status may have been used as an identity marker to inform public perceptions about who was considered worthy or unworthy of rescue during the July 2006 war. For instance, one participant distinguished between those Lebanese-Canadian citizens who were “getting a free ride” and who have not contributed as much to Canada and other Lebanese-Canadian citizens who have contributed by paying taxes and residing in Canada.

In conclusion, issues of articulating and defining Canadian identity are complex. The present findings have highlighted that major events such as war, individual and community factors, and government-level policies on assimilation, multiculturalism, immigration, and foreign relations appear to significantly impact attitudes and perceptions towards ethnocultural groups. These factors, coupled with the way threatening events shape people’s perceptions and attitudes towards diversity, make the articulation of ethnocultural and national identity a complex and evolving process. More research is needed to ascertain how these processes influence identity articulation in diverse settings and changing sociopolitical contexts.

Chapter Six: Summary and Implications

In this final chapter, I summarize the major findings and limitations of this research study and discuss the implications for future research and practice. The main purpose of this research study was to explore the identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians and how they described the impact of the July 2006 war in Lebanon. A particular focus was how they may have re-examined aspects of their ethnic and cultural identification upon learning about this war through the media. The overarching question that was used to guide this research study was “*What are the subjectively constructed identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada at the time of the July 2006 war in Lebanon?*”

Summary of Major Findings

Participants felt it was important to acknowledge the background and history of political relations between Lebanon and Israel. From their accounts, this history was shaped by Lebanon’s longstanding struggles for political sovereignty and Israeli and Hezbollah conflict. One major aspect related to issues of accountability - participants perceived several accounts of injustices and hostilities towards their homeland by Israel and Hezbollah, and wanted these people to take responsibility for their actions.

Participants commented at great length about events related to the July 2006 war. Their observations, reactions, and emotions were varied and experienced in relation to different contexts. They saw Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s “measured response” comment as unjust, and also perceived Canada’s overall stance on this war as pro-Israeli. They questioned the double standards observed in Arab-Israeli conflict and commented on the perceived negative associations made between the Lebanese community and Hezbollah. Participants experienced

different emotions in response to the war. Anger, tension and confusion were noted; some reported feeling embarrassed about being Canadian during this difficult time.

Media influence was seen as significant surrounding the details of this war. Participants perceived a pro-Israeli bias in Western news media outlets, and expressed concern about what they perceived as limited exposure and education that most Canadians receive about global and current events, including an informed perspective about Middle Eastern politics and history. They also commented on the lack of accurate historical and factual knowledge about the situation in Lebanon, and the emphasis on highly sensationalized news stories of this war.

Participants expressed many common viewpoints regarding aspects of their Lebanese heritage and Canadian identity. They shared positive sentiments about their Lebanese heritage, emphasizing ancestry, connectedness to their homeland, families, culture, and community as significant features of their Lebanese heritage.

Most participants spoke about how their identity status as Lebanese-Canadians was challenged by their Canadian peers in relation to the July 2006 war. These challenges significantly contributed to how accepted these participants felt as Canadians in society during this time, and how accepting their peers were of them as “Canadians”.

Participants also articulated diverse views about what is a “Canadian”, the different perceptions of “being Canadian”, and the value placed on how Canadian identity is legitimized. For some, acceptance from “pure” Canadians was one way of securing their identity status as a Canadian. For others, the term Canadian appeared to be an inclusive one that represented all individuals in Canada, regardless of ethnocultural background. Ultimately, issues of articulating and defining Canadian identity were both complex and problematic.

Limitations

Several limitations have been identified in this research study. Qualitative research methodology focuses on acquiring highly subjective and contextualized understandings of a particular phenomenon of interest. Data gathered from participants' subjective accounts and experiences do not enable the generalization of research findings to the greater Lebanese community in Canada, although there appear to be many elements of perceived commonality. Additionally, my analysis was guided by the participants' responses to the main interview question, and the findings in this study were interpreted from the subjective accounts of each participant's interview data. These interpretations were made according to how I, as a researcher, understood their experiences and are therefore shaped by own worldview, education, and life experiences. Several factors may have influenced how participants discussed their experiences of being Lebanese-Canadian in Canada in relation to the July 2006 war.

The prevalence of media influences may have shaped how participants perceived themselves as Lebanese-Canadians during this time. Comments, observations, and reactions to media coverage of this war were emphasized in all participant interviews; however, factual corroborations and misperceptions were not addressed. Two news articles related to the July 2006 war in Lebanon were chosen for participants to review. These articles were employed as part of this study because of how important it was to address the terms used in the media to describe events related to this war (i.e., "measured response", "convenient Canadians"), and the influence of media portrayals on how participants perceived themselves as Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada. Thus, their identity narratives were shaped to a considerable extent by the participants' reactions to media during this time. These two particular media stories could be perceived as more sensational than strictly factual, and the information presented in these articles

perhaps did not offer a complete or balanced perspective of events related to the July 2006 war. Indeed, a significant portion of the content focused on the Canadian media climate and the Canadian government's response to the war. Other news media articles from alternative or international sources could have affected participants' responses differently. Moreover, the use of news articles in the data gathering process could be perceived as a form of intervention, where participants are first provided with particular information related to the July 2006 war and subsequently invited to discuss their experiences.

Four participants were recruited through the Edmonton Druze Community Association in Edmonton, Alberta. This is a religious-based community association, and thus, the opinions, comments, and life experiences documented in this study could be related to the common religious ties shared among these participants. This participant sample also represented a fairly educated portion of the Lebanese community in Canada. All participants had completed formal post-secondary education or specialized professional training. Thus, this sample may not have represented the diversity of the Lebanese community across Canada. Future research involving the Lebanese community would benefit from recruiting participants from diverse religious, regional and educational backgrounds.

Moreover, there was only one female participant involved in this research study. It is more customary for males in Arab cultures to engage in open discussions about Middle Eastern politics than women. Despite receiving a significant amount of interest and inquiries from potential female participants, only one ultimately agreed to be interviewed. It is important to understand that, for most members of the Lebanese community, the July 2006 war was a politically-charged topic. Thus, the perceived political aspects of this research inquiry coupled

with these cultural norms may have impacted the involvement of female participants in this study.

Gender may have also shaped how participants conducted themselves and spoke of their experiences to me as a female interviewer and a Lebanese-Canadian woman. A significant aspect of the female participant's narrative encompassed the struggles she has endured to be accepted as a successful Lebanese woman. She may have felt more comfortable discussing her struggles with me because there was a common gender and cultural link between us. In contrast, the male participants placed less emphasis on discussing their personal struggles and shared more of their opinions and comments in relation to their experiences of the July 2006 war. More involvement of women is recommended for future research with Lebanese-Canadians. None of the participants were vacationing in Lebanon at the outbreak of the July 2006 war. Interviewing Lebanese-Canadians who were vacationing in Lebanon may have resulted in different perspectives and experiences based on their firsthand accounts of the war.

Future Research

Several future research efforts are indicated to increase understanding of the key issues revealed in this research study. The most imperative focus relates to the lack of contemporary scholarly research related to the Lebanese-Canadian community in Canada, particularly the experiences of women. The majority of identity-related, cross cultural research studies have been conducted outside of Canada. This makes it difficult to assess how findings articulated in these studies relate to the current ethnocultural and sociopolitical climate in Canada. With our increasingly diverse society, social science researchers have an abundant opportunity to expand scholarship in Canadian-based, cross-cultural research.

The findings of this research study demonstrate the importance of applying a contextualized approach to researching identity and identity-related issues. The impact of globalization, the politics of identity, and the significance of belongingness to various social, national, ethnic, or religious groups cannot be removed from how individuals perceive themselves and their notions of belongingness in the world. One significant feature of this articulation process is awareness of the contradictions and tensions evident in conceptualizing the multiple and complex facets of identity. Consequently, it becomes more difficult to assess how useful common operational definitions of social constructs of race, identity, and biculturalism are in conducting cross-cultural research. The findings of this study demonstrate that the articulation of identity is a highly subjective and negotiated process. Poorly articulated and overly simplistic definitions do not fully describe these processes. Further research on dynamic models and contextual factors influencing bicultural identity development and identity negotiation processes are also indicated, particularly for members of mixed racial and ethnocultural groups.

This research inquiry has also elicited several questions in relation to the perceptions of ethnocultural diversity in Canada, and the differences among what were termed “core” Canadians and more recent immigrants. One important question is related to the perceived outcomes and impact of culturally pluralist ideologies and multiculturalism policies. What defines us as Canadians? What does it mean to be a Canadian? The findings of this study confirm that defining what is a Canadian and what it means to be Canadian is a crucial debate in articulating our national identity. This, in turn, has implications for immigration and citizenship policy and practices at provincial and national levels.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this research study offer important implications for multicultural education and counselling practice. Of particular importance is the multiple ways that identity is defined and constructed by Lebanese-Canadians. These findings highlight that participants identified different criteria for belongingness to a particular identity and ethnic group. Notions of ancestry, homeland, citizenship, culture, social relationships, and language were all related to how participants conceptualized their identity as Lebanese-Canadians. In this regard, it is incumbent on helping professionals to refrain from making assumptions about the extent of an individual's identification with a particular ethnocultural group based primarily on ethnic heritage.

It is important as well for educators, counsellors, and related helping professionals to recognize that identity-related issues are situated and shaped by several contextual and developmental factors, and must be understood within their sociopolitical context. The role of the media in perpetuating stereotypes about members of diverse ethnocultural communities may also serve as a significant source of identity-related stress. This may be compounded when one's ethnocultural identity becomes more salient as a result of increased media attention directed towards his or her ethnocultural group in times of crisis. The importance of educating others about the impact of media on how people form perceptions and attitudes towards members of diverse ethnocultural groups is salient. More attention needs to be focused on helping individuals deconstruct media messages as a means to becoming more critical consumers of media. The degree of identity-related issues expressed by individuals may also be linked to the reactions and comments received from others about aspects of their identity. Diversity of views and situations need to be considered.

The way socially constructed terms such as race, ethnicity, and biculturalism are used in everyday interactions may not be understood by others in the same manner. For example, the experience of being bicultural may not be described the same way by all bicultural individuals. Therefore, it is important that helping professionals become cognizant of their own beliefs and understandings of these terms, and how the operational definitions may not fully capture the range of experiences described by their clientele. They should be mindful of understanding the unique experiences of the clients they are working with and monitor how these terms are defined and used by them.

The findings of this study suggest that a significant aspect of how participants have described themselves as Lebanese-Canadians related more broadly to the political aspects of identity articulation. Increased efforts to address identity politics in counselling training programs can enrich the multicultural counselling competencies of helping professionals who work with culturally diverse clientele.

Impact on Researcher

The opportunity to engage in this research study provided me with many observations and insights about my growth as a qualitative researcher. A significant aspect of this research study concentrated on participants' conceptualizations of their Lebanese-Canadian identity. Conducting the interviews and hearing more about how participants articulated their identity prompted me to also reflect on my own identity articulation process as a Lebanese-Canadian. In particular, the participant recruitment process entailed several interactions with other Lebanese-Canadians, and it was at this specific phase in my research that I experienced the strongest connection to and awareness of my Lebanese heritage.

One of the concerns that I had, however, was with appearing to be more Canadian than Lebanese in my interactions with participants – in other words, being too “whitewashed”. This was a concern in part, because of the relative distance created by my role as a researcher and by having to adhere to formal research and data gathering procedures. Another aspect related to my advanced level of education, which has contributed to my predominantly Westernized frame of thought. It was challenging at times to reconcile that despite being one-in-the same with my participants, they also served as the objects of study for the purpose of my research. Thus, I attempted to adopt an intermediate researcher position whereby my Lebanese identity was complemented by my role as a researcher, rather than being in conflict with it.

Concluding Thoughts

This thesis research study illustrated the complex and evolving processes concerning identity and identity conceptualization for members of the Lebanese community in Canada related to the July 2006 war in Lebanon. The influence of media and the identity-related challenges experienced by participants has raised important questions about how notions of identity and citizenship are interconnected and situated within a highly political context. The need for ongoing understanding, intercultural empathy, and acceptance in an increasingly global world appears to be a significant aspect of successfully navigating cross-cultural exchanges in our diverse ethnocultural landscape.

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Appendix A



Nabiha Rawdah
 Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies
 University of Victoria
 PO Box 3010
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 V8W 3N4
 Canada

May 25th, 2009

Mr. _____
 President, Edmonton Druze Community Association
 14304-134th Avenue
 Edmonton, Alberta
 T5L 5V8
 Canada

Dear Mr. _____,

Hello, my name is Nabiha Rawdah and I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. I am a member of the Lebanese Druze community and have lived in Edmonton for several years prior to attending graduate school in Victoria. At present, I am working on my master's thesis research and would like to inform you of its relevance to the Lebanese community in Edmonton.

The main focus of my thesis research is on the identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians. I am interested in exploring how the events surrounding the July 2006 war in Lebanon have contributed to the identity of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada today. I intend to explore the perspectives of those participants who, like myself, have been raised primarily in Canada but still identify with their Lebanese heritage and uphold the religious and cultural traditions of their heritage. To date, I have found a limited amount of current academic research that has focused on Lebanese populations living abroad and the significance of the July 2006 war in Lebanon for Lebanese-Canadians. Therefore, because of my familiarity with Druze Community Association in Edmonton, I kindly request your permission and assistance at this time to recruit participants for this study through your organization and the Young Edmonton Druze Association.

The type of assistance I require for this purpose will involve the electronic distribution of recruitment materials to members of your organization and the Young Edmonton Druze Association via your organization's internet website, listserv, or community newsletter. All

recruitment materials, including an invitation to participate and poster advertisements, will be provided once your approval is confirmed. The time commitment and effort associated with your assistance will be kept to a minimum and you will not be asked to provide any personal contact information of potential participants. Any inquiries made about this research study can be forwarded directly to me. Upon completion of this research study, I intend to submit a summary report of my research findings to the Edmonton Druze Community Association as a way to express my gratitude and thanks for your contributions.

Should you require any other information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email. I can be reached by calling (250) 661-8858 or at nrawdah@uvic.ca.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request. Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nabiha Rawdah

/nr

Invitation to Participate

Hello! My name is Nabihah Rawdah and I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. As part of my graduate work, I am conducting a research study involving the Lebanese-Canadian community in Edmonton, AB.

The purpose of my research study is to explore how the events surrounding the July 2006 war in Lebanon have contributed to the identity of Lebanese-Canadians living in Canada today.

This study will involve one 90-minute research interview where participants will be asked questions about their life experiences and how the July 2006 war contributed to their identity as Lebanese-Canadians. One half-hour follow-up interview may also occur at a later date.

Reimbursement for transportation will be provided, in addition to a card and small gift.

Please contact Nabihah Rawdah at (250) 661-8858 or at nrawdah@uvic.ca for more information and to participate. *All inquiries will be kept confidential.*




DO YOU IDENTIFY AS A LEBANESE- CANADIAN?

IF YOU....

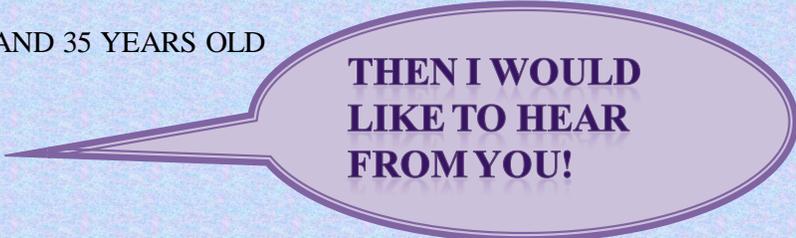
- WERE BORN IN CANADA AND HAVE MAINTAINED PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN CANADA

or

- WERE BORN ELSEWHERE, BUT HAVE MAINTAINED PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN CANADA FOR AT LEAST 7 YEARS

and

- ARE BETWEEN 20 AND 35 YEARS OLD



**THEN I WOULD
LIKE TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

- This research study will explore how the events surrounding the July 2006 war in Lebanon have contributed to your identity as a Lebanese-Canadian living in Canada today
- It involves one 90-minute research interview where you will be asked questions about your life experiences and how the July 2006 war contributed to your identity as a Lebanese-Canadian. One half-hour follow-up interview may also occur at a later date
- Reimbursement for transportation will be provided, in addition to a card and small gift

Please contact Nabiha Rawdah at (250) 661-8858 or at nrawdah@uvic.ca for more information and to participate. All inquiries will be kept confidential.

Nabiha Rawdah				
nrawdah@uvic.ca				
(250) 661-8858	(250) 661-8858	(250) 661-8858	(250) 661-8858	(250) 661-8858

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

An Exploration of Identity Narratives of Lebanese-Canadians Around the Time of the July 2006 War in Lebanon

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *An Exploration of Identity Narratives of Lebanese-Canadians Around the Time of the July 2006 War in Lebanon* that is being conducted by Nabiha Rawdah. Nabiha is a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by calling (250) 661-8858 or by email at nrawdah@uvic.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in counselling psychology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Anne Marshall, Ph.D. You may contact my supervisor at (250) 721-7815.

Purpose and Objectives

A major objective of this research study is to explore how your exposure to global media coverage of the July 2006 war in Lebanon has prompted you to re-examine your identity as a Lebanese-Canadian living in Canada.

Importance of this Research

This research study is important because a limited amount of research literature is currently available on biculturalism and the subjective experiences of bicultural Canadians living in Canada. Also, most of the research that has focused on Lebanese participants has been related to the civil war in Lebanon, and is no longer useful for the purposes of this current research study. This study will advance cross-cultural research involving the Lebanese community by addressing the role of the mass media and politics in the construction of the identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your Lebanese heritage and the potential insights you have gathered throughout your life experiences in Canada.

What is Involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will consist of one formal research interview and one optional follow-up interview scheduled for a later date. All interviews will be recorded via audiotape for future data analysis, and will consist of your responses to two interview questions. The first interview will last for 1.5 hours, and the second interview will last for 0.5 hrs. All interview schedules and locations will be arranged in collaboration with you and will take into account your personal, work, or academic commitments. Depending on the proximity of the interview location to your home, school, or work setting, there may be some travelling involved. All costs associated with your travel will be reimbursed. After the interviews have been completed, your participation will also involve a review of your interview transcript to ensure the accuracy of these data.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, and this includes the amount of time devoted to the research interview process. The interview process will consist of the formal research interview (1.5 hours), and a follow-up interview scheduled at a later date (0.5 hours). Also, any travel time to and from the designated interview location may be an additional source of inconvenience for you. This will depend on the proximity of this location to your home, school, or work setting.

Risks

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research. You may experience feelings of discomfort (e.g., grief or anger) which may occur during or after the research interview has been completed. Also, you may feel fatigued as a result of travelling to and from the interview location and during the interview process itself.

To prevent or to deal with these risks the following steps will be taken: 1) a follow-up appointment will be provided to debrief the feelings or reactions that you may have experienced throughout the course of your participation in the interview process; 2) a list of multicultural counselling resources will be offered as a means of enabling you to access further emotional support if latent feelings or reactions arise after your involvement in the research study, and 3) you will be offered to take a 10 minute break during the interview process, at which time you may go for a short walk, relax, or eat a light snack.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity for you to share your life stories and experiences. Also, this research can highlight the range of obstacles faced by the generation of Lebanese-Canadians like yourself growing up in a culturally diverse context in Canada.

The potential benefits of this research to society include that it will address the underlying political influences on identity formation and it will also illustrate how these political influences have affected the way members of diverse ethnocultural groups in Canada come to define themselves.

The potential benefits of this research to the state of knowledge include that this type of research can expand upon the existing literature on ethnic identity and models of ethnic and bicultural identity development. This type of research can also better inform multicultural counselling competencies and practices by bringing awareness to the identity narratives of Lebanese-Canadians.

Compensation

As a way to compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation, you will be fully reimbursed for transportation costs. This will include bus or taxicab fare to and from the designated interview location, as well as parking fees. A thank you card and small gift will also be provided. If you agree to participate in this study, this form of compensation to you must not be coercive. It is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research

participants. If you would not participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used in any analysis and will be promptly destroyed. As a gesture of goodwill, you will be permitted to keep the full monetary reimbursement associated with your transportation costs as appropriate, as well as the thank you card and gift.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

The primary investigator may have a relationship to you as researcher-close friend or researcher-family friend. To help prevent these relationships from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken: 1) You will be reminded prior to data collection of your right to withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation; 2) You will be permitted to keep the full amount of compensation provided even if you choose to withdraw from the research study, and 3) The primary investigator will engage in a conversation with you about dual role relationships should you or the primary investigator express any concerns or questions related to the perceived cultural, personal, or social obligations related to any aspects of your participation in this research study.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will seek verbal agreements from you throughout your involvement in this research study. These agreements will involve your ongoing consent to: a) decline answering any of the interview questions presented to you, b) participate in a follow-up interview at a later date; c) propose any interview scheduling changes, and d) review your interview transcript to ensure the accuracy of these data. The primary investigator will document all verbal agreements and the conditions under which they were discussed and made in her field notes.

Anonymity

You will not be an anonymous participant in this research study, as the principal investigator will know your identity; however, your identity will not be disclosed to any third parties. After your interview data has been collected, you will be presented with an opportunity to modify all personally identifying information in your interview transcript to protect your privacy prior to the dissemination of these data. Please see the next section on confidentiality for more details.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by providing the opportunity for you to implement a pseudonym name and alter any personally identifying information and features in collaboration with the primary investigator prior to the formal dissemination of these data. Also, in collaboration with you, all third party information identified in interview transcripts will be modified to maintain the privacy of these data. However, if you wish to declare your interview data as your own, this option will assume that you agree to waive your rights to any built-in protections for anonymity and confidentiality. The primary investigator will discuss this option with you and will consult with her thesis committee as

appropriate to ensure ethical research practices. All hard data will be stored in a locked, fire-safe filing cabinet. All electronic data files corresponding to this research study will be stored on the primary investigator's personal laptop computer in a password-protected file folder. At the end of a five year duration period, all paper documents and archived material will be permanently destroyed.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in a thesis presentation as well as in other presentations at future scholarly meetings and conferences. These results may also be summarized in the form of a scholarly article submitted for publication in academic journals. A brief newsletter article will be provided to the Edmonton Druze Community Association upon completion of this research study.

Disposal of Data

All hard data (e.g., paper documents) will be stored in a locked, fire-safe filing cabinet and electronic data will be stored in a password-protected file folder on the primary investigator's personal laptop computer. All electronic files will be archived onto a computer disc immediately following the completion of this research study. This disc will then be stored along with other materials in a locked filing cabinet for a period of five years. At the end of the five year duration period, all paper documents will be shredded, and the computer disc containing electronic files will then be destroyed.

Contacts:

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include Nabiha Rawdah or Dr. Anne Marshall. Please see the beginning of this consent form for their contact information.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (Ph: 250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date (m/d/y)

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.