Domestic Ethnicity: The Lebanese Diaspora in Newfoundland

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the descendants of Lebanese immigrants who arrived on the island of Newfoundland between the late 1800s and early 1900s. In contrast to diaspora communities found in the large urban areas that are popular destinations for immigrants, members of the Lebanese community in Newfoundland did not form any institutions (i.e. churches or ethnic clubs) in which to continue the expression of their culture prior to the incorporation of the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland & Labrador in 2016. Rather, in response to their position as one of the earliest non-European diaspora groups on the island, they have attempted to "fit in" with the dominant culture by cultivating what I propose to call a "domestic ethnicity" which is both reflexive and individual. Lebanese Newfoundlanders primarily express their ethnic identity within the home and/ or around others of Lebanese descent, allowing them to "un-mark" in the public sphere while discretely continuing Lebanese cultural practices. While diaspora scholars often focus on the institutional, public, and visible aspects of ethnicity, by examining folklore genres that take place in relatively more discreet settings this thesis explores the ways in which Lebanese Newfoundlanders express their ethnic identity in the domestic sphere. In so doing, it draws attention to the unique ways in which smaller places can shape diasporic experiences.

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Chapter One: Introduction

On a sunny day in May of 2010, I walked through the door of a health food store on Duckworth Street in St. John's, Newfoundland. Turning my head to the left I was surprised – almost startled – to see jars of tahini, bottles of olive oil, jars of grape leaves, and bags of burghoul. I had just arrived in Newfoundland, bringing with me the presupposition that many seem to have about the island – that its residents were almost exclusively descended from Irish and English settlers living in complete cultural isolation in the North Atlantic. How was it, then, that I had almost instantly encountered these familiar Lebanese foods? As I strolled the aisles the question continued burning until I was forced by my curiosity to ask the owner why she stocked these items, and if anyone ever bought them. She explained, to my astonishment, that Newfoundland has a small Lebanese community, and that many Lebanese people used to own shops nearby on New Gower Street. She had Lebanese friends growing up, she said. She celebrated a holiday with them once, but she couldn't remember what it was.

Save for one chance encounter during a flight to Vancouver, I would not meet any Lebanese Newfoundlanders in the ensuing decade. I would, however, continue to hear about them. Friends would tell me of people who they thought might be Lebanese. Others would mention that there were a lot of Lebanese people living on Bell Island at one time. Some people knew of Dr. Falah Maroun, an acclaimed neurosurgeon, but he was a Lebanese immigrant. Save for Lorraine Michael, who was recognizable as a provincial MHA at the time, nobody I talked to seemed able to name a definitively Lebanese person who was born in Newfoundland. I began to wonder if they had all left the province, and at times genuinely wondered where they had gone. After all, if there really were so many

Lebanese people in Newfoundland, why wasn't I seeing them? Where were they hiding? In many ways these are the questions this research set out to answer.

When I chose this research topic I knew that Lebanese Newfoundlanders existed, but knew little else about them. However, early research and preliminary interviews began to suggest a history that bore strong resemblance to that of my own family: Like many of my participants, my own paternal grandfather left Lebanon for the United States in the late 1880s. He came from Baskinta, Mount Lebanon, while my grandmother came from Ehden, North Lebanon – a mere 25 kilometres away from the source community of many early Lebanese immigrants to Newfoundland. Like them, they did not settle in a large urban area, choosing instead a small town in western New England where they were among the first non-European immigrants. Like many of their co-ethnics in Newfoundland they belonged to the Maronite church, they were business owners, and they willingly anglicized their names in an attempt to more easily integrate into 19th century American society. Like many of my research participants, only one of my parents is Lebanese, and I have primarily experienced Lebanese culture through family foodways. While Lebanese Newfoundlanders exist within a unique cultural context, I began to realize that this research might also have implications about the "old" Lebanese diaspora far outside of this island.

Methodology

Following approval by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) in July 2018, I put out a call for participants on social media. My post was shared by several people, and I was subsequently contacted by several potential participants, and began ethnographic interviews soon after. After meeting with my first participant, I was given the names and contact information of several other potential participants, and from there recruitment was snowballed. I was subsequently interviewed on a local radio programme about my research, prompting several additional participants to contact me.

Upon making contact with potential participants, I sometimes struggled to recruit them to record an interview. While any apprehension generally disappeared once I disclosed my own status as a Lebanese American, many participants doubted, against my assurances, their potential contributions to my research. Further, concerns around privacy and anonymity had the effect of shrinking the already small pool from which I planned to draw interviewees. This also forced me to seek participants from outside the area of my initial intended geographic focus. However, regardless of willingness to participate, nearly all potential participants I contacted responded to my research with enthusiasm, and expressed the desire for their history to be recorded.

Most interviews took place in participants' homes, where I was received warmly. During interviews my participants went out of their way to make me feel welcome and comfortable. I was consistently shown great hospitality, and if an interview went long I never left hungry. Those who I interviewed at home were happy to share aspects of their material culture, allowing me to photograph art objects and other markers and symbols of

Lebanese identity, and make copies of family photographs. Throughout my thesis I rely on excerpts from, and observations made, during interviews and meetings with participants. However, it must be acknowledged that my own position as an insider-outsider has influenced the kind of questions asked (or unasked) and observations made.

I also conducted research at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA) and found valuable material. It includes three cassette-recorded interviews with second and third-generation members of the Lebanese community in Bell Island and Corner Brook, conducted by two Lebanese Newfoundlanders in 1981. These cassettes are accompanied by a 19-page handwritten manuscript by John Basha. I also referenced a 21-page handwritten manuscript about the calendar customs of one Lebanese family in Corner Brook, originally from Tripoli, written by family member Anthony Kawaja in 1979. Furthermore, I consulted a 13-page typed manuscript about Newfoundland's Lebanese community, including maps of settlement, created by Edward Vincent Chafe in 1983. I was also aided in my research by a wealth of archival documents, books, photographs, and newspaper clippings generously loaned to me by Joe Boulos.

I ultimately interviewed a total of 16 people. My participants are as follows:

Lorraine Michael - a retired Member of the House of Assembly from St. John's. She is also a musician, and member of the Philharmonic Choir of the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra. Our interview took place in her home.

Bodra Elia – a singer, songwriter, and dance instructor originally from St. John's, currently based in Texas. Our interview took place over Skype.

Terri Andrews – a health safety environment and quality systems consultant and auditor from St. John's. She is also a performer and is the Executive Producer and Artistic Director for TaDa! Events. Our interview took place in her home.

Hannah Gaultois – a musician, Canadian Forces Reservist, and HR specialist from Stephenville, currently living in St. John's. Our interview took place in the Department of Folklore grad room at Memorial University.

Enda Davis – is a surveyor and retired St. John's city employee originally from Badger. Our interview took place in his home in St. John's.

Catherine Ryan – a paralegal from St. John's. Our interview took place at her home in St. John's, along with her brother **Brian Penney** – a carpenter and caretaker at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist, in St. John's.

Gary Gosine – mayor of Wabana, the prinicipal community on Bell Island. He grew up in an area of the town known as "The Green", alongside other families of Lebanese descent. After touring me around the island to show me sites of interest, our interview took place in the parking lot of a Catholic church.

Michelle Collins – a pianist and music educator who was born in St. John's and grew up in Grand Falls. Our interview took place at her home in St. John's.

Kimberly Offspring – a social worker from Portugal Cove. Our initial interview took place at her family home in Portugal Cove along with her father **John Offspring** and uncle **Leo**, who both grew up in St. John's. Kimberly and I also met for a second interview which took place in the Folklore department library at MUN.

Sharon Dominic – a retired nurse and administrator for Eastern Health. Though now based in St. John's, her family lived in Botwood before relocating to Grand Falls-Windsor. She is the founder and president of the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Bob Noah – a retired Canada Revenue Agency employee from St. John's, our interview took place at his home in Mount Pearl.

Charlotte Noah Walsh – a wife, mother, grandmother, and cashier from St. John's who grew up in Kilbride. She is active in the Lebanese Association, and at the time of interview was one of three people on its committee. Our interview took place in her home in St. John's.

Stephen Belanger – an attorney from Corner Brook currently living in St. John's. Our interview took place at his office in downtown St. John's.

Peter – the pseudonym of an anonymous participant who declined a recorded interview but allowed me to photograph his home and take notes during our meetings.

This thesis is based on interviews and experiences with the individuals above. Like any group of people, Lebanese Newfoundlanders are not a monolith. The generalizations and conclusions drawn in this thesis, therefore, may not reflect with perfect accuracy the experiences or opinions of every single Newfoundlander of Lebanese descent.

Existing Literature

In order to contextualize this study, I engaged with the following relevant clusters of academic literature: studies dealing with the Lebanese diaspora in Newfoundland, studies of the Lebanese diaspora elsewhere in the world, and folklore studies of immigrant/diaspora/ethnic culture and identity.

1. Studies of the Lebanese diaspora on the island of Newfoundland

When this study began, the body of folkloric literature concerning the Lebanese diaspora in Newfoundland consisted of two articles by John Ashton. In "'They got the English Hashed up a Bit': Names, Narratives and Assimilation in Newfoundland's Syrian/Lebanese Community" (1999), Ashton examines the attempts at the Anglicization of Arabic surnames among the first wave of Lebanese immigrants to Newfoundland. He describes the way that the metafolklore around these name changes represents "the process as acculturative (embodying cultural change as the result of culture contact) but not necessarily assimilative (embodying the submission of the immigrant culture to the dominant receiving culture)" (73). In "Kibbeh and Flatbread: Food and Identity in a Syrian-Lebanese Community" (2001), Ashton examines ethnic foodways among the

Lebanese community in Corner Brook. He highlights foodways and their place in the family as the most enduring element of Lebanese culture in Corner Brook (11-12), and identifies kibbeh as an emblematic food for Corner Brook's Lebanese community – both for its members, as well as other residents of the city (14). This thesis contributes to a small body of folkloric research concerning Lebanese Newfoundlanders by examining genres that have seen no study thus far, and by introducing the concepts of "un-marking" and "reflective domestic ethnicity" to describe diasporic processes.

1. Studies of the Lebanese diaspora elsewhere in the world

The Lebanese diaspora has received little attention by folklorists, and as a result the body of folkloric literature concerning it is sparse. One rare example of such scholarship is an article by Alixa Naff (1965) which describes the survival and persistence of certain supernatural beliefs among the Christian Lebanese diaspora in the United States. Naff offers little in terms of analysis of these beliefs, but does highlight the intersection between Levantine supernatural beliefs and the vernacular Christian traditions of the region. Other studies about the Lebanese diaspora in North America are primarily of a historical nature, examining the forces that created the diaspora, and focusing on the economic and social life of the diaspora's first two generations (Jabbra and Jabbra 1984; Hooglund 1987; Weale 1998; Sherman et al. 2004; Shibley 2014).

Many early studies focused on the ethnic identity-forming process, and the establishment of Lebanese institutions in diaspora (Hooglund 1987; Faires Conklin and Faires 1987; John 1987). These studies have explored the ways in which turn-of-the-century American racial policies and prejudices saw Lebanese and Syrian immigrants reflecting on, and constructing, their own ethnicity in order to establish and assert their

place in white America. (Hooglund 1987; Faires Conklin and Faires 1987; John 1987; Suleiman 1987). These works note that the Catholic faith of many early Lebanese immigrants was a source of discrimination (Faires Conklin and Faires 1987), determined their social place in their host country, and facilitated interaction with other immigrant and ethnic groups (Hooglund 1987; John 1987). These studies describe the way that discrimination caused Lebanese communities to turn to their own institutions – such as Churches and societies, to organize their life as a community and to find a refuge for the expression of ethnic identity (Faires Conklin and Faires 1987; Hooglund 1987; John 1987). David Weale's more recent work examines the later stages of the ethnic identity building process, including the development of an ethnic consciousness. Pointing out that prior generations would have identified primarily along family or sectarian lines, Weale draws the conclusion that the concept of a "Lebanese community", at least in Prince Edward Island, is a recent construction of later generations of Lebanese Islanders (Weale 1998).

While not folkloric, other ethnographic works about the Lebanese diaspora have often pointed to the role that folklore plays in the construction and maintenance of ethnic identity in worldwide Lebanese communities (Jabbra and Jabbra 1984; Tabar 2005). These studies generally examine larger Lebanese communities that were able to develop their own institutions, and in which performances of folk dance (*dabki*) and other celebrations of Lebanese culture, such as the *mahrajan* have become popular public displays of ethnicity (Jabbra and Jabbra 1984; Hooglund 1987; Weale 1998; Tabar 2005). As would be expected, these authors describe the way verbal genres, such as folk poetry, have generally not been continued by second and third generation Lebanese without a

working knowledge of their ancestral language, while folk dance and foodways have remained popular. While not an ethnographic study, the evolution of Lebanese-Canadian foodways has been examined by Rony Kastoun (2000), and his research has implications about the use of foodways in the construction and performance of ethnicity in the home. He draws the conclusion that Lebanese Canadians eat “biculturally” – choosing Canadian foods as a process of acculturation, while choosing Lebanese foods to maintain ethnic identity.

Thus far, there does not appear to be a study of heritage tourism to Lebanon. However, the engagement of members of the Lebanese diaspora with the modern Lebanese state, as well as the modern Lebanese state’s engagement with its diaspora, has seen some examination by Paul Tabar (2016) and Nicole Georges Maamary (2018).

This thesis contributes to existing scholarship concerning the Lebanese diaspora by focusing on a small, culturally distinct region, and applying a folkloristic approach.

1. Folklore studies concerning immigrant/diaspora/ethnic folklore and identity

Margaret Brady identified the following predominate themes of folkloric studies concerning diaspora groups (2011). Working under the assumption that ethnic folklore was moribund due to assimilation, early folklorists in North America were primarily concerned with the collection of what they considered to be “survivals” of ethnic folklore. Later, in large part due to the impact of Richard Dorson (1959), folklorists began to move away from this preoccupation with collection, and began to study the continuity and evolution of ethnic lore in North America, shifting from a focus on the lore of immigrants, to ethnic folklore. This included studies of Greek (Georges 1980), Ukrainian (Klymasz 1973), and Finnish (Köngäs-Maranda 1980) communities, among others

(Brady 2011, 432). Not long after, folklorists became interested in the concept of cultural exchange and the boundaries between (Dégh 1975; Jansen; Bauman 1971), and even within (Abrahams 1980; Dundes 1971 and 1975) different ethnic communities (Brady 2011, 433).

The primary focus eventually shifted from genres to performance, context (Kirshemblatt-Gimlett 1983), and social interaction surrounding the construction of boundaries between different diaspora groups, culminating in an understanding that ethnicity is not only community-based, but also highly personal, dynamic, and diverse (Brady 2011, 434-5). Recent trends in folkloric studies concerning immigrant and diaspora groups take an interdisciplinary approach, and take into account the historical, migratory, and global influences in the formation of ethnic identity in diaspora (e.g., Nahachewsky 2011). Some have focused on memory (Ben-Amos and Weissberg 1999), belonging, and displacement (Lattanzi Shutika 2011; Khanenko-Friesen 2015). This is the literature that has primarily informed the theoretical approach taken by this thesis.

This thesis contributes to this body of research by focusing on the relationship between ethnic and regional identity in a culturally distinct region. As such, the concepts expounded in this thesis may be useful for analyzing diasporic processes in parts of the world that are similarly small, culturally distinct, and relatively remote.

Newfoundland has seen folkloric scholarship about its Jewish (Kahn 1983; 1987) and Chinese (Li 2014) communities, but the province's Lebanese community remains largely understudied by folklorists. Since beginning this research, however, the Lebanese Business Community received Provincial Historic Commemoration, accompanied by a book to which I contributed a chapter (Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and

Labrador 2023). Additionally, Mariya Lesiv and I co-authored an article examining diasporic processes among Ukrainian and Lebanese diasporans in Newfoundland which builds on concepts contained in this thesis (Lesiv and Hirschfeld Shibley 2023).

Because this thesis studies Lebanese cultural expression through the prism of three genres, it will engage with additional relevant genre-related literature within its chapters.

Thesis Outline

This thesis concerns the cultural expression of an over century-old diaspora and attempts, as much as is reasonably possible, to examine diasporic processes over time and across generations. This approach arose from interviews, during which memories of childhood, the past, and prior generations featured prominently alongside discussions of the present. As such, each chapter will include relevant historical information, mostly clustered near the beginning. Its three genre-based chapters will begin with illustrative ethnographic snapshots to give the reader a sense of the subject material before identifying distinct elements and patterns, followed by their analysis.

This flow will be roughly reflected in the structure of this thesis. Chapter Two, “Historical and Geographical Context” provides relevant background about Newfoundland, Lebanese emigration, and the early diasporic processes of the first generation. It then introduces the concepts of “un-marking” and “reflective domestic ethnicity” to describe this approach to acculturation. Chapter Three, “Material Culture”, explores the ways in which objects displayed in the home act as reflective symbols of identity. Chapter Four, “Foodways”, delves into the rich culinary tradition of Lebanese Newfoundlanders and the ways symbolic foods are used to establish and assert boundaries while providing a medium for creative negotiations of identity. Chapter Five,

"Music", discusses the musical lives of the first two generations before examining the role of popular music genres in ethnic memory in two closely related families. Chapter Six, "Conclusion", contemplates the future of the Lebanese community by examining cultural revival processes, the relationship with contemporary Lebanon, and the high rate of civic engagement among Lebanese Newfoundlanders, before adding concluding remarks.

A note on terminology:

Strictly defined, the term "Newfoundlander" is exclusively reserved for those born on the island of Newfoundland (Bassler 1992, 63-66). This is the definition by which this text will generally adhere. "Lebanese Newfoundlander" will refer to all those of Lebanese descent born in Newfoundland, with exception made for self-identification. Lebanese Newfoundlanders are the sole subject of this study as, due to travel and recruitment constraints, Lebanese Labradorians fall outside the scope of this research, while recent immigrants were never part of its intended focus.

Despite this, generational status will be counted starting with the immigrant generation. Those who left Lebanon and came to Newfoundland will, therefore, be referred to as "first generation", their children "second generation", and their grandchildren "third generation" etc.

Chapter Two: Historical and Geographical Context

Pine-Clad Hills: An Exceedingly Brief Introduction to Newfoundland

Jutting out into the Atlantic Ocean, cut off from the Canadian mainland by the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, Newfoundland and Labrador is Canada's newest and easternmost province. Its rocky, windswept terrain encompasses the island of Newfoundland, the mainland region of Labrador, and many of the smaller islands dotting the coast. Home to 510,550 residents living within a territory of 405,720 square kilometres, Newfoundland and Labrador is the least densely populated of any Canadian province.[1] With a median age of just over 48 years, its population is also the country's oldest (Statistics Canada, 2021). The island of Newfoundland's position as Canada's easternmost extremity also makes it relatively remote, with many of its residents living closer to the French overseas collectivity of St. Pierre and Miquelon than to any location on the Canadian mainland.

This marginality within Canada is more than geographical in nature. In 1583 Newfoundland[2] witnessed the birth of the British Empire when it became its first overseas colony, with the formerly French colony of Canada following in 1763. For over 300 years the two would continue to be governed separately. When the prospect of confederation with Canada was first presented in 1869, Newfoundland's governing powers rejected it – as they did again in 1895. Newfoundland and Labrador gained self-governing Dominion status in 1855, but in 1934 voluntarily, and unprecedentedly, renounced it. A nation in limbo, two referendums were held in 1948 in order to determine Newfoundland's national

[1] Territories notwithstanding

[2] As the colony was officially known at the time. In 2001 the province's name was changed to "Newfoundland and Labrador".

future. Results of the first referendum were close but inconclusive, with no option garnering over 50% of voter support. In the second referendum, by a margin of 4.6%, Newfoundland and Labradorians voted in favour of confederation with Canada. Confederation was formalized in 1949, and Newfoundland was admitted into Canada as its newest province (Baker 2003, 6-15; Canada 1950, 15-41).

Having developed distinctly from Canada over the course of roughly three decades, Newfoundland and Labrador had already coalesced its own sense of national identity by the eve of confederation. Historically, in Newfoundland, this identity is closely tied to the English, Irish, French, and Scottish cultural roots of many of its residents; the geographical isolation afforded by the island allowing these cultures, along with their dialects and languages, to persist along a separate trajectory from elsewhere in North America. To this day the province is recognized for its distinct regional culture, most visible in its vernacular music, foodways, crafts, architecture, hospitality, and way(s) of life. The province is famous for its distinct and endemic dialect(s) of English, most closely related to those of the English West Country and southeastern Ireland, while Labrador is home to the endemic Inuttitut language.[3]

Confederation was, and occasionally still is, hotly contested, and Newfoundland and Labradorians have been negotiating their relationship to, and place within Canada ever since. The province's distinct history, culture, and identity, along with feelings of mistreatment by the federal government and experiences of othering by mainland Canadians, have entrenched a sense of difference among many Newfoundland and

[3] The province is also home to a small Francophone population, while Labrador, along with bordering regions of Quebec, is home to speakers of the Innu-Aimun language.

Labradorians. In a 2003 poll aimed at assessing residents on their feelings of regional and national identity, 72% described themselves as a "'Newfoundlander or Labradorian' first", as opposed to the 24% who answered "'Canadian' first" (Provincial Opinion Study 2003, 390). In 2021, 34,640 residents of the province listed "Newfoundlander" as their "ethnic or cultural origin" on the Canadian census (Statistics Canada, 2021). In spirit, Newfoundland and Labrador remains a nation within a nation.

However, behind a façade of homogeneity Newfoundland and Labrador society is one divided by many intersecting lines. The most obvious of these is the one drawn by the Straight of Belle Isle, which separates the population-centre of Newfoundland from sparsely populated Labrador. Geography is also partly responsible for a rural/ urban divide within Newfoundland. Located far to the east of the island St. John's is the province's capital, largest, and by most North American standards, only city. There remains a palpable divide between St. John's, often referred to simply as "Town", and the rural parts of Newfoundland, known locally as outports, or colloquially as "the Bay" (Laba 1978).

Long winters, coupled with cool, unpredictable summers and a dearth of topsoil has meant that agriculture has never been particularly widespread (Cadigan 1998). Rather, for most of its history the cod fishery had been Newfoundland and Labrador's economic backbone. The sole economic activity in some communities, for centuries many of the province's residents lived and breathed to the rhythm of the fishery. As a result, the fishery has coloured much of the province's history, culture, and identity, and remains a powerful regional symbol. After the devastating 1992 cod moratorium put an end to the commercial cod fishery, a significant number of Newfoundland and Labradorians left the

province to seek employment (Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Web Site Project 1998). They, along with those who had gone before them, gave rise to a Newfoundland diaspora (Delisle 2008). For many who remained, employment opportunities were found in newly developed industries, such as oil, gas, and other natural resource extraction (Higgins 2009). Today the fishery continues, albeit in a diversified form, with snow crab becoming a particularly lucrative species (Higgins 2011). In the era during which Newfoundland received its first Lebanese immigrants, however, cod was still king.

Cedar Roots: Historical Context of Lebanese Immigration

Propelled by a complicated mixture of factors, including persecution in their home country and better economic opportunities abroad, the years between 1860 and 1914 saw the migration of 330,000 people out of Lebanon (Labaki, 1992). While it is unknown how many of these emigrants may have intended to return to Lebanon, many settled permanently in their new countries and laid the foundation of a worldwide Lebanese diaspora. Today, the descendants of this early wave of Lebanese emigration can be found scattered across the globe, with the largest communities located in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, as well as other South American, West African, and Arabian Gulf countries (Hourani and Shehadi 1992, 3-4).

While many early Lebanese immigrants settled in the large, urban areas that have typically been popular destinations for immigrants, many also found themselves drawn to more rural and remote locations. This settlement pattern was influenced in part by the nature of pack-peddling – the near-ubiquitous trade of the first generation of Lebanese in North and South America (Hourani and Shehadi 1992, 7). The first known Lebanese

immigrant to come to Canada arrived in Montreal in 1882. The first immigrants in Nova Scotia had arrived around 1885, settling in the North Sydney area, and by 1887 the Lebanese diaspora began to land on Newfoundland's shores (Jabbra and Jabbra 1987, 23-24; Smallwood, Poole, and Cuff 1991, 268).

Due to the fact that reliable statistics are unavailable, it is difficult to enumerate the exact number of early Lebanese and Syrian immigrants who arrived in Newfoundland during this time. In the era leading up to World War I – the height of Lebanese immigration to Newfoundland – Lebanon did not yet exist as a sovereign country. As Lebanon was then governed by the Ottoman Empire, Lebanese immigrants were frequently recorded as "Turks", "Syrians", or "Assyrians" – demonyms which provide no distinction between Lebanese immigrants and others from the region. While Maronites, Syrian Christians, and Druzes[4] are known to have constituted the largest number of people bearing these demonyms in Newfoundland at the time, they were conflated with a smaller number of Palestinians and Armenians with whom they shared a common nationality (Bassler 1992, 51).

Further obscuring this data are those Lebanese who first immigrated to another country before arriving in Newfoundland. This settlement pattern was common, and it is known that few Lebanese immigrants came to Newfoundland directly. John Ashton notes that, while some Lebanese migrants came directly to St. John's, or neighbouring ports in Conception Bay, the majority arrived "as the result of secondary migrations" from larger centres such as New York and Montreal, but more frequently from Yarmouth, Sydney,

[4] Adherents to a distinct and esoteric Abrahamic faith primarily found in the Levant.

and other smaller Nova Scotia communities (Ashton 1999, 67). Secondary migrations were not limited to North America, however, and it is known that others arrived from countries such as Brazil and Colombia (Chafe 1983, 31). It is therefore unknown how many Lebanese may have been recorded as nationals of other countries.

Existing scholarship has cited 1911 government records which record 86 “Syrians” and 44 “Turks” living in Newfoundland at the time. Combining these figures suggests that immigrants from the Middle East constituted the single most significant number of foreign-born individuals on the island, excluding those from Great Britain, Canada, and the United States (Bassler 1992, 243; Smallwood, Poole, and Cuff 1991, 269). These numbers appear to have increased over time, and it is thought that between 200-300 “Syrians” had permanently settled in Newfoundland during the height of pre-World War I immigration (Bassler 1992, 51; *Evening Herald,* 8 May 1906). By 2016, 995 residents of Newfoundland listed “Lebanese” as their “ethnic origin” on the Census – the single largest number recorded under the “West Central Asian and Middle Eastern origins” category (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Existing research has suggested that between the years of 1896 and 1957 a total of 47 Lebanese families settled in Newfoundland, bearing 25 different surnames (Chafe 1983, 31). John Ashton’s work on Lebanese names in Newfoundland highlights 44 surnames belonging to Lebanese Newfoundlanders, and Edward Vincent Chafe’s research highlights five more, for a total of 49 names. These are:

> Abbas, Abbiss, Ahey, Alexander, Alteen, Andrews, Basha, Boulas, Boulos, Carbage, Corbage, Corey, Daniels, David, Dominic, Ellis, Faour, Ferris, Fiscobie, Gaultois, George, Gosine, Gossine, Hemeon, Herro, Joseph, Kawaja, Kelly, Kyte, Michael, Monier, Murphy, Neimas, Nickosey, Nikosey, Noah, Richard, Saab,

> Sapp, Sharlotte, Sheehan, Simon, Solo, Sphire, Suffidy, Tooton, Tuma, White, and Zarouk (Chafe 1983, 31; Ashton 1999, 74-76).

The discrepancy between Chafe's numbers and Ashton's may be due to the occurrence of alternate spellings of the same name (i.e. Nickosey/ Nikosey), as well as names that are not strictly Lebanese (i.e. George, Kelly). Thus, the combined 49 surnames listed above should be a fairly accurate representation of the names common to descendants of Newfoundland's early Lebanese immigrants. Other early immigrants bore names that are uncommon or unknown today – such as Anthony, Chibley, Howard, Howley, Kessop, Normey/ Normaine/ Nomanim, Mesood, Sweet, Thomas, Sophia, and Wydetti/ Wydette (Boulos 2023, 15-27). That 26 of these names are English or Irish points to the acculturative processes in which Lebanese immigrants were taking part immediately upon arrival.

The earliest Lebanese immigrants to arrive in Newfoundland were predominately Maronites – members of a Levantine Christian community that emerged for the first time in the eighth century (Bassler 1992, 51; Moosa 1986, 279). Like the other Uniate Churches (i.e. Ukrainian Greek Catholic), the Maronite church is an Eastern Rite church in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. However, unlike the other Uniate Churches, which restored union with Rome after parting ways with it at some point in their history, the Maronite church has never broken its communion since it was first affirmed in the sixteenth century (Moosa 1986, 217-278). Certain particulars of the Maronite Rite set it apart from the Latin Rite to which most of the world's Catholics belong. These include the use of Syriac as the liturgical language, the ability of married men to enter the priesthood, and a distinct monastic tradition (Moosa 1986).

Recent estimates of Lebanon's religious demography suggest that Muslims currently make up 54 percent of the population, while Christians comprise 40.5 percent – consisting of 21 percent Maronite, 8 percent Greek Orthodox, 5 percent Melkite (Greek Catholic), and 6.5 belonging to other Christian groups (U.S. Department of State, *Lebanon*). This contrasts sharply with the demographic makeup of the early wave of Lebanese emigrants; of those who emigrated from Lebanon prior to 1932, 123,397 were Maronites, 57,031 were Greek Orthodox, and 26,627 were Melkites, with the remaining 36,865 being Muslims and Druzes (Collelo, 1987).

While it could be the case that these demographics reflect the religious makeup of late 19th and early 20th century Lebanon, they also suggest that the pressure to emigrate may have been felt more acutely by Christians. Indeed, the mass emigration undertaken by Lebanese Christians at the turn of the 20th century took place against a sociopolitical backdrop of poverty, overpopulation, and religious persecution (Issawi 1992, 14-31). Following a brief invasion by Egypt ending in 1840, Lebanon's Maronite and Druze communities came into conflict with one another over political and economic power. Because these two communities lived in different regions at the time, European powers, along with the ruling Ottoman authorities, proposed the partition of the country into two sections – one Maronite, and one Druze, which came into effect in 1842 (Jabbra and Jabbra 1987, 15; Issawi 1992, 20).

While partition may have been intended to keep the peace between the two communities, it had the opposite effect. Existing tensions were exacerbated by the partition, as well as political reforms that were indifferent to – or even welcoming of – any conflict that could weaken both groups and restore Ottoman control of the region

(Issawi 1992, 19-20). The late 1850s saw the revolt of Maronite peasants in the north against Maronite feudal families, while in the south Maronite peasants were pitted against their Druze lords. This devolved into fighting between Maronites and Druzes, and in 1860 an armed conflict between the two groups swept through Mount Lebanon (Issawi 1992, 20-21).

This proved particularly disastrous for the Maronites. An estimated total of 11,000 Christians were killed as a direct result of the conflict, and a further 4,000 died as a result of the aftermath. Many more were left homeless by the conflict, which resulted in nearly 100,000 refugees. Ottoman authorities administered severe punishments to Turkish officers and civilians who had participated in the violence, but Druze leaders saw only light punishment for their actions. For Lebanese Christians, this seemed to signal Ottoman support of the Druzes, and indifference to the suffering of the Maronites (Issawi 1992, 18-21; Jabbra and Jabbra 1987, 15-16).

Indeed, Gerhard P. Bassler has described Lebanese and Syrian Christians as Newfoundland's first refugees (Bassler 1992, 51). There is evidence that this is how early Lebanese and Syrian immigrants thought of themselves, with religious persecution explicitly cited as a motivating factor for emigration in archival documents. These motivations were articulated clearly in the lines of the *Evening Herald* by Maronite immigrant Simon Tooton:

> A number of us immigrated to this country, not for the purpose of trade or to earn a livelihood, but to enjoy the freedom and blessings of English institutions. In our own country we have to suffer gross indignities at the hands of the "unspeakable Turk." Laws are made which curtail our liberty of action and make us not the equal of the Mohammedans; hence so many of our people immigrating. (Tooton 1906)

This sentiment was echoed by others of the first-generation, such as Ed Boulos, who asserted that Maronites came to Newfoundland "in search of liberty, conscience and trade, and to escape the oppression of a hard and unjust ruler and that. . . we have freedom from oppression, justice, and toleration in this, Britain's oldest colony" (Boulos 1906).

The memory of the massacres suffered during the 1860s – as well as the Ottoman response to them – have loomed large in the collective memory of the Maronite diaspora, and religious persecution has remained an oft-cited reason for emigration. However, Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi note that the height of Christian emigration from Lebanon occurred one to two decades after some of the bloodiest sectarian conflicts of the era – such as the aforementioned 1860 civil conflict. They suggest that restrictions upon freedom of speech imposed during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid, the increasingly strained relationship between the country's Muslim and Christian communities, a sense of social stagnation, and a wish to evade conscription into the Ottoman army would have been primary motivating factors. Economic improvement was a factor as well, and the booming economies of North America, South America, and Australia provided highly attractive destination points for young emigrants (Hourani and Shehadi 1992, 4-5).

It would be impossible to talk about the history of Lebanese Newfoundlanders without mentioning Hadath El Jebbeh – the small town in North Lebanon's Bsharri District from which many of Newfoundland's early Lebanese settlers originally hailed. Perched at an altitude of 1,450 metres above sea level, Hadath El Jebbeh overlooks the Qannoubine Valley, and is bound from the southeast to the northwest by mountains. The Parish Register of the town was destroyed sometime between 1914 and 1918, and any official census data is unavailable to the public due to Lebanon's precarious political

situation. However, research conducted in 1953 put the population of Hadeth El Jebbeh at 852 (Touma 1958, 17, 83).

Despite its size, there is evidence that Hadath El Jebbeh may have been a common source community for early Lebanese immigrants the world over. Indeed, at least as recently as the late 1950s, oral tradition in Dakar, Senegal, holds that young men from Hadath El Jebbeh were among the very first Lebanese immigrants to the country (Arsan 2014, 48). Edward Vincent Chafe estimates that roughly 55% of Newfoundland's Lebanese immigrants were born in Hadeth El Jebbeh, with another 26% born in Baalbek, and 7% in Beirut (Chafe 1983). My interviews, as well as archival materials, have shown Hadath El Jebbeh, along with other towns in the surrounding area, to be the origin of the Andrews, Boulos, Dominic, Gosine, Michael, and Noah families.

It may initially seem surprising that so many of Newfoundland's Lebanese families can trace a lineage back to the same small community. However, this is indicative of a tendency shared by early Lebanese immigrants across Atlantic Canada. Despite a seemingly random pattern of settlement, closer examination shows that the Lebanese in Atlantic Canada have "clustered in pockets, large or small, of relatives or covillagers" (Jabbra and Jabbra 1987, 21).

The fact that so few early Lebanese immigrants hailed from large cities may account for the relative ease with which they adjusted to life in Newfoundland. Baalbek is a small city similar in size to St. John's, while Hadath El Jebbeh is a small agricultural community. Like other villages dotting Lebanon's northern mountains, Hadath El Jebbeh is relatively rural and remote. This would have been particularly true at the time of immigration, as Lebanon's mountain communities were characterised by poor roads and a

general lack of communication infrastructure. Villagers, therefore, knew little of neighbouring villages, let alone the world outside their country (Jabbra and Jabbra 1987, 19). Lebanese villagers who settled in Newfoundland's outports may have simply found themselves in a different kind of rural community. Meanwhile, as a small city situated along the sailing routes of the day, St. John's may have felt relatively larger and less isolated to the villagers who settled there.

However, the same ocean that connected St. John's to the rest of the world nonetheless isolated immigrants from the culture and spirituality of their home country. When the first Lebanese settlers arrived in Newfoundland, they found themselves in a country without a Maronite Church. None was ever established, and while Maronite priests visited annually to provide religious services, immigrants otherwise attended Mass at Latin Rite Churches (Westcott 2019, 201-203). As Newfoundland has historically been divided along denominational lines (Thomsen 2005), this determined the place of Lebanese immigrants in Newfoundland society.

Specifically, this appears to have aligned Lebanese immigrants with Catholic Newfoundlanders of primarily Irish, but also French descent. Their shared Catholic faith allowed Maronites to intermarry with their Newfoundland-born coreligionists, and today it is common to meet Lebanese Newfoundlanders of partial Irish or French, descent. This may also account for the way in which some Lebanese surnames were "hibernicized" rather than anglicized (i.e. Murphy, Sheehan, and Kelly). However, despite the adoption of Latin Rite Catholicism, some of my participants have expressed a continued identification with their Maronite heritage, and an annual community event hosted by the

Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador has sometimes featured Mass lead by a visiting Maronite priest.

If it is difficult to determine the number of Lebanese immigrants who arrived in Newfoundland at the turn of the last century, it is only slightly less difficult to ascertain why those immigrants chose Newfoundland as their destination. Indeed, while my consultants offered many reasons as to why their ancestors left Lebanon, several have themselves expressed puzzlement over why they would have chosen to settle in Newfoundland specifically. However, John Ashton explains trade as being the driving factor behind this migration. After settling for a time in communities in Nova Scotia, "typically," Ashton says, "Arab businessmen who had established themselves in those places would send out junior family members to extend their trade, first as pack-paddlers and later as the operators of more conventional business enterprises in Newfoundland's commercial centres" (Ashton 1999, 67).

Indeed, my interviewees have described what appears to be a process of chain-migration, with several members of a family immigrating to Newfoundland successively. This, combined with the fact that most Lebanese Newfoundlanders with whom I have spoken can trace a direct link back to the same village in North Lebanon, would suggest chain migration and family reunification as important motives in the decision to settle in Newfoundland.

It is also possible that, among those who did come to St. John's directly, some may have settled in Newfoundland unintentionally. While the decision to emigrate involved a certain amount of knowledge of the outside world, as Hourani and Shehadi put it,

> The knowledge might be minimal. . . there are stories of emigrants thinking they were going to one place and finding themselves in another, and in the popular language of the Lebanese countryside 'America' might be used indiscriminately as a term for all the places where emigrants settled. (Hourani and Shehadi 1992, 6)

Indeed, this phenomenon was described by one of my consultants, who shared the story of her great-grandfather's arrival in Newfoundland:

> When my great-grandfather first came, I think they thought they were going to New York. But when the ship stopped here, he heard people – because they didn't speak English, they didn't know a word of English - they knew the word of the place was "New York". But when he was stopped and heard people talking on the wharf, and heard "New" for "Newfoundland". But at the same time he also heard someone speaking Arabic and thought "Oh, well, I can talk to this person". And when he talked to this person he must have, as the story goes, been convinced to just stay because there was a community here already. . . So I don't think Newfoundland was supposed to be the final destination. (Michelle 2018)

Spreading Out: Secondary Settlement Patterns

While trade was a motivating factor for Lebanese migration to Newfoundland, it remained a motivating factor for internal migrations within the island. Reacting to developments in Newfoundland's economy, some enterprising Lebanese left their original communities of settlement in order to establish businesses in the island's boomtowns. While these included relatively larger communities, such as Corner Brook and Grand Falls-Windsor, my interviews have also highlighted a number of smaller, relatively remote communities, such as Stephenville, Badger, and Millertown Junction, in which Lebanese Newfoundlanders either settled or opened businesses. Edward Vincent Chafe notes the areas of Lebanese settlement, from West to East, as St. George's, Benoit's Cove, Curling, Deer Lake, Botwood, Windsor, Grand Falls, Norris Arm, Glenwood, Gambo, Carbonear, Bell Island, and St. John's (Chafe 1983, 07).

This geographic distribution is partly a legacy of peddling. As St. John's is not geographically central, it was not an adequate supply centre for peddlers who worked away from the Avalon. For this reason, Lebanese businesspeople first opened stores along the railroad line at regular intervals in order to help keep peddlers supplied with goods. As more peddlers opened their own businesses, these supply stores converted to dry goods to serve their communities. When they ultimately outgrew local demand, they expanded or relocated to other communities (Chafe 1983, 36). This process had the effect of dispersing Newfoundland's Lebanese community throughout the island, with some of its members settling in small communities in which they were the only Lebanese family.

After peddling for a while, many Lebanese immigrants opened stores. Generally, these were grocery, dry goods, wholesale, or corner stores. As it was common for families to live above their stores, life for some families was marked by a lack of distinction between work and home environments, paralleling the experience of Lebanese shop owners elsewhere in Atlantic Canada (Weale 1988, 31-35). However, despite the long hours and hard work, owning a store was a means of upward mobility, and in time many Lebanese families in Newfoundland settled into a comfortable life of financial prosperity.

The typical migratory pattern, as well as the pack-peddler-to-store-owner trajectory, is exemplified by Kaleem Noah – an important early figure in the establishment of Newfoundland's Lebanese community. Originally hailing from Hadath El Jebbeh, Noah first emigrated to New York in 1887, working as a peddler throughout the Northeastern states and Canada. He settled for a time in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, before moving to St. John's, Newfoundland in 1896. There he established a wholesale dry goods business, with several locations near the St. John's waterfront. Noah became

something of a patriarch of the growing Lebanese community, being an outspoken advocate for his community, and assisting many other Lebanese in their immigration by employing them as peddlers servicing the outports (Smallwood, Poole, and Cuff 1991, 84, 268; Ashton 1999, 67-68).

It is possible that the location of Kaleem Noah's store on the West End of Water Street influenced the geographic distribution of Lebanese settlement in St. John's. As the community in St. John's grew, it began to coalesce around the area of New Gower Street, where many Lebanese immigrants opened stores[5]. This area would come to be the heart of the urban Lebanese community in Newfoundland, and would remain so until the City expropriated the land between the years of 1964 and 1966 (Phyne 2014, 29). The spirit of this once-vibrant neighbourhood was captured by Terri Andrews:

> My grandmother was, you know, as old as Methuselah – she'd open up the window in the evenings after supper, and she'd lean out the window and she'd talk to her neighbours across the way, leaning out the window. All of that happened on that street, I remember it. It's like a movie for Little Italy or something. (Terri 2018)

The destruction of the neighbourhood around New Gower Street and Brazil Square dealt a severe blow to the Lebanese community in St. John's and has loomed large in the collective memory of the community. Terri Andrews and Lorraine Michael have shared their feelings that residents of the area were undercompensated for their properties. While by no means an ethnic enclave, the clustering of Lebanese together on New Gower Street fostered a sense of community. With its loss, the community found itself scattered throughout the city and isolated from one another – conditions that seem to have

[5] See Figure 1.

accelerated a process of cultural attrition. Indeed, David Weale attributes the rapid assimilation and integration of Charlottetown's Lebanese community to a similar pattern of geographic dispersal (Weale 1988, 38).

Standing Out: Experiencing "Difference"

> *I didn't identify myself as different – others identified me as different. You know, all I knew is I was Lebanese* (Lorraine 2018).

The relationship between Lebanese Newfoundlanders and their neighbours has been mostly amicable. Indeed, Lebanese business owners relied on, and owed their success to, the patronage of non-Lebanese Newfoundlanders. Further, my interviewees have described their deep, enduring friendships with those outside the Lebanese community. As Leo Offspring put it – "They were good as gold to us". Evidence of this relatively friendly relationship may be observed in the fact that intermarriage has been so common that 13 out of the 16 individuals I interviewed during my fieldwork have one non-Lebanese parent. On the whole, Lebanese Newfoundlanders are well-integrated into Newfoundland society, and some have even assumed prominent roles in the political and social structure of the province. These include retired provincial MHA Lorraine Michael, Provincial Supreme Court Justice Alphonsus Faour, Mayor of Wabana Gary Gosine, President and CEO of Newfoundland Power Peter Alteen, and Senator Michael Basha.

However, the experience of the Lebanese in Newfoundland has not always been one of acceptance. While the record of public opinion about Newfoundland's early Lebanese immigrants would appear to be short, prejudices against them are evidenced only a short time after their arrival. In 1906, when the Chinese exclusion bill was being debated in the Newfoundland legislature, some Legislative Council Members were

vociferous in their assertion that Maronites should be included in the bill as well. Council Member James Angel's feelings toward the Maronites were summarized in the following way:

> He (Mr A.) referred to the Maronites, whose habits and manner of life and business called for legislation, perhaps more strongly than the habits and business of Chinamen. They were a class of people who gave very little profit to the revenue. . . They were far more objectionable in their habits than the Chinese and should be restricted if possible by legislation. The Chinese did not sell, they worked and were thrifty and saving, while the other class went about selling cheap goods for four or five times their value. (*Evening Herald,* 1 May 1906).

These sentiments were echoed by Council Member John Anderson, who voiced his opinion that "There were others in this country besides the Chinese whom he would like the Government to take an interest in, and these were the Maronites. . ." and his hope that "the time was not far distant when every one of these peddlars [sic] would be obliged to pay a tax just as was now proposed to put on the Chinese" (*Evening Herald* 3 May, 1906). It is significant that, at the time, James Angel was the owner of the largest iron foundry on the island, while John Anderson was a wholesale merchant (Bassler 1992, 52). Both men were members of the Newfoundland's merchant class and may have been concerned that the growing number and influence of Maronite businesses might pose a very real (and in the case of John Anderson, very direct) threat to their own.

These statements drew the ire of Maronite leaders, such as Thomas N. Sphire, Simon Tooton, Kaleem Noah, and Ed Boulas, who rushed to defend the reputation of their nascent community in the columns of the evening press. Kaleem Noah's response in the *Evening Herald* typifies this response:

> Mr. Angel has been pleased to describe our homes and our habits, our business methods and our morals. What does he know about us. How many of our homes has he ever been through to say whether we live in cleanly, healthy houses or in

> squalid dens of filth and misery? Is he so well acquainted with our domestic life as to be able to speak with authority upon our habits and our morals. Upon what does he base the assertion "that we are a class concerning which legislation of a prohibitive or restrictive character is more necessary." I boldly and fearlessly challenge Mr. Angel to repeat on the street or in the press the language that he used in the Legislative Chamber the other day. He dare not do it. (Kaleem Noah, *Evening Herald*, 9 May 1906).

However, while the responses of Noah, Sphire, and Boulas were unprejudiced, even sympathetic, toward Chinese immigrants, Simon Tooton felt insulted by the comparison:

> To compare us with the Chinese is, to say at least, scandalous. We do not depress the labor market by working for low wages, our morality is as high as any Christian nation in the world. We worship the living God and not Confucius. Can the same be said of the Chinese? Their habits, customs and religion are diametrically opposed to the Caucasian. We are of the same race as the people of the different European nations. (Simon Tooton, *Evening Herald*, 9 May 1906).

The responses of other Maronite leaders, as well as memories of the first generation shared during interviews, have suggested that Tooton's sentiments were far from unanimous among the community at the time. However, his appeal to Christianity in attempting to position Maronites as "Caucasian" as a response to discrimination is nonetheless illuminating.

Ultimately, institutionalized discrimination against both communities would come in the form of immigration restrictions enshrined in the Aliens Act, 1906 (enacted by Newfoundland legislature in 1906). This piece of legislature was enacted with the aim of restricting, or even halting, the flow of Arab and Chinese immigrants into Newfoundland. In this aim it was largely successful, having the effect of pausing Lebanese immigration to the island. This left Newfoundland's Lebanese population isolated from their home

country and deprived of growth through immigration. (Bassler 1992, 39-69; Ashton 1999, 69).

The Aliens Act, 1906 was replaced by the Immigration Act of 1926, which remained in force until 1934. This Act formalized Newfoundland's immigration law, broadened the scope of immigrants deemed "undesirable" to the colony, and facilitated their deportation. It also allowed the government to prescribe the minimum amount of money a potential immigrant was required to possess – to be determined by race, occupation, or destination. It also allowed the government to prohibit "the landing of immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of the Colony, or immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character", and enabled both the Immigration Officer and Minister of Finance and Customs to deport any immigrant found to be in violation of the conditions of the Act (Bassler 1992, 85).

While changes to Newfoundland's immigration law would be made over subsequent years, it remained restrictive up until Confederation with Canada in 1949 (Basler 1992, 211). However, although Confederation eased restrictions on immigration, evidence suggests that the number of Lebanese immigrants settling in Newfoundland did not return to pre-World War I numbers. Edward Vincent Chafe estimates, at the time of his writing in 1983, that over 57% of Newfoundland's Lebanese immigrants arrived between 1896 and 1957 (Chafe 1983, 31).

The country into which Newfoundland's Lebanese immigrants arrived had a distinct social structure of its own. The divide between St. John's and rural Newfoundland generally coloured the way in which Lebanese immigrants were received in their communities of settlement. According to Gerhard P. Bassler,

> The susceptibilities of Newfoundlanders towards outsiders have become evident in various situations and in different ways. In the rural districts in-migrants (including Newfoundlanders from other areas) into an established outport community tended to be viewed and treated as "strangers." There the non-British alien was just another outsider. In the capital city of St. John's, however, non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants tended to be classified as "foreigners," often into their second and third generations. The depth of this sentiment surfaced as late as 1989, when a local media debate instructed the public that the term "Newfoundlander" should be confined to the native-born and did not include immigrants and "mainlanders." (Bassler 1992, 66).

Perhaps in response to the experience of othering and discrimination – both under Ottoman rule and in Newfoundland, the first generation seems to have adopted what might be described as a generally assimilationist attitude. Indeed, while members of the first generation may have initially viewed themselves as refugees, by World War II there is evidence that some had begun to identify as Newfoundlanders. In a 1940 issue of the *Evening Telegram*, a writer under the pseudonym "Hadet-El-Joubbe" responded to the xenophobia of the time, and defended the patriotism of "Syrian-Newfoundlanders", writing that:

> There are people who have the bare-faced audacity to look down on the Syrian people here and regard them as "Foreigners" and "Slackers." To them I will say, such an ignorant attitude is highly discreditable and the very epitome of all that is low and mean.
>
> The Syrian-Newfoundlander, as well as the Syrian in general, has proven his worth, and will continue to do so, despite all who look down from their haughty and despicable perch, and chose to regard them as the very dirt under their feet.
>
> Should they reflect for a moment, they would realize that the Syrian-Newfoundlander is every inch a citizen as much as they are and as such, is just as anxious and concerned, if not more so, for the welfare and prosperity of Newfoundland and the British Empire. (Hadet-El-Joubbe, *Evening Herald*, 18 April 1940)

It should be noted, however, that this adoption of patriotism for the new country by Lebanese immigrants is not unique to Newfoundland and has been noted in Lebanese communities elsewhere in North America (Suleiman 1987, 48-49).

When describing his grandfather's silence about life in Lebanon, Stephen explained that "at that time, at the turn of the century and later, when I was a child. . . they wanted to fit in, and didn't want to be seen as different, because there was real discrimination" (Stephen 2019). Experiences of discrimination were not limited to the first generation, however, and several of my consultants recalled some of their own experiences during interviews. These include being taunted with several slurs that, intentionally or not, include elements of ethnic misidentification. "I was called the N-word" Stephen recalled, "called a 'little N- word'. . . you'd hear them when you were walking up the road, some cretin would scream out the N- word" (Stephen 2019). Other disparaging terms include "Jew" (used pejoratively), "Jackatar" (a local slur for a person of mixed French and indigenous descent), and "Tally" or "Tallyman" (from 'Italian') – a local slur seemingly reserved exclusively for individuals of Middle Eastern extraction. Verbal abuse persisted and evolved over time – Kimberly, who grew up after 9/11, remembered being called a "terrorist" when she was in middle school.

Though rare, occasional acts of violence against Lebanese-Newfoundlanders have been noted in existing literature (Ashton 1999, 69). In 1906 a headline appeared in the *Western Star* that read:

> **Lively Scene at Bell Island: Miners and Syrians Fight**
> Bell Island witnessed another very disorderly scene on Christmas Eve and as a result, three men are under the doctor's care, one being in a very bad state having been stabbed in three places. It being the festive season, some of the men procured liquor and made merry. Evidently they indulged in too much as a quarrel arose

with some Syrians near the mines. Words lead to a fistic encounter which ended in knives being drawn. For several minutes the mélée was furious and the wonder is that some of the combatants were not killed outright. (*Western Star*, January 1909)

There are also examples of what might today be considered hate speech, as recalled by Lorraine Michael:

In later years my father had a business. . . a very popular business, the Royalton Club, on Cochrane Street. And he experienced guys who may not have been happy with the way he ran the club, because if you arrived at eleven o'clock and you had been out drinking somewhere else all night, my father didn't want drunks in his club. So he locked the door, and so you had to ring the doorbell – if he knew who you were you got in. . . but he would only do it after once there was the point where you had sort of the last round of drinks was coming up and you would get. . . people who go from bar to bar. . . so he had trouble a couple of times. But one of the times, his car had spray-painted on it "FUCKING ARAB". So we're talking the 1970s that happened. (Lorraine 2018)

Aside from these occasional occurrences of overt prejudice, some Lebanese Newfoundlanders have faced microaggressions which instill a feeling of othering or difference from the rest of Newfoundland society. Several have described this experience when being asked the seemingly innocuous question "Where are you from?", which Lorraine typified in the following way:

. . . people would say "Where are you from?" I said "Well, I'm from St. John's". "No, where are you *from*?" I said "I'm from St. John's!" [laughing] right? You know? And then they'd push it, and I'd say "Well, I'm Lebanese, I'm a Lebanese Newfoundlander," I said "My father is Lebanese". . . so, the sense of being different really got laid on you by others. (Lorraine 2018)

This is an experience that remains common today, even among the younger generation. "I get asked that a lot", Kimberly Offspring told me,

like 'Where are you from?' And I know Newfoundlanders ask that a lot, but I know they're not asking it in the same way that they would to somebody who is a Newfoundlander, right? Like, they're not asking 'Oh what community are you from?' they're asking like 'You're not from here, where are you from?' I've had people ask me like 'Oh where are you from?' and I say 'I'm from St. John's', and

> they say like 'Oh, where are your parents from?' I say 'St. John's'. 'Where are your grandparents from?' . . . (Kimberly 2018)

People of Arab and Middle Eastern descent have never fit comfortably into North America's racial milieu. Indeed, while early Arab-Americans advocated for, and won, their right to be considered white according to the country's Jim Crow-era racial laws, their lived experiences have not been ones easily to categorize as "whiteness" (Suleiman 1987; Faires Conklin and Faires 1987; Hooglund 1987; John 1987; Hartman 2006). Historian Matthew Frye Jacobson describes the ambiguous nature of Arab racial identity in the United States as a 'probationary whiteness', reflecting the way in which Arab-Americans, through litigation, 'became' white and the fact that this hard-won legal status can be, and has been, revoked periodically (Jacobson 1998, 57, 174).

While the social and racial contexts of Newfoundland and the United States differ considerably, Lebanese Newfoundlanders, too, exist along the margins of whiteness. This is embodied by feelings of racial ambiguity among some participants – "too brown to be white, too white to be brown", as Kimberly put it (Kimberly 2018). A sense of probationary whiteness may be felt more acutely in a region wherein the majority of the population is of Northern European descent and in which the borders of whiteness are consequently perceived to be drawn closer. Indeed, the few interviewees who spoke about their identity in explicitly racialized terms (including those with one white, non-Lebanese parent) did not self-identify as white. "I've never been called a 'white woman' in my entire life", Bodra told me, adding that after leaving the province and living ". . . in areas that are so black or Latin American, for the first time I'm now all of a sudden a 'white woman'" (Bodra 2018).

“Fitting In”: Un-Marking and Domestic Ethnicity

In her article Dismantling Local Culture, Amy Shuman discusses how the concept of “local culture” in folkloristics can be essentializing (Shuman 1993). Key to her argument is the concept of “marked” and “unmarked” local culture, which is informed by psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon’s description of marking as it pertains to race (Shuman 1993). While not using explicit terminology, Fanon describes how people of colour are “marked as a distinct group”, allowing whiteness to exist in an “un-marked” and “natural” category (Fanon 1990; Shuman 1993, 346-347). The same, Shuman argues, is true of any “purportedly authentic local category” (Shuman 1993, 346). Expanding this concept to include culture and ethnicity, in addition to race, reveals that within the context of Newfoundland, those groups falling outside the locally dominant Anglo/Irish Newfoundland culture(s) may be perceived as existing in a similarly “marked” category.

Existing scholarship about the Lebanese diaspora has described their integration into diasporic societies as either assimilative or acculturative (Hooglund 1987; Ashton 1999). John Ashton discusses acculturative processes as “embodying cultural change as the result of culture contact”, while assimilative processes communicate “the submission of the immigrant culture to the dominant receiving culture” (Ashton 1999, 73). Lebanese diasporic processes in Newfoundland reveal a third alternative to describe the apparently assimilative or acculturative process that can be called “un-marking” (Lesiv and Hirschfeld Shibley 2023). While un-marking may be a consequence of cultural contact, it

represents neither culture loss nor cultural submission. Rather, my research has revealed this to be a process in which Lebanese Newfoundlanders have been active participants.

Unlike assimilative or acculturative processes, which may be understood to affect both public and private aspects of culture, un-marking is a primarily public phenomenon. Facilitated by those practices which allow the public presentation of an assimilated version of the self, un-marking can take many forms. Early examples of un-marking include the choice to adopt English (or Irish) surnames, wearing western styles of dress, and the use of the English language. My interviews have revealed that a desire for un-marking persisted beyond the first generation. "It was really important for my father to fit in. . . " said Lorraine, recalling her father's use of a cosmetic powder in an attempt to lighten his skin (Lorraine 2018). This literal example illuminates the way in which un-marking has allowed Lebanese Newfoundlanders to leverage their position along the margins of whiteness and belonging in order to lean a little closer to its core.

The process of unmarking is well-documented by photographs. Individuals among the first two generations of the Lebanese and Syrian diaspora in Newfoundland were early pioneers of photography on the island, meaning that many early photographs were taken by themselves. Having studied photography in Paris, Damascus-born Maronite immigrant Anthony Tooton opened the Parisian Studio on Water Street – one of four photography studios operating in St. John's at the time. By 1911 he had become the Newfoundland agent for the Eastman Kodak company, building a network of photography equipment stores and repair shops under the name "Tooton's, the Kodak

Store"[6] (Smallwood, Poole, and Cuff 1994, 397). It is perhaps Tooton's influence that caused other members of the Syrian and Lebanese community to take an interest in, and become proficient in, photography.

As such, photography provided Lebanese Newfoundlanders with a means by which to frame their experiences, values, and aspirations. Apart from the people they centre, as well as photos of the first generation before emigrating, of family left behind, or those taken while on trips to Lebanon, there is little outwardly "Lebanese" about most of the photographs kept or displayed by my participants. On the contrary, many of the photographs my consultants have shared with me are filled with images that appear to document the process of un-marking.

Many photographs depict first and second generation Lebanese Newfoundlanders dressed in the contemporary western clothing, posed next to cars, enjoying festive meals, parties, picnics, and otherwise projecting an image of happiness, harmony, and success.[7] Other images show Lebanese Newfoundlanders engaged in activities that would be familiar to most other Newfoundlanders, such as fly-fishing,[8] hunting, or walking at Bowring Park in St. John's.

While a general lack of photography centring Lebanese cultural practices may reflect the realities of the shifting cultural lives of the second generation, it is also possible that these images represent, at least in part, an attempt by the first and second generations to assert themselves as Newfoundlanders. Regardless of conscious intent, by

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[6] Later changed to "Tooton's" after Confederation.
[7] See Figure 2.
[8] See Figure 3.

creating a frame that foregrounds experiences common to Newfoundlanders to the near-exclusion of those that are Lebanese, the photographers of the first and second generations succeeded in producing images of themselves doing precisely what they struggled to do off-camera – "fitting in".

Despite this, the ethnic identity continues to feel relevant, meaningful, and important to many today. Indeed, some of my interviewees have described deep feelings of connection to their Lebanese identity. For some, these feelings can supersede those felt toward their regional identity. As Sharon put it "I'm passionate about being a Newfoundlander, but equally or more so Lebanese" (Sharon 2019). "I feel more Lebanese than anything else. . ." Kimberly told me. "I don't feel a quarter Lebanese. I feel more than that. I don't feel like I'm a Newfoundlander" (Kimberly 2018). "The tie to Lebanon is so strong. . ." John explained, "And it's inside of you when you're born – no matter where you're born to. . . it's always that fraction of you that belongs somewhere else" (John 2018).

Because many Lebanese Newfoundlanders have attempted to un-mark themselves in the public sphere, traditions that take place within the more discreet spaces of domestic life have become vital domains for expressing ethnic identity. This can be understood as "reflective domestic ethnicity" – a concept derived from the neologism "reflective dance", coined by Andriy Nahachewsky to describe the meanings of Ukrainian dance in diasporic settings (Lesiv and Hirschfeld Shibley 2023, 240). Etymologically related to, but distinct from reflexivity, Nahachewsky describes reflective dance as evoking "an image of the participants in a dance tradition metaphorically looking into a mirror to see their reflection, and their past" (Nahachewsky 2012, 26-27).

For many Lebanese Newfoundlanders un-marking, reflectivity, and domestic ethnicity work co-dependently to form the basis of an approach to acculturation. While un-marking facilitates social integration, domestic ethnicity allows the private practice of ethnic cultural practices when out of view from the dominant culture. Finally, reflectivity imbues these cultural practices with memory and meaning, allowing diasporans to see, feel, and strengthen their sense of "Lebaneseness". No descendants of Newfoundland's early Lebanese immigrants speak Arabic as a first language, and public displays of Lebanese identity are uncommon. Instead, Lebanese Newfoundlanders primarily experience and express their culture through foodways, the display of art objects in the home, and other individual or family-specific traditions.

These socio-demographic trajectories explain the absence of institutional manifestations of a Lebanese identity in the forms of public festivals or celebrations. Indeed, the concept of a "Lebanese Community" as a coherent and unified entity is a relatively recent one. This new community consciousness is embodied by the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, established in 2007 to preserve Lebanese culture, identity and traditions. The Association hosts an annual gathering, attended primarily by members of the old diaspora, featuring food, music and educational presentations. Approximately 60 people were in attendance in 2019.

In the decades that have passed since the arrival of Newfoundland's early Lebanese immigrants, their "home" and "host" countries have changed significantly. Indeed, they have even become different countries; Newfoundland, at the time self-governing, became part of Canada in 1949, while Lebanon gained independence after the end of the French Mandate in 1943. During the time they have been present in

Newfoundland, these descendants of Newfoundland's early so-called "Syrian", "Turkish", or "Assyrian" immigrants have become Lebanese and Canadian. They are today the bearers of a unique hybrid identity, blending cultural input from their "home" country, and "host region" (Lesiv 2021), cemented by generations of lived experience as one of the earliest visible minorities to arrive on the island. Behind closed doors, among comfortable company, and in sometimes subtle form, this identity finds expression.

Chapter 3: Material Culture

This chapter explores the layers of reflective meaning evident in the display of material culture objects within the home. Material culture, most frequently embodied by the display of objects related to the Lebanese identity within the home, emerged as a relatively common expression of domestic ethnicity and reflectivity among my research participants. Indeed, ownership of ethnic identity-marking objects is common enough that 11 of 16 consultants keep them. Additionally, those who do not keep such objects have generally recalled their parents or grandparents owning them. These include items directly referencing Lebanon or Lebanese heritage – such as art objects or flags – but can also include other items originating in Lebanon. Because of the way in which ethnic and familial identities tightly intertwine, they can also expand to include memory objects that lack a clear "Lebanese" character.

Because we regularly come face-to-face with the objects with which we adorn our homes, they can represent some of the most literal examples of reflectivity. That the home is a particularly reflective space is an observation made by Clare Cooper Marcus, who puts forth the idea that the interior of the home reflects our inner perception of self, while the façade projects the version of our self that we wish to present to the outside world. While the body may be the primary and most conscious form with which to express one's sense of self Cooper Marcus writes that:

> man also frequently selects the house, that basic protector of his internal environment (beyond skin and clothing) to represent or symbolize what is tantalizingly unrepresentable. . . The house both encloses space (the house interior) and excludes space (everything outside it). Thus it has two very important and different components; its interior and its façade. The house therefore nicely reflects how man sees himself, with both an intimate interior, or self as viewed from within and revealed only to those intimates who are invited

> inside, and a public exterior (the *persona* or *mask,* in Jungian terms) or the self that we choose to display to others. (Cooper Marcus 1974, 131)

Accordingly, the choices made in the ordering of the rooms in a home encode information about its inhabitants. “The choice of furniture, its arrangement, and the pictures we display”, according to Cooper Marcus, “are messages about ourselves that we want to convey back to ourselves, and to the few intimates that we invite into this, our house” (Cooper Marcus 1974, 131).

Curating a Collection: Ethnographic Snapshots and Material Culture Categories

In the Roman Catholic cemetery in Wabana, Bell Island, stand two cross-vaulted obelisk gravestones. The forward-facing inscription of the white marble reveals these to belong to Michael Joseph Gosine – patriarch of the Gosine family in Newfoundalnd – and his son Joseph Michael Gosine (Boulos 2023, 151). Each nearly identical stone is inscribed with “In Memory Of” above each name, with dates of birth and death given on the line below. Beneath this is a line reading “Erected By His Children” (and wife, for Joseph Michael), followed by a final line bearing the same identical prayer – “Sacred Heart of Jesus Have Mercy on His Soul”. However, closer inspection reveals a second inscription on the dexter side of each stone, facing inward toward the adjacent stones. Partly covered with lichen, and etched in unmistakable Arabic, these inscriptions, while also conveying the same information as the English, is more personal in nature:

> Mikhael son of Yusef Algossin, from Hadath el Jebbeh, who moved to God age 83 years. He died December 29 1938. Whoever passes on my grave, if you remember my will, don’t cry for me.

And:

> Wafic, son of Mikhael Algossin, who passed to God, 57 years old. He died in 1939, April 29. Whoever is on my grave now, think about what has happened for (with) me. Don't leave like me, but live for me [sic]. (Boulos 2023, 151-152)[9]

These gravestones, and several others like them, are rare public markers of Lebanese presence in Newfoundland. Indeed, they stand tall as testament to the Lebanese identity's enduring importance to the men they memorialise, as well as the loved ones they left behind. Featuring an "un-marked" façade flanked by a partly hidden ethnic and expressive side, they also serve as poignant metaphor for Lebanese diasporic processes in Newfoundland.

Cooper Marcus' observation about façade versus interior seems fitting. Of the homes I have visited, the façade is generally left un-marked; the exteriors of Lebanese-Newfoundland homes blend in among those that surround them. Other than a small Lebanese flag flying in Charlotte's back yard, any Lebanese-related items found outside the home are generally coded in their symbolism. The interiors of some homes, by contrast, may contain many Lebanese-related items. Indeed, Peter's home contains so many such objects that, during an informal conversation, another consultant remarked that it looked "like any house in Lebanon".

During interviews I asked participants if they owned and/ or displayed any objects in the home from Lebanon, or that they might consider Lebanese. After the conclusion of an interview, those who did own such items would then lead me into various rooms of the home in order to observe and photograph the various pieces of material culture within. This included objects kept on display as well as photo albums, family trees, and other

[9] See Figure 4.

(generally more fragile) items that are not displayed. Some participants had prepared collections of objects in anticipation of my visit, while others kept them in place at the locations in which they are displayed within the home. Nearly all shared photographs.

The practice of keeping and displaying these items is most prevalent among those who tend to collect and/ or display other decorative items. For these individuals, such as Peter, Sharon, and Bob, Lebanese-related items can make up a substantial percentage of items displayed. For those with a less densely decorated home, such as Terri, the few items displayed stand out. Display of Lebanese identity objects also generally correlates positively with age, proximity to the first generation, and level of self-identification as "Lebanese". Many such objects are owned and displayed by Bob and Lorraine – both older members of the third generation; Sharon – a relatively younger member of the third generation with a strong sense of Lebanese identity; and Peter – the only participant with a Lebanese-born parent. However, the keeping and display of Lebanese-related items is a practice shared by all ages and generations, and for those who may only own one such item, particular significance may be ascribed to it.

Family photography, alongside family documents, represents the single most prominent material culture category kept by my participants. However, approaches to the display of family photography differ among individuals. While some hardly display any photographs, save for those of their immediate family, others display many photographs spanning several generations. A strong example of the latter can be found in Lorraine's home, in which a hallway display includes photographs of her great-grandparents dating from the end of the 19th century. Other participants – such as Michelle, Catherine, and Charlotte, own considerably old family photographs, but do not display them.

Instead, most of my consultants keep photographs depicting the more distant past, or more distant family, in photo albums. While this is done out of consideration for their rarity and fragility, it may also be that there is little need felt to display these kinds of photographs within the home. While displayed photographs serve as daily reminders, those kept in albums are instead used as occasional aids to memory. An example of this is the way in which photo albums are used in the sharing of narratives related to the family. Indeed, during interviews photo albums, together with family trees, were typically consulted in the recounting of a family's history. Photo albums help illuminate narratives by assisting the listener in putting faces to names, while family trees help the listener in understanding how they are related to the teller. However, after they have fulfilled their purpose they are put back into storage.

Heirlooms:

In her study of Ukrainian art objects displayed in the home, Anna Kuranicheva establishes a schema for their categorisation. Kuranicheva splits Ukrainian art objects into two broad categories – "Actual Peasant" items, consisting of "objects that were actually found in peasant villages in Ukraine, particularly those used at the end of the 19th - beginning of the 20th centuries" and "Imitation Peasant Art", consisting of "pieces that were made recently with the intent to imitate actual peasant objects" (Kuranicheva 2002, 37). A similar schema can be applied to many of the objects kept by Lebanese Newfoundlanders, with "actual heirloom objects" referring to the late 19th – early 20th century items either brought from Lebanon to Newfoundland by the first generation, or Lebanese cultural objects owned and/ or used by them. "Imitation heirloom objects" can be used to refer to more recently acquired pieces that imitate those items.

Objects belonging to the "actual heirloom" category are relatively rare among my consultants. Some consultants own heirloom jurns, pronounced as "jarren" by some participants. These large, heavy stone mortar and pestles are traditionally used for the preparation of many common and emblematic Lebanese foods, such as hommous or kibbeh. Other items in this category include two bracelets owned by Catherine[10], a prayer book owned by Charlotte, Lebanese backgammon boards owned by Bob[11], and a cedar cone owned by the Offspring family. This category might also be expanded to include certain family-related documents, such as the passports or vital records of immigrant ancestors, as well as photographs – especially those of family left in Lebanon brought by the first generation. However, apart from Lorraine's jurn, which sits outside the front entrance of her home,[12] Catherine Ryan's bracelet, which she wears daily, and some such family documents and photographs, these items are generally not displayed but instead kept stored away for safe keeping.

Actual heirlooms brought from Lebanon by an immigrant ancestor are particularly cherished by those who own them. Catherine's bracelets are known to be among ten or twelve such bracelets to have come from Lebanon on the wrists of her ancestors, and she has worn them daily since receiving them as a gift from her mother at the age of 19. She recounted that her sister was gifted a matching bracelet, and upon entering the Sisters of Mercy had it melted down to form her Profession Ring so that she, too, could continue wearing it daily. When one of the bracelets broke, she repaired it so that she could

[10] See Figure 5.
[11] See Figure 6.
[12] See Figure 7.

continue wearing it. These bracelets, which Catherine estimates to be over 150 years old, are deeply meaningful to her.

As is the case with many such objects, however, Catherine stressed that its importance is primarily personal – "a grandmother thing, not necessarily a Lebanese thing", as she put it (Catherine 2018). Indeed, objects related to the Lebanese identity are primarily used by my consultants as reminders of family, with their associated ethnic symbolism significant for its place in family identity. When asked directly about their importance, many consultants have emphasized a personal connection to these objects as reminders of their family and upbringing.

"Imitation heirloom objects" look like traditional objects owned or used by the first generation and/ or those used by 19th century Lebanese villagers. These include items used purely for decoration, as well as those with combined decorative or utilitarian purposes. They might be made from traditional materials, and they may incorporate traditional techniques. Peter and Bob both own miniature jurns which are good examples of this. Made of stone or wood, some of these small jurns are purely decorative. While many of the typical tasks performed on a jurn, such as grinding meat for kibbeh, would be impossible due to their size, some see occasional use for small tasks such as mashing garlic or grinding spices.

This category can also include antique or traditional objects from Lebanon that have been acquired more recently. This includes examples of Lebanese wood inlay, most popularly found on small wooden boxes owned by Bob, Sharon, and Peter.[13] Wood inlay

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[13] See Figure 8.

can also be found on backgammon sets owned by Bob, and two inlayed tables and one chair owned by Peter. Contemporary Lebanese coffee sets, displayed by Bob and Sharon, are another example.[14] Other objects which are not necessarily displayed include a red and white keffiyeh and finger cymbals owned by Catherine Ryan. Like miniature jurns, these fully useable items are generally unused by their owners, perhaps owing some of their symbolism to their theoretical utility.

The presence of the jurn as both actual heirloom object and imitation heirloom object is testament to the way that, as a cooking implement endemic to the region, the jurn is virtually singular as a symbol of Lebanese foodways and the Lebanese kitchen. Due to its central role in Lebanese food preparation, some of my interviewees have recalled watching their mothers or grandmothers using a jurn. These early memories suggest the jurn as something of a symbol of the childhood home. Terri Andrews described this symbolism, and the transformation of the jurn from a functional to decorative item in the following way:

> In the kitchen there was a big jurn [pr. 'jarren'], which ended up over on Grieve Street as a flower pot – but when I was little that resided in the kitchen on New Gower Street. And when my grandmother was making kibbeh, she didn't grind the meat, she pounded the meat to a pulp. And she'd sit there, and she'd pound that. . . (Terri Andrews 2018)

Today, the jurn is no longer used by any of my consultants, having largely been replaced by the electric food processor. However, the display of heirloom jurns, as well as artistic renderings of them, has been relatively common. Lorraine keeps her grandmother's jurn outside on her front patio where it functions as something of a

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[14] See Figure 9.

birdbath. Bob's miniature jurns[15] are primarily displayed in his kitchen and dining room, while Peter displays one of his on a table in the living room.[16] The evolution of the jurn from an "actual heirloom object" item kept and used in the kitchen, to "imitation heirloom object" that has been miniaturized and displayed in the domestic museum-space of the living room can be read as symbolically preserving the memory of traditional Lebanese folklife. Meanwhile Lorraine's the display of her heirloom jurn on the front patio of the home may be read as a coded semi-public expression of ethnic and family pride.

Modern items used to prepare Lebanese dishes are not assigned ethnic status. Even if a food processor is kept for the sole purpose of preparing Lebanese dishes, it does not acquire symbolic status. Likewise, while jurns may be displayed outside the kitchen, modern cooking equipment is not displayed in the same way. This is likely due to the fact that the food processor is not unique to Lebanese cooking, was not adopted for its preparation until the second half of the 20th century, and therefore has not become a memory object. The jurn, meanwhile, is closely associated with the preparation of kibbeh – considered to be Lebanon's national dish. If kibbeh is a symbolic food, then the jurn is the symbol maker – an endemic tool used to prepare an endemic dish. Not so the food processor or the meat grinder.

Cedars:

Apart from family photography, no category is as prevalent as "miscellaneous Lebanese-related art". This includes examples of fine art, in the form of paintings owned

[15] See Figure 10.
[16] See Figure 11.

by Peter and Lorraine, which depict scenes of the Lebanese landscape. However, this category also includes the most prominent material culture category of all: objects made from, or featuring representations of, Lebanese cedars. The focal point of the Lebanese and Maronite flags, cedars have been closely associated with Lebanon since ancient times. The cedars of Lebanon have deep religious significance, appearing several times in the Bible as symbols of strength, righteousness, and life everlasting (Zechariah 11:1,2; Psalm 29:5; Ezekiel 31:3; Psalm 92:12; Ezekiel 31:3; Psalm 104:16). Among Maronites the cedar also symbolizes the Virgin Mary, with the invocation "Cedar of Lebanon, pray for us" added to Marian litanies in Lebanon (Roten, n.d.).

Works of pyrography have proven to be particularly common. These pieces of pyrography most often consist of 1-2-inch-thick cross sections cut from a cedar branch or trunk. These are generally round or ovular and may include live edge around the perimeter. A typical example might depict a Lebanese cedar accompanied by Arabic calligraphy and/ or an English inscription reading something along the lines of "Lebanon" or "Cedar of Lebanon". Others depict towns or cities in Lebanon or religious iconography. These pieces were not created in Newfoundland, having been acquired during trips to Lebanon for those who have travelled there, or gifted by others who have been to the country. Other such pieces have been in the family so long that those I interviewed cannot recall their origin.

Among those who own them, these pieces are frequently kept in prominent positions in the home. An example of this is a piece of pyrography belonging to Lorraine. This piece, about five inches high, sits on a small table close to the entrance of her home

where it is visible to anyone entering the house.[17] Several adorn the walls of Peter's living room, kitchen, and hallway, where they are impossible to miss. Those owned by Sharon virtually fill the walls of the staircase between the first and second floor of her home, visible to anyone making their way to the washroom. The piece kept by Terri Andrews is located above the archway dividing her kitchen and living room – an exalted position, as this is the highest object in either of those rooms.[18]

Cedars feature prominently in other art objects as well, and the cedar is a common thread connecting many of the objects owned by different people. Two of my participants own paintings of Hadath el Jebbeh – the small town in North Lebanon's Bsharri District from which many of Newfoundland's early Lebanese settlers originally hailed. One painting, owned and commissioned by Lorraine, is displayed in a downstairs living room where it takes a central spot alongside the television. Lorraine explained that the painting depicts Hadath el Jebbeh metaphorically. As such, the painting does not depict the village as a cluster of houses but, making use of symbolic imagery, depicts Hadath el Jebbeh as a cedar perched high on a mountainside.

While some of the diaspora's cedar objects have been owned by a family so long that their origin is unknown, others are known to have been kept by members of the first-generation. A poignant example of one such piece is a cedar cone belonging to the Offspring family which was brought from Lebanon in the luggage of John and Leo's grandfather, Michael, who later kept in a display case at the store he ran on Water Street in St. John's. This suggests that members of the first-generation used cedars as an aid to

[17] See Figure 12.
[18] See Figure 13.

memory and a symbol of identity, and that this symbolism has been inherited by future generations. However, unlike other cedar objects which are usually displayed, the cone is now kept tucked away in a cabinet in the home of Leo Offspring due to its fragile nature.

Sharon, Lorraine, and John and Kimberley keep cedar trees in their respective yards as symbols of their heritage.[19] For John and Kimberley, the cedar is the tallest object in their yard, while Sharon's cedars form a row between her front yard and that of her neighbour's. The national emblem of Lebanon, Lorraine recalled that the two cedars at the front entrance of her home were planted by her father as symbols of the family's identity. Meanwhile, those owned by Sharon and John and Kimberley were distributed by the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, of which Sharon is president. While these trees belong to species other than the true Lebanese cedar (*cedrus libani*), they nevertheless have meaning as an ethnic symbol for those who keep them. "It's just a nice reminder of who we are", as Kimberly put it (Kimberly 2019).

The migration to Newfoundland by the first generation of Lebanese immigrants was largely unidirectional, with most never returning to Lebanon. Perhaps due to an understanding of the finality of their migration, the few objects brought by the first generation (or at least those that have survived) tended to be sentimental in nature and are used as an aid to memory. The need for memory objects, and the primacy of the cedar as an ethnic symbol, is evident in the image of Michael carefully packing away a fragile, delicate cedar cone in his luggage, taking care to keep it intact throughout his voyage and, indeed, the remainder of his life. His descendants' choice to keep this cedar cone speaks

[19] See Figure 14.

to its continued significance as a memory object and symbol of family history and identity.

An Assemblage of Mirrors: Home Décor as Folk Art

While Lebanese Newfoundlanders have produced relatively few of the identity-marking objects that adorn their homes, the curation and display of these objects represents a creative and expressive act. Interior decors can be analyzed as a kind of folk-art – examples of what Jack Santino terms "folk assemblage" (Santino 1983). Defined as "the combining of a variety of symbolic elements within a single frame, and the creation of a single aesthetic entity by grouping together disparate things", Santino urges for a holistic treatment of folk assemblages, rather than the isolation of individual objects from which they are constituted. Folk assemblages are, according to Santino, "results of the process that Claude Lévi-Strauss has termed *bricolage*, described by Henry Glassie as 'the very complicated synthesis of old and new ideas'" (Santino 1983, 158-160; Levi-Strauss 1969, 16-22; Glassie 1972, 260).

I would argue that interior decors constitute inevitable folk assemblages, filled with photographs, art, and other decorations that encode information about the personalities, identities, interests, and lives of household members. In this way, even those Lebanese identity-marking objects that appear in isolation are part of a greater whole – taking their place alongside other markers of regional, occupational, recreational, and other identities. Displayed within the semi-private space of the home, these assemblages provide a medium for the personal expression of what might feel un-expressible in public. In contrast to the external world which constantly requires the presentation of a publicly palatable version of the self, these interior folk assemblages

function as something of a "mirror-scape" which can be used to reflect personal perceptions and aspirations of the self *to* the self.

Indeed, for those who own many such objects, their curation becomes a way of expressing not only one's ethnic identity, but also a way of communicating ideas about, and definitions of, that identity. When Lebanese identity-marking objects occur alongside one another, they can form something of an assemblage-within-an-assemblage. This is true even in cases in which Lebanese-related objects scatter disjointedly across multiple rooms of the home, in much the same way in which a Christmas assemblage may consist of decorations found across the entirety of the house. These specifically Lebanese assemblages provide a medium for the negotiation and definition of that identity.

The place of the Catholic faith in Sharon Dominic's life can be read in the Lebanese religious iconography adorning her home, which establishes and reinforces a link between the Lebanese identity and the Maronite Catholic faith. Quoting Psalm 92:12, one of her cedar planks reads "The Righteous… Flourish Like The Palm Tree And Grow Like A Cedar In Lebanon". Another, featuring a depiction of a Madonna and Child, bears a plaque explaining that it was donated to Sharon by Our Lady of Lebanon Parish, in Halifax, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.[20] Others include a depiction of Christ wearing a crown of thorns, and another depicting Saint Charbel Makhlouf.

Sharon's display of a small statue depicting the Phoenician alphabet on a table in her living room echoes statements made about Lebanese ethnic origins during our

[20] See Figure 15.

interview – "We're Phoenicians", she told me, "we come from the Phoenicians". Finally, the many small Lebanese flags she displays, as well as awards given to her by the Lebanese consulate for her work with the Lebanese Association, express an identification and relationship with the modern Republic of Lebanon. These overt symbols reflect that, for Sharon, the Lebanese identity is not felt on a purely family level but is an important part of personal identity in which she is actively engaged. "I'm passionate about being a Newfoundlander", Sharon told me, "but equally or more so Lebanese".

Living rooms have proven to be the foci of the greatest agglomeration of ethnic identity-marking objects among my participants who keep them. In his exploration of everyday space in a small Newfoundland community, Gerald Pocius explores the meanings behind different rooms of the home. He describes the home as "a cluster of ordered spaces: rooms with specific functions filled with socially appropriate objects and decorations", adding that "the entire visual environment becomes a code that is concerned with particular types of behavior" (Pocius 1991, 228). In analyzing the living room, Pocius writes that "everything that is special, unique or fancy is kept on permanent exhibition, and… opened for viewing to a select public" (Pocius 1991, 239).

The display of Lebanese-related objects within the exhibition space of the living room can, therefore, be interpreted as ascribing to them "special, unique, or fancy" status. Indeed – the living room is where Sharon displays a medal from the Maronite Patriarch as well as an award from the Honorary Consulate of Lebanon in recognition for her work with the Lebanese Association.[21] Meanwhile, as reminders of prior generations and the

[21] See Figures 16 and 17.

past, the display of heirloom and imitation heirloom objects can be understood to signify the importance of those people, their experiences, and their culture. When objects related to food or cooking are displayed in the living room, for example, they act as symbols and reminders of the time during which they were still in daily use.

In her essay "Transnational Dwelling and Objects of Connection", Maja Povrzanović Frykman warns against the academic prejudice of studying immigrants through a strictly "ethnic" focus (Frykman 2017). While this is a sound warning when studying any folk group, this advice may be particularly pertinent when studying diasporans with multiple ethnic identities, and through a regional lens. For those who keep them, Lebanese memory and identity-marking objects frequently occur alongside other similar objects marking other parts or personal or family identity. In this way, the sum total of all material culture found in the home can constitute a folk assemblage reflective of its inhabitants in their totality.

For example, while Sharon's home prominently features Lebanese symbols, it is also replete with artwork related to Newfoundland, souvenir objects from other places, and other pieces that are seemingly purely aesthetic in nature. Souvenirs from elsewhere serve as reminders of travels abroad, or the friends who gifted them, while Newfoundland-related art reflects a regional sense of identity. Similarly, a small Lebanese flag belonging to Kimberley takes its place alongside several other flags hanging above her bed. "The other flags are of places I have travelled to", Kimberley explained. "I like to keep the Lebanese flag among them to symbolize my intent to travel there one day, and to motivate me towards that dream" (Kimberley 2019).

Indeed, not all Lebanese-related objects I was shown during interviews had a clear "Lebanese" component. Rather, some items were prized for the way in which they symbolized, or acted as aids to remembering, the Lebanese experience *in Newfoundland*. An example of one such item is a painting owned by Terri Andrews. The painting, thought to depict King Edward VIII, is displayed by Terri in an upstairs living room in her home. Terri explained that the painting is significant because it had belonged to her grandfather and used its story to illustrate the use of credit and exchange of goods in the corner store commerce of mid-century St. John's. She recalled that the painting had been acquired by her grandfather via a trade with a British captain who had visited his store:

> . . . . during the war, or shortly after the war, a captain from a British vessel came into my grandfather's store on New Gower Street, and said 'Albert, this is an unpopular prince right now' because he was supposed to have some ties to Nazi Germany, and he had abdicated for a while [while since then?] and all this came out, and it was the portrait of him as a child. And he said, 'I can't be sailing back to England with this thing in my boat'. So they did a trade. And this portrait ended up in my grandmother's – that was in the living room . . . . took up all the wall. Went through a fire, went through all kinds of stuff, so I had it restored. But that was not an uncommon thing. (Terri Andrews 2018)

Materializing Memory: Lebanese Objects as Souvenirs of the Past

However, unlike other items, which may be of a primarily personal/ family significance, cedar objects have a clear ethnic, even national symbolism. Today, the old-world experience of the first generation is referenced in images of the cedar. Indeed – the source communities of Hadath El Jebbeh and Qnaiouer[22] are close to a large cedar forest, and cedars would have been part of the natural environment with which the first generation regularly interacted. Whether intentional or not, these objects – which are

[22] A nearby village in North Lebanon from which Sharon's grandfather originated.

largely displayed in prominent positions within the home – serve as daily reminders of the culture and landscape of North Lebanon for the third and fourth generation who cannot experience it directly. The same can be said of Bob's backgammon sets, as well as the Lebanese coffee sets displayed by him and Sharon – neither of whom drink Lebanese coffee. Backgammon is a common pastime in Lebanon and coffee drinking and important component of Lebanese culture and daily life – particularly in its villages (Geha and Wigan 2021; Svendson 2014, 32-38).

As Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett writes, souvenirs and mementos are "from the outset intended to serve as a reminder of an ephemeral experience or absent person" (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1989, 331). While the objects kept by my consultants seem of little daily utility, I would argue that they, as souvenirs and mementos, serve as reminders of the everyday experience that the first generation left behind. Some also seem to serve as poignant reminders of the first generation. While many such items are kept exclusively for display, there is something anticipatory about them – jurns awaiting food, rakeweh and finjein sets awaiting coffee, finger cymbals awaiting music and dancers. These items sit on shelves and tables waiting to offer their hospitality to ethereal guests as they offer remembrance of those who once used them.

Indeed, Kimberley's description of her family's cedar as a "reminder of who we are" does not refer to the nostalgic remembering of the first-generation. Rather, as a member of the fourth generation, the cedar symbolizes and reflects an old-world identity and experience to which she otherwise has no access. In this way, the objects displayed in – or in this case, just outside of – the homes of Lebanese Newfoundlanders are metaphorical mirrors of ethnicity, if not also windows into the past. Away from the gaze

of the dominant culture, the home is safe space in which to participate in this reflective activity.

While the private display of these objects represents a process of identity-marking, it may also be the case that these objects play a role in identity *making*. Writing about the display of Halloween folk art in Maryland, Jack Santino reflects the following:

> I began to wonder: was it the presence of the pumpkin and the jack-o'-lantern that made it feel like it was the autumn? Did the season create the symbols or did the symbols create the season? In certain ways, the answer to all of these questions is yes. To display pumpkins and make jack-o'-lanterns are customary acts which help us to feel properly attuned to the season of the year, and to the changing of those seasons" (Santino 83, 151).

I would argue that the relationship between the construction and expression of ethnic identity is similarly interrelated, recursive, and cyclical. Lebanese Newfoundlanders may choose to display Lebanese identity objects because the identity those objects symbolize is one they feel connected to, but the act of displaying such objects forms part of the process of creating, maintaining, and strengthening that connection. In this way, while the display of Lebanese symbols may be partly driven by a desire for ethnic expression, that expression is itself part of what makes Lebanese Newfoundlanders *feel* Lebanese. This was encapsulated by Bob, who reflected on how meaningful it is for him to keep these kinds of objects, offering the following explanation:

> See, what I think it boils down to – it's not *you* so much, as being close to your parents' heritage. And I guess *feeling* rather than remembering, or anything else, that you're a part of it. That's about the best way I can think of to describe it. But it brings you a little closer to home, if you will. . . Home like, Lebanon. . . My roots. (Bob 2019)

What Bob identifies here as "feeling" rather than "remembering" seems to speak directly to the reflective experience.

As earlier generations of Lebanese Newfoundlanders attempted to present an un-marked version of themselves in public, these private displays of ethnicity became a vital form of ethnic expression and memory within the safe space of the home. The display of these markers of identity may be understood as a process of "re-marking". That is, while presenting as "un-marked" in public, the home becomes a place in which to assert oneself as Lebanese. For others, the curation and display of these objects in the semi-public spaces of the kitchen, living room, or back yard of the home may represent a quiet pride, to be expressed in the company of family and other people familiar enough to visit.

Through these domestic displays diasporans are able to glimpse into their past to reveal their ethnic selves reflected back at them. For those who keep them, the curation and display of these objects plays a daily role in the affirmation and negotiation of ethnic identity by providing a personal medium for its creative expression. This reflective, personal, and creative process is not unique to the display of material culture objects, however, and similar processes can be observed in other expressions of ethnic identity.

Chapter 4: Foodways

Because the Lebanese identity in Newfoundland is one that has been constructed, maintained, and reproduced primarily within the home, some of the most important and ubiquitous of its traditions are those related to that most-domestic of spheres – the kitchen. The persisting popularity of Lebanese foods, combined with the daily acts of cooking and eating, mean that foodways have emerged as a genre particularly rich with ethnic and regional symbolism, creative expression, and reflectivity. This chapter explores the vital role played by foodways in the construction, maintenance, and negotiation of ethnic and regional identities.

Upon arriving on Newfoundland's shore, the Lebanese identity has been nourished and sustained by its symbol-laden foods. Over a century later, the centrality of food as a form of ethnic expression has been highlighted by my consultants, who have been virtually unanimous in their assertion that, of all Lebanese traditions, foodways are the most common and enduring. Indeed, for some Lebanese Newfoundlanders, food represents the only aspect of Lebanese culture with which they have ever had contact. Because of this tenacity and ubiquity, foodways encompass the Lebanese cultural practices that tend to receive the most emphasis, labour, and attention by members of the community.

Among diaspora groups, foodways are generally regarded as among the cultural practices most resistant to acculturation. It has been theorized that this is because foodways are among the first layers of culture to form, and as such are the last to be peeled away (Spiro 1955, 1249-1250). However, this effect may be magnified among diasporas emanating from regions in which food traditions already receive particular

emphasis. Food and its role in hospitality has been identified as a cultural cornerstone of a generalized pan-Arab identity (Stephenson 2014, 157) as well as Lebanon and its diaspora specifically (Abdallah et al 2019, 4-5). According to tourism scholars Ali Abdallah and Kevin Hannam, Lebanese culture has "placed great emphasis upon food as a key but arguably quixotic event in Lebanese social life and as a significant part of its global diaspora identity" (Abdallah and Hannam 2016, 147).

The Menu: Brief History and Ethnographic Snapshots of Lebanese Foodways

Lebanese cultural concepts about food, its role in hospitality, and a distinctly Lebanese palate were carried to Newfoundland by its early Lebanese settlers. *"*Your food kind of feeds your soul", Hannah reflected, "so they didn't let that go easily*"* (Hannah 2018). Despite attempts to un-mark while in public members of the first generation adhered, to varying degrees, to Lebanese foods and patterns of eating within the home. This was facilitated by the fact that so many of the first generation were store owners and pack peddlers – occupations which, in Newfoundland, relied heavily on importation. Along with shipments of dry goods to stock their shelves and fill their packs, Newfoundland's early Lebanese entrepreneurs were also able to order culturally specific ingredients with which to prepare ethnic dishes.

Despite Newfoundland's geographic location, these shipments did not always follow a direct route from Lebanon. Indeed, some Lebanese Newfoundlanders who were alive during the first half of the 20th century recall witnessing this process. "My grandfather", Lorraine told me, "in the 1920s, you know, through wholesalers in Montreal, was bringing in black olives, was bringing in kusa, was bringing in burghul,

was bringing everything in. . . I grew up with, you know, barrels of black olives in our basement, you know, in the 40s" (Lorraine 2018).

This connection to the diaspora on the mainland largely continues today, as many of the Lebanese products available in Newfoundland are still imported through mainland-based cooperatives, wholesale, and packing companies, such as the Canadian Lebanese Investment Corporation (CLIC). In a more ethereal way, this connection is maintained through the use of cookbooks authored by mainland Lebanese Canadians with *A Taste of Lebanon: Cooking Today the Lebanese Way* by Calgary-based Lebanese Canadian Mary Salloum being particularly popular among my consultants.

Among the community, the distribution of Lebanese foods, and the more hard-to-obtain ingredients needed to prepare them, continues today. Many of my participants have recalled a practice of preparing Lebanese meals in excess to be distributed among others in the community, as well as other family friends. "Every time we had a Lebanese dinner at our house there was at least a half dozen people that we used to have delivered to their house personally", Gary told me (Gary 2018). Meanwhile others recalled a similar process when privately importing Lebanese ingredients. "My grandmother used to get it [okra] ordered in from somewhere" Sharon told me, "and I think it was Montreal. . . she used to also get various sweets, like the candy-coated chickpeas. . . She would have them Christmastime. . . And haleweh, we would always have that, because she'd get a parcel come from Montreal and then so much would go to every family" (Sharon Dominic 2019).

The necessity of procuring hard-to-get ingredients necessary for Lebanese dishes has also created a prodigious gardening tradition among some in the Lebanese

community. These gardens include many vegetables familiar to all Newfoundlanders, such as turnips, potatoes, and cabbage, but also include vegetables important to Lebanese cuisine, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and kusa, which are historically uncommon in Newfoundland and difficult to grow in its climate. Three of my research participants grow grape vines, which are kept primarily for their leaves rather than their fruit.

With this relatively steady stream of Lebanese foods imported into or produced within Newfoundland, Lebanese Newfoundlanders have been able to retain certain aspects of their ethnic food culture. Accordingly, there are also fewer substitutions of culturally specific ingredients than might be implied by the island's geographic location and small Lebanese population. Indeed, despite having grown up in the American northeast, some ingredients – such as okra – were unknown to me in their Lebanese preparations before beginning this research. Accordingly, my consultants have revealed a variety of Lebanese dishes still prepared and/ or eaten today.

Pita bread, or flatbread as it is known to many in the community, is an indispensable part of most Lebanese meals.[23] Taking the place of cutlery, flatbread is used to pinch, scoop, or dip certain dishes at the table. While most Lebanese Newfoundlanders buy their flatbread today, in the past it was always baked at home. Flatbread is the standard accompaniment to hommous, which is rarely eaten without it. Now well-known to most North Americans, hommous consists of mashed chickpeas mixed with tahini, lemon juice, and garlic. After being arranged in a serving dish, it is usually finished with a drizzle of olive oil. Hommous and flatbread can be served as a

[23] Also known by its Arabic name, "khubz araby", or its English translation, "Araby Bread", by some Lebanese Newfoundlanders.

snack at any time and is traditionally eaten by some families on Good Friday (Ashton 2001, 14). Hommous can also be used as an accompaniment to certain dishes.

Alongside flatbread, rice is another common stable starch in Lebanese-Newfoundland cooking. While not specific to Lebanese cooking, the prevalence and importance of rice has been described during my interviews, with a penchant for rice being considered a Lebanese trait by some. In Lebanese dishes that may be prepared with either rice or burghul, rice is consistently preferred. This is true in the case of mujaddara – a dish that marries rice and lentils with deeply caramelized onions, and is a traditional staple during Catholic fast days. During less austere times, rice can be combined with ground meat (usually beef), onions, spices, and sometimes pine nuts. This mixture, known as hashweh ("stuffing" in Arabic), can be cooked and eaten on its own. However, when left uncooked it is also used as the filling for meshy/ mishy – a genre of stuffed dishes including stuffed grape leaves, cabbage rolls, and kusa.[24]

Rice is also an important part of Lebanese stewed dishes, such as the dish known to many Lebanese Newfoundlanders as "cinnamon beef", "string beans and meat" or "hompsa". This tomato-based stew of beef (or other meat) and green beans is flavoured with cinnamon and typically served over or alongside a bed of rice. This is also true of its meatless variant, sometimes known as lubi or lubie, as well as bammy/ baymi, which uses okra in place of the green beans. When prepared on its own, including when served alongside the above dishes, rice is sometimes cooked with vermicelli.

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[24] A summer squash picked while small and tender, also known as marrow or Syrian squash. In Newfoundland the more common Italian zucchini is sometimes substituted.

These dishes point to a defining aspect of Lebanese-Newfoundland cooking – the use of cinnamon as a dominant spice in many dishes. This is most obvious in cinnamon beef, but also includes bammy/baymi. Cinnamon is also often found in recipes for meshi, kibbeh, meat fatayer, and baklava. Garlic and mint are also common seasonings, and parsley is an herb necessary to some Lebanese dishes. Cumin is less common, and when it is used, is usually a relatively recent addition to Lebanese recipes.[25]

Exemplary of the much-lauded "Mediterranean diet", Lebanese cuisine is replete with plant-based dishes, such as tabbouleh – a salad consisting of finely chopped parsley, burghul, tomatoes, and onions mixed with olive oil and either lemon juice or vinegar. Mint, as well as other seasonings, may be added according to family and personal preference. An adherence to Catholic fast days has further entrenched some meatless dishes. Makroun – small homemade pasta/ dumplings, are served with toum – a garlic and olive oil based condiment, and are eaten some families during Lent; as is rishta, a lentil soup with makroun. Fatayer – triangular hand-pies consisting of a spinach filling encased in a yeasted bread-like pastry, are very popular. When prepared outside of Lent, they may also be made with a spiced meat filling instead.

Despite a steady stream of ethnic ingredients, Lebanese-Newfoundland cooking is also notable for what it lacks. Lebanese breakfast dishes are virtually unknown, for example. Likewise, the internationally recognizable repertoire of Lebanese barbecue dishes is mostly absent from my consultant's food traditions and memories. As is fresh

[25] Incidentally this correlates with a popular perception that, among Lebanese, cumin is popular among Muslims but much less so among Christians.

eggplant – a common component in many Lebanese dishes, but infrequently used in Lebanese-Newfoundland cooking. In its place, some of the first and second generations made use of dried eggplant, which would be stuffed, stewed, and served in the same manner as any other meshi dish.

Lebanese desserts and sweets are also less prominent, though baklava (also known as bakleweh or baklewah), halva (also known as haleweh or halewah), and candy-coated chickpeas have remained popular. While the latter are usually purchased, baklava is sometimes prepared at home. While difficult to prepare, this allows for the addition of flavourings, such as rosewater, not typically found in store-bought versions. It is also generally considered to be a superior product: "The stuff you buy, it's sweet, but it's like corn-syrupy sweet" (Hannah, 2018).

"Our National Dish": Kibbeh as Lebanese Food Emblem

> *". . . and after everybody has their dessert, then of course they have a piece of kibbeh [laughing]"* (Sharon Dominic 2019).

There is perhaps no singular dish more unanimously and deeply beloved among Lebanese Newfoundlanders than kibbeh. Composed of finely ground meat mixed with bulghur and spices, Lebanon is home to several variations of kibbeh, with myriad found throughout the rest of the middle east. In Newfoundland, kibbeh is most typically served either raw (kibbeh nayyeh) or baked (kibbeh bil sanieh). In its raw form, the kibbeh is spread onto a serving dish, drizzled with olive oil, and eaten with flatbread – sometimes accompanied by onions. In the baked version, the kibbeh is rolled onto or pressed into a baking dish. A diamond pattern is typically scored along the top of the kibbeh, over which olive oil is drizzled prior to baking. Baked kibbeh may also include a filling, which

is spread between two layers of kibbeh. Most commonly this is a mixture of sautéed onions and/ or pine nuts and/ or spiced meat. Baked kibbeh can be served plain, or can be eaten with a tahini or yoghourt-based sauce. While baking can be a way to use up leftover raw kibbeh, baked kibbeh is also and prepared and enjoyed for its own sake. Kibbeh can also be fried, usually taking a shape akin to a patty, but this is a less common method of preparation among my research participants.

Kibbeh is an esoteric dish. The making of kibbeh, especially in its raw form, requires a culturally specific set of knowledge. When selecting, purchasing, and processing kibbeh meat, great care must be taken in order to avoid foodborne illness and to ensure a delicate, but not mushy, texture. "You have to make sure it is absolutely fresh" (Lorraine 2018), and "done in a meat grinder that's the first cut of the day, because where it's raw you don't want to get any contaminants" (Charlotte 2019). A kibbeh maker must also understand the grading system of bulghur and know that "fine is for kibbeh" (Charlotte 2019). The maker must also know how to properly season the kibbeh – "the spicing for me is having the right balance of the allspice" (Lorraine 2018), and how to maintain a good texture while incorporating the seasoning and burghul – "it needs to be really super cold", Michelle advised (Michelle 2018). If making kibbeh bil sanieh, the maker must also how to plate the kibbeh – typically adorned with a cross hatch pattern drawn across its surface.

Even after plating, as a preparation of raw meat consumed without cutlery, kibbeh bil sanieh remains somewhat esoteric for the uninitiated. This has likely bolstered kibbeh's position as a highly symbolic food for those in the Lebanese diaspora, and among Lebanese Newfoundlanders it is virtually unrivaled in its emblematic status.

Indeed, of the two academic works already published about Newfoundland's Lebanese community, one is devoted to kibbeh (Ashton 2001). Writing about the importance of food in the maintenance of a Lebanese ethnic identity in Corner Brook, folklorist John Ashton identifies kibbeh and flatbread as the primary food symbols of Newfoundland's Lebanese community, describing kibbeh as something of a key cultural text. As one of Ashton's consultants remarked ". . . that's our national dish" (Ashton 2001, 15). My research has also revealed kibbeh to be one of the dishes most amenable to ingredient substitutions and, therefore, expressive variation.

This process began within the first generation in Newfoundland, starting with a variation in the meat itself. While kibbeh prepared in Lebanon typically uses lamb, only one person with whom I spoke grew up eating lamb kibbeh. Rather, in Newfoundland kibbeh is most typically prepared with beef. While this beef-for-lamb substitution may have originally been due to availability and affordability, it is now evident across dishes in Lebanese-Newfoundland cooking. Today beef kibbeh is standard in Newfoundland, with lamb being used only occasionally.[26] However, on rare occasion, beef may be swapped out for another lean meat. "My dad made [baked] kibbeh using moose meat the other day. . . ", Kimberly told me (Kimberly 2019). While this specific instance was described as a one-off, a tradition of codfish kibbeh has been maintained by members of the Michael family for at least two generations. "Daddy used to do a killing", Lorraine remembered, "his fish kibbeh was gorgeous. Baked fish kibbeh" – never raw – "The only

[26] This is also the case in my own family, with the explanation given that beef is cheaper than lamb in the United States. In Lebanon, the inverse was true, and beef was accordingly considered a more high-status food there; the family narrative being that when my grandparents arrived in Massachusetts they were excited to eat beef kibbeh instead of lamb.

difference is it's fish instead of the meat. . . And my cousin Sid, he makes really good fish kibbeh also" (Lorraine 2018).

While codfish kibbeh may initially seem like a Newfoundland invention, Lorraine speculated the following:

> A lot of people say it – and I thought well "did they just do it because of being in Newfoundland?" But the thing is – fish is just as important in Lebanon as it is here, right? And then at one point in time I just searched, and I did find fish kibbeh in a book. And I said "okay, so it's not only us who do it" right? But in the Lebanese community here in St. John's, the Michael family seem to be the only one who did fish kibbeh. (Lorraine 2018)

Atlantic cod, however, are not found in Lebanese waters. Moreover Hadath El Jebbeh, hometown of Lorraine's grandparents, lies in the mountains far from the coast. If fish kibbeh was a dish they prepared in Lebanon, it is unlikely that any saltwater species would have been consistently used. Inevitably, in a process analogous to the adaptation(s) of meat kibbeh, this recipe replaces an unavailable Mediterranean fish species with a similarly white-fleshed, locally abundant one. While fish kibbeh may in fact be a traditional Lebanese dish, *codfish* kibbeh is almost certainly a Newfoundland invention, and one that takes on significant regional symbolism in this province.

While kibbeh is an emic symbol of ethnic identity for Lebanese Newfoundlanders, it is also a food that has symbolized Lebanese cooking for those outside the community. In Corner Brook, Ashton attributes this to its presence during the town's occasional public celebrations of ethnicity, such as international food nights (Ashton 2001, 16). Recipes for kibbeh and flatbread have found their way into printed recipes – including one food memoir authored by a Lebanese Newfoundlander (Faour 2012), as well as a

household almanac and cookbook based on reader submissions by local magazine and publisher (Young 2000, 218; 256).[27]

The Divided Dish: Food Symbols and Food Boundaries

Lacking the natural or political boundaries and borders afforded by a nation-state, ethnic groups in diaspora must draw these for themselves. According to Susan Kalčik, this boundary-making process is primarily achieved through the use of symbols and their performance. "Social relationships are developed and maintained by symbols", Kalčik says, "and thus we tend to *see* groups through their symbols and to identify ourselves through symbols" (Kalčik 1984, 45). Therefore, when studying foodways, "we are led to examine the meaning of food, its symbolic nature, and the communication and performance aspects of food choices" (Kalčik 1984, 44). Applying a reflective approach reveals that we tend not only to *identify* ourselves through our symbols but *see* ourselves through them as well. In this way, food symbols can be used, and food boundaries enacted, in the reflective process of presentation of the self to the self.

Reflective of a hybrid identity, the boundaries drawn by Lebanese Newfoundlanders are perforated and moveable. Lacking a large population, distinct ethnic institutions, and perhaps most importantly, a *desire* for separated-ness, the Lebanese experience in Newfoundland has been one in which boundary-making has been limited. Today the near ubiquity of intermarriage continues to blur and redraw these boundaries with each successive generation. Accordingly, while some individuals may

[27] The Downhome Household Almanac & Cookbook also includes a recipe for "String Beans and Rice" which appears identical to Lebanese recipes for lubie, including beef and tomatoes, but without the inclusion of cinnamon.

choose to erect strong food boundaries, others erect none. My research has illuminated an unconscious process of blending and hybridizing food symbols from both ethnic and regional identities while simultaneously delineating boundaries around them. This process is double pronged; While Lebanese food symbols are enacted to delineate the boundaries of ethnic identity, Newfoundland cuisine is replete with its own symbolic foods used by Newfoundlanders to delineate the boundary between regional and national identities.

Special days, such as Sundays and holidays, deploy their own food symbols which, for Lebanese Newfoundlanders, are synonymous with ethnic and regional food symbols. However, there is a tendency among some to separate the consumption of traditional Lebanese and Newfoundland foods. These are eaters for whom Lebanese and Newfoundland dishes will generally never share a plate. In some families, this has resulted in alternating between a Newfoundland and Lebanese meal for Sunday dinner, for example. This was elaborated by Gary who recalled that, in his family, Lebanese foods were eaten "Probably every second Sunday. You had the traditional Newfoundland Jigg's dinner one Sunday, and you had Lebanese food the next Sunday, or at a festive season of the year or whatever, it would be Easter or Christmas or somebody's birthday. . ." (Gary 2018). Others observed a similar process during holidays, with Bodra recalling that, in her family, "Christmas tended to be a traditional British-Newfoundland meal, and New Year's tended to be the traditional Lebanese feast. And I tend to remember Lebanese food on Easter" (Bodra 2018).

Due to the labour involved in the production of large meals this has a utilitarian function – particularly among families who have a tradition of serving Lebanese meals composed of multiple dishes. Indeed, while some Lebanese dishes may be eaten in

isolation, it is very common for several dishes to be served together as a larger spread. “Mostly when we were growing up and you had a Lebanese meal, you had the full meal deal”, Gary told me. “You had the flatbread, and you had the kibbeh. Raw kibbeh, fried kibbeh, kusa, cabbage rolls, tossed salad, and grape leaves. You cooked enough for twenty extras and you always had leftovers for the next couple of days (Gary 2018). This style of eating is common in Lebanon, where it is known as mezze. However, for some families in Newfoundland this is the primary, if not only, way in which Lebanese foods are eaten.

While food choices are quite literally matters of taste, the compartmentalization of ethnic and regional foods may also reflect a compartmentalization of regional and ethnic identities. According to the cognitive-developmental model of social identity integration, the compartmentalization configuration is one in which individuals who hold multiple identities choose to separate those identities from one another. In an unconscious internalized process, compartmentalizing individuals make choices about which identities to activate in different social contexts (Mosanya and Kwiatkowska 2023, 4).[28] For those who compartmentalize, then, food symbols must also be compartmentalized in order to serve their symbolic role. By compartmentalizing symbolic foods, and then consuming several of them together as a large meal, the symbolic status of those foods is amplified.

Food boundaries, and the compartmentalization they are accessory to, have sometimes been entrenched by the negative reactions of non-Lebanese Newfoundlanders

[28] Indeed, this may be precisely the process by which Lebanese Newfoundlanders have been able to un-mark without erasing their ethnic identity completely.

when ethnic foodways run afoul of regional food boundaries. “We were the only people in St. John’s who used garlic back then”, Lorraine recalled, before recounting an incident involving a former classmate. “I was in grade eight, I can still see her, I know her name. . . and she stood in front of me in the classroom and she said ‘You stink!’” (Lorraine 2018). Terri Andrews remembered the responses to the lunches she brought to school as a child, explaining that “. . . going to school with Araby bread, pita bread, wasn’t a thing here. But I’d go to school with these Araby bread sandwiches and everyone thought I was crazy”. As with other aspects of Lebanese culture, experiences of othering pushed the consumption of ethnic foods primarily into the home, or among others of Lebanese descent, while also compartmentalizing them as incongruous or incompatible with regional foodways.

Ethnic food symbols can be deployed, and food boundaries enacted, during times when ethnicity is put on display. In these settings, they can form the basis for connection with other co-ethnics; the recognition of familiar food symbols allowing unfamiliar people to find common ground behind the borders established by food boundaries. Engaging in communal reflective eating enables eaters to see their ethnic self, and facilitates the negotiation of their relationship to it. The potluck meal produced for the Cedar Social – an annual gathering organized by the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, provides an example of this.[29] With scant exception (mostly desserts) the entirety of the dishes present at this event are Lebanese – as are most of the people. For Lebanese Newfoundlanders, the presence of familiar Lebanese foods eaten in

[29] See Figure 18.

the company of familiar Lebanese people fosters conversational reminiscences of family, home, and upbringing. Meanwhile, for the scant Lebanese non-Newfoundlanders in attendance, the experience of eating familiar Lebanese foods in Newfoundland, among Newfoundlanders, fosters a sense of belonging and emplacement.

The recognition of familiar food symbols also facilitates connection with others in the Lebanese diaspora while travelling off-island. Lebanese restaurants and food establishments provide a point of contact between Lebanese Newfoundlanders and their co-ethnics elsewhere, thereby facilitating real-life experience of an otherwise "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). For those who have primarily experienced a Lebanese identity as expressed by their own family, and through the prism of Newfoundland, these establishments can even become sites of ethnic awakening. Lorraine summarized this experience while recalling her first visit to a Lebanese restaurant, occurring in Ottawa when she was in her 30s. She described the emotional impact of entering the restaurant "To see mujaddara written", on the menu,

> and to realize I was part of a community that was bigger than the community I had grown up in - it was an amazing experience. . . Because I'd never thought about it before, I just lived it. And then all of a sudden here I was in this restaurant seeing all the dishes that I'd eaten and made all my life actually written down, and there is that realization that this is a major culture that you're a part of. (Lorraine 2018)

Like prior generations, Lebanese Newfoundlanders travelling off the island frequently seek out Lebanese restaurants while they are out of the province and return to Newfoundland with Lebanese foods purchased during travel. For some this is a goal while travelling. This practice is not limited to visits to the Canadian mainland, with others seeking out Lebanese restaurants when abroad.

> We were in Sweden last year. . . and I had a cab driver - I looked at her, and she looked at me, and I looked at her, and she looked at me, and I [let myself know?] she's Lebanese. I said ". . . so where are you from?" She said "I'm Lebanese" I said "I'm half Lebanese!" So she sent us to this Lebanese place in Stockholm. . . It was spectacular. It was the best Lebanese food I've ever eaten outside my home or my daughter's home. (Stephen 2019)

The Mixed Plate: Foodways and the Negotiation of Ethno-Regional Identity

For many in the community today, Lebanese dishes are no longer everyday foods. "We wouldn't have it around our table very often" Enda told me, while reflecting on his childhood (Enda 2018). Meanwhile, when recollecting his own upbringing, John stated bluntly: "We would eat mostly Newfoundland food" (John 2018). While indicative of a large-scale acceptance of Newfoundland's food culture, the relegation of Lebanese foods to a more occasional basis has also magnified their symbolism. This process is elaborated by Roger Abrahams, who states that "Ethnic or regional identity can be acted out within the home by eating certain foods prepared in special ways. That this is an unconscious process, in the main, is clear, at least until the alternative foodways are introduced, at which point a choice is involved" (Abrahams 1984, 20).

Food boundaries are enacted to delineate the borders of identity, but they can also be enacted to protect symbolic foods from external cultural influence or appropriation. Used in this way, food boundaries help to maintain the perceived purity and, therefore, symbolism of such foods. This reveals a reflexive relationship between food and eater – when food boundaries are repeatedly used as part of ethnic and regional identity building processes, they deepen the symbolism of the foods they encircle. While food boundaries can be widened or reinforced in response to a threat (Ariel 2012), they erode when what

is considered “external” is no longer deemed to be threating or, as is the case with hybrid identities, no longer external.

While some individuals typically separate the consumption of Lebanese and Newfoundland foods, others eat them in combination. “Traditionally, at home” Sharon told me, “Christmastime we always had the turkey dinner, the Jigg’s dinner and everything. And we also had cabbage rolls, and we also had kibbeh. . . Whenever it was a feast day or a celebration, that was the fare” (Sharon Dominic 2019). If enacting strong food boundaries may suggest a compartmentalization of ethnic and regional identities, these relatively open food boundaries suggest their integration – a process by which multiple identities, seen as equally essential and complementary, are organized into one coherent supra-identity. Unlike compartmentalized identities, this integrated identity is generally expressed independently of context (Mosanya and Kwiatowska 2023, 4).

In the instance of mixed marriages, external cultural input can come from within the family itself. This can lead to situations in which the Lebanese dishes that form part of a family’s foodways are filtered through and influenced by the food preferences of a non-Lebanese parent. This is particularly true when the non-Lebanese parent is also the primary cook. Catherine, for example, recalled her non-Lebanese mother’s preference for baked kibbeh. “The raw kibbeh”, Catherine explained, “our mother wasn’t too hyped on us eating the raw meat. . .” Meanwhile, when her mother would make baked kibbeh she

recalled that "every now and then she might put dressing in the middle. . . . Newfoundland dressing" (Catherine 2018).[30]

However, the blending of Newfoundland and Lebanese food symbols is not the sole provenance of non-Lebanese spouses and parents. Indeed, Lorraine recalled a similar alteration to the spicing of kibbeh made by her first-generation grandmother in Newfoundland: ". . . *Sitti*[31] did a variation. . . based on being here – she would put some savoury in with the allspice and mint. And it makes for an amazing flavour". Like the kibbeh made by Catherine and Brian's mother, this variation uses savoury – an herb symbolic of Newfoundland, in the preparation of kibbeh – an emblematically Lebanese dish, and in so doing marks an ethnic food symbol with a regional one.

Meanwhile, Lebanese cuisine's use of cinnamon in savoury dishes remains a lingering culinary influence for Lebanese Newfoundlanders. During our interview, Lorraine served me a soup including cinnamon along with herbs, tomatoes, and meat from a roast leg of lamb. Meanwhile, Stephen described his use of cinnamon to a similar effect while preparing a different, very local, meat: "If I cook moose", Stephen told me, "which is very infrequently. . . I put cinnamon in with it. And they say 'My god that moose tastes delicious, what have you got in with it?' And I say 'Ah, it's an old Lebanese trick'" (Stephen 2019). In this case moose, a Newfoundland food symbol, is seasoned with cinnamon – a Lebanese food symbol, thereby marking a regional food symbol with an ethnic one.

[30] In Newfoundland, "dressing" is a breadcrumb-based stuffing seasoned with summer savoury, and often onion, that is commonly stuffed into or served alongside turkey, chicken, game meats, fish, or seafood, and is often topped with gravy. It typically forms part of the typical Newfoundland Sunday dinner.
[31] "Grandma", in Lebanese Arabic.

In these instances, the blending of food symbols is subtle, consisting of a symbolic staple dish marked by a symbolic herb or spice. In this way, expressive variation can be created without altering the essence of the dish. Kibbeh remains kibbeh, whether seasoned with summer savoury, or stuffed with Newfoundland savoury dressing. A piece of moose cooked with cinnamon is still moose. By integrating food symbols from ethnic and regional identities, these fusion dishes operate as ethno-regional food symbols that are wholly unique to Lebanese Newfoundlanders. While some hybrid dishes, like codfish kibbeh, are traditional to certain families others, like John's moose kibbeh, may be transient and/ or unique to specific individuals. The metafolklore surrounding these dishes suggests that they can be light-hearted – even playful, expressions of multicultural joy.

However, it is more frequently the case that Lebanese foodways inform the way in which some Lebanese Newfoundlanders prepare meals that are not intended nor perceived to be part of the cannon of either Lebanese or Newfoundland cuisine. If Lebanese dishes are ethnically marked, and Newfoundland dishes are regionally marked, these meals exist in a neutral, non-regional, and non-ethnic category. Free from the expectations and food boundaries surrounding symbolic foods, these meals provide a blank palette for the projection of ethnic, regional, and personal tastes on a highly individual level. This can be observed in the preparation of casual weekday meals, especially those prepared for oneself. The often-improvised nature of such meals means that a cook must act intuitively, relying on the culinary skills and concepts with which they are most familiar.

The most obvious examples of this incorporate leftovers from Lebanese meals into more casual dishes. Catherine, for example, remembered eating sandwiches filled

with cold baked kibbeh during her childhood, while Stephen recalled eating leftover kibbeh with eggs at breakfast. However, it is evident that early exposure to Lebanese foodways has shaped the daily cooking and eating habits of some Lebanese Newfoundlanders. "I think, when you're growing up, that's what you see your parents cooking. And that's just what you learn to cook as you're a kid. . ." Hannah reflected. "And so those smells, and all that stuff – that's what I want to smell in my house. And when I'm even cooking like my quick thirty-minute meals, my first go-to is that we have to put on a pot of rice. And anytime I cook anything I'm like – rice first, and then you just go from there" (Hannah 2018).

Occasionally, certain Lebanese foods have been taken far out of the home. While some recalled family picnics, the outdoor ventures of Lebanese foods has not been solely relegated to family outings. Fatayers, particularly, have proven to be a popular portable food in some families. "They were big", John recalled. "We used to go hiking. . . up over the South Side hills into Freshwater Bay, and we'd have three or four of them with us" which would keep appetites satiated "the whole day" (John 2018). Meanwhile Leo recalled that "Mom and her sisters, when our brothers and their friends would be going up duck hunting and grouse and everything, they'd fill up a pillow slip with fatayers, and they'd go out hunting all day. . . and they'd take them with them" (Leo 2018).

The above examples, and others like them, suggest an internal thought process in which ethnic and regional identities appear in conversation with one another, applying Lebanese culinary solutions to Newfoundland cultural problems. Fatayers are a solution to the need for a filling and portable food for hunting. Kibbeh is a way of introducing novelty to the monotony of cod in the traditional diet. Kibbeh also provides a solution to

the leanness of moose, and cinnamon a solution for masking its gamey flavour. When Stephen describes the positive reactions of those who try moose prepared using the latter, there is an implication that his familiarity with Lebanese foodways enhances his ability to prepare regional dishes. When Lorraine explains fish kibbeh by saying "fish is just as important in Lebanon as it is here", she makes a direct connection between both cultures. Expanding beyond the context of foodways, the metafolklore surrounding hybrid dishes communicates a suggestion that objects in a Newfoundland cultural landscape may be enhanced by a Lebanese cultural lens.

"Mama's Kibbeh": Foodways, Memory, and Reflectivity

Foodways may be considered especially reflective as they allow us to prepare dishes interwoven with food symbols that encode parts of our identity. By consuming those symbol-laden dishes, or by serving them to others, we can strengthen, affirm, or alter the feelings of identity that those symbols engender. When cooking for oneself, these private meals can represent a presentation of the self to the self, like a performance before a mirror. If cooking for family, they can serve to construct or reinforce a family's collective identity. When cooking for others, they can help to project our idealized and aspirational selves. Finally, talking about food, and reminiscing about past meals, is perhaps the final stage in the reflective process – one which reinforces food symbolism, and cements its role in facilitating cultural and familial memory.

Rooted in nostalgia, if not anemoia, reflective cooking and reflective eating are emotional processes that evoke memories of generations past. When Lorraine, for example, describes her kibbeh-making process, she describes a process of reflective cooking in which she refers to the methods and modalities of her first-generation

ancestors. The goal is not only to make kibbeh, but to make kibbeh as it would have been made by prior generations, in order to evoke their memory. She recounted an incident at a family reunion – "one of the things we had was a kibbeh contest [laughing]", she told me.

> And it was a blind test. . . the judges were picked - nobody who had been involved in making it could be part of the judging, etc. . . and I heard this comment – maybe it was before it was judged. . . all I can remember is aunt [redacted] tasting kibbeh and saying *"Mama's kibbeh"*. And that was mine. (Lorraine 2018)

Lebanese food symbols are so important, and the nostalgia they engender so powerful, that their consumption can even override personal food preferences. "It's always too acidic for me", Bodra told me. "It's too much fucking lemon". As a person for whom Lebanese and Newfoundland identities are "fused, totally fused together", and who now resides outside the province, for Bodra nostalgia and the reflective eating process are the primary motivations for choosing Lebanese foods. "I think to this day I eat it because of the emotional, spiritual connection", Bodra continued.

> It really affects my heart like, in a soulful manner, in that I have so much memory of my mom – it would take her two to three days, usually three, to prepare a whole Lebanese meal. So it would just begin, and I would see my mom in the kitchen prepping from morning to night until finally that whole feast would come out. So I correlate Lebanese food as feasting food, or snacking food. And that's how I still use it to this day. And if I go longer than a month without Lebanese food I get weird. I'm like "I gotta go have some Lebanese food". And it's, again, not because it excites the shit out of me, but to be whole, to be sane, I have to go have some. (Bodra 2018)

When Lebanese immigrants first arrived in Newfoundland they brought their food traditions with them, which then took on heightened significance as Lebanese cultural activities were pushed primarily into the home. As members of the second generation reached adulthood they referenced their childhood memories in order to construct a feeling of "home". This helped to perpetuate the ethnic foodways of their parents onto the

next generation, allowing Lebanese foodways to outlast most other ethnic traditions in Newfoundland. Thus, the first revolution of the reflective eating cycle was completed. Linking contemporary diasporans' conception of "home" to late 19th century Lebanon, this cycle may continue to revolve, and evolve, in perpetuity – so long as each new generation reaches for the mirror left by the last.

Chapter 5: Music

Music has long been an important aspect of the identity of the Lebanese community in Newfoundland. However, unlike the other genres which display a clear ethnic component, my participants have been quick to point out that much of the music that has been performed by Lebanese Newfoundlanders is not identifiably "Lebanese". Additionally, my research has revealed that much of the music performed and enjoyed by Lebanese Newfoundlanders does not fit neatly into the genre commonly defined as "Newfoundland traditional music". Rather, Lebanese Newfoundlanders have tended to favour popular genres.

In the absence of an enduring large-scale Lebanese musical tradition, my hypothesis is that when desires for un-marking were met with early alienation from Anglo/ Irish-Newfoundland music, second generation Lebanese Newfoundlanders were pushed to seek out other forms of musical expression. This, in turn, may have helped put Newfoundland's Lebanese musicians on the forefront of new musical trends on the island. For some second-generation members of the Lebanese community in St. John's, jazz and big band music became popular and important genres. For their children and grandchildren, this non-Lebanese music is now emblematic of a time when the Lebanese community was perceived to be thriving, and has become a part of the way in which the ethnic past of these families is remembered and recreated today.

Relative to their numbers, Lebanese Newfoundlanders have made significant contributions to the popular music of the province. These include cousins Leo Michael and Chrissy Andrews, who performed jazz and big band music during the time around the Second World War; Joe Boulos – original drummer of Newfoundland's pioneering rock

band, The Ducats; and pianist and singer Mickey Michael, whose song “My Newfoundland” found local popularity in the 1990s. Some Lebanese Newfoundlanders currently active in the province’s music scene include John Boulos – bassist and principal songwriter of rock and soul band Billy and the Bruisers; singer-songwriter Maria White; drummer Ed Sutherby; guitarist, singer, and songwriter Peter Lannon; and award-winning singer-songwriter Chris Picco.

Of the 16 participants in my research, seven are musicians, and of those seven, four have formed at least part of their living by performing or teaching music. Because the role of musical traditions, as well as individual musical practices vary among participants, this analysis will primarily focus on the role of music in the articulation and performance of ethnic identity among the closely related Michael and Andrews families. In addition to her political career, Lorraine Michael is a pianist and singer who currently performs with the Philharmonic Choir of the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra. Bodra Elia, also of the Michael family, is a tango instructor and singer-songwriter who has worked in the past as a professional musician and music teacher. Terri Andrews is a performer as well as director of TaDa! Events – a local entertainment company that organizes concerts and musical theatre productions. All three women are related – Bodra’s mother is Lorraine’s sister, and Terri and Lorraine are cousins.

Dabke to “Desert Night”: The Musical Lives of the First Two Generations

While my interviews primarily featured recollections of the music performed and enjoyed by the second generation of Lebanese Newfoundlanders, they also made clear that there were musicians among the first generation, and that Lebanese musical traditions survived for at least two generations in Newfoundland. Both Lorraine and Terri, for

example, recalled learning to dance the dabke[32] during their childhoods. While the dabke was typically danced to recorded music, Lorraine shared that her father, as well as her uncles Leo and Mickey, were able to perform the music for dabke on western instruments – such as saxophone, piano, and drums, rather than the oud, mijwiz, and tablah more typical of Lebanese dabke music. As with other aspects of Lebanese ethnic expression in Newfoundland, this dancing took place in private, and among others of Lebanese descent.

Lorraine described the importance of recorded music to her Lebanese-born grandfather, as well as its role in the social life of the community in the following way:

> Pop had a shortwave radio. . . and he always had it on. . . So Pop always had Lebanese music coming, and Arabic music coming in as well. . . But the whole family were musicians. . . music was really important to the family, so having records with Arabic music, and Pop having the Arabic music on the radio, like, I just grew up with Arabic music. And that's what the music would be in the parties (Lorraine 2018).

While Lorraine notes that Lebanese social occasions also saw the performance of Western music, she was quick to downplay its importance compared to Arabic music. "Sometimes the boys would be invited to play some jazz too, or big band stuff", Lorraine told me. "But it was more the Arabic. I mean I learned the dabke there in the living room, and I can still see my grandfather with the handkerchief in his hand [leading?] everything" (Lorraine 2018).

Dance traditions, and music for dancing, were not limited to dabke. Other forms of Lebanese music were performed in the home, often on piano – an instrument that has featured prominently in the music of many Lebanese Newfoundlanders past and present. Terri recalled the following scene that unfolded while visiting her aunt as a child:

[32] A Lebanese folk dance.

> . . . my grandmother, my aunt, or my father or whatever, would be on the piano. My aunt. . . She was teaching me these songs, or singing with me, where my sister next to me, Joanie, had come out. Joanie was this gleeful child, and my grandmother who, I don't know, would be maybe in her 70s then, late 60s early 70s, standing up, lifting her shirt - which Lebanese women didn't do – lifting her shirt in the kitchen, and rolling her belly and showing Joanie who was only, you know like, not three feet high, how to do these belly dance moves. If any of the boys walked in the kitchen that stopped. But I do recall Sitti[33] showing Joanie how to roll her belly a certain way to do belly dance (Terri 2018).

There is also evidence that the performance of Lebanese lyrical songs survived for at least two generations in Newfoundland. During my interview with Terri, she recalled her aunt attempting to teach her to sing the popular Lebanese folk song "Al Rozana". I was fortunate enough to collect her version of it, which she referred to as "Yah Ruzhana" in Arabic, or "My Rosanna" in English. Terri is not an Arabic speaker, having learned the song by sounding it out. "I don't recall if those are the words", Terri explained. "That's how I perceived them in my six-year-old mind – but they were trying to teach me". Her version, consisting of the first two lines of the song, is transcribed as follows:

> Ya Ruzhana, ya Ruzhana kalee al jazeeha
> A shem latey Ruzhana Allah ya jazeeha (Terri 2018)

When I asked Terri if she knew what the song's lyrics meant she said that she did not, offering a guess that it was a love song to a woman named Rosanna. My research has revealed this to be a folk song with origins in the Levant. "Al Rozana" is relatively well-known in the Arab world, and has been performed by Lebanese pop stars, such as Fairouz and Sabah. According to one popular interpretation, "Al Rozana" recounts the Great Famine of Mount Lebanon during World War I. During the famine an Italian ship, named the Rosanna, arrived at a port in the region carrying food. However, upon landing the ship

[33] "grandmother" in Arabic

was found to contain no wheat or other staple foods, but instead grapes and apples – some of the only foods which were plentiful at the time (Turkmani 2020; Odeh and Laban 2019, 53).

While it is impossible to pinpoint exactly when "Al Rozana" arrived in Newfoundland, or why it may have survived for three generations, it seems likely that its lyrics may have been relatable to the Arabic-speaking first and second generations. "Al Rozana", after all, recounts the arrival of a ship meant to deliver salvation, but which ultimately brings only disappointment. It is possible that this theme may have spoken to the sense of longing and displacement experienced by members of the first generation, who boarded a ship with the promise of a better life in the New World. While the fruits of the immigrant ship were sweet, they brought the bitterness of cultural unfamiliarity, othering, and the longing for loved ones and lives left behind. Indeed, the last line of the song, translated as "Oh lord, may the breeze bring my lover back to me" may in fact be a direct reference to emigration.

It also seems significant that, of all the folk songs of the Lebanese repertoire, the one that seems to have survived so well in Newfoundland is about a ship. Indeed, if translated to English, "The Rosanna" would fit neatly into an established canon of Newfoundland songs recounting ships and disasters at sea. Further, ships are a common sight in Newfoundland – particularly so in the busy St. John's harbour. It may, therefore, be an example of a way in which early Lebanese immigrants assimilated aspects of Newfoundland culture, or at least its seafaring landscape, into the cultural practices they carried with them from Lebanon.

"Desert Night": An Early Lebanese Newfoundland Composition

While members of the first generation of the Lebanese diaspora in Newfoundland carried with them the songs of their birthplace, members of the second generation began to write music in the style of contemporary Western popular music. Unlike the performance of Lebanese music at parties and social occasions attended primarily by others in the Lebanese community, this popular music was produced and performed for a primarily non-Lebanese public. An early example of this is a song written by second-generation Lebanese Newfoundlander Peter Boulos at the age of 15 or 16 years old and published as sheet music in 1916. The song, titled "Desert Night", is an illuminating example of the acculturative processes already occurring in the music culture of Lebanese Newfoundlanders.[34]

Written for piano in ¾ time, the music of "Desert Night" seems to be heavily influenced by contemporary American popular music. Published by Tin Pan Alley music publisher Frank Harding, "Desert Night" fits neatly into the style popularised by New York's music industry at the time. Accordingly, it bears no discernible similarity to Lebanese traditional music. It also bears little likeness to the works of similar contemporary Newfoundland songwriters, such as Johnny Burke, which musically reference Irish traditional music while lyrically referencing Newfoundland cultural experiences.

While the lyrics of "Desert Night" primarily express longing for a loved one, they also portray a generalized, even Orientalist version of the Middle East. Its deserts,

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[34] See Figure 19.

swaying palm trees, and “Eastern skies” seem to derive more from popular Western imaginings of the region than from authentic memories of Lebanon that might have been shared with Peter Boulos by first generation family members. Indeed, Lebanon has no deserts, and palm trees are primarily found along its coast – far from the village in North Lebanon from which the Boulos family originates.

While an image of cedars perched atop mountains overlooking fertile valleys might be a more identifiably “Lebanese” scene, it would be less generically “Middle Eastern”. Without further information about Peter Boulos other than his name and the age at which he wrote “Desert Night”, it is only possible to make educated guesses about the inspiration for the song. While it may be that Boulos was not attempting to reference his Lebanese heritage at all, it is also possible that the lyrics of “Desert Night” reflect a kind of internalized Orientalism resulting from growing up in a country with virtually no representation of Lebanon in its media. Alternatively, “Desert Night” could represent an attempt at packaging a commercially viable expression of ethnicity for a non-Lebanese public most familiar with this generic conception of Middle East.

However, Boulos’ reliance on stereotype in the expression of ethnic identity was relatively common in popular music at the time and would have been a literary tool shared with his local contemporaries. Indeed, this is an area in which his song writing shares significant overlap with Johnny Burke, whose work is riddled with Irish stereotypes and self-parody; Boulos’ stereotyping of the land rather than the people being comparatively more subtle (Fitzpatrick 2001). It could therefore be the case that this kind of self-stereotyping is, itself, something adopted from contemporary Western music. If “Al Rozana” set the Newfoundland experience in the language and melody of the

Lebanese immigrant, "Desert Night" sets the Lebanese experience in the language and melody of the West.

Unpopular Music: Lebanese Newfoundlanders and "Newfoundland Music"

If Peter Boulos' composition can be thought of as an example of un-marking, it is significant that it makes no lyrical or musical reference to any of Newfoundland's recognizable vernacular musical traditions. Rather, Boulos is one of many Lebanese Newfoundlanders to embrace American popular music while mostly rejecting the traditional music of Newfoundland. Indeed, none of my participants play traditional music, and those with whom I have spoken have remarked that Newfoundland traditional music has never gained any major momentum with the Lebanese community. While Bodra's mother (also Lorraine's sister) is an exception to this, her involvement with Newfoundland traditional music occurred during the folk revival of the 1970s and 1980s - a time when this music was being rediscovered, redefined, and accepted as popular music in the province (Gulliver 2014, 148-204)[35]. This begs the question as to whether the acceptance of popular Western, but not Newfoundland music, can really be considered an acculturative process at all.

That early Lebanese Newfoundlanders generally favoured popular genres of Western music may be due to concepts about music making inherited from Lebanon. Particularly, "folk" or "traditional" may not have been familiar ways of categorizing music for members of the first-generation. Simon Jargy describes the "poorly-delimited zone between art and folk-music" evident in the Levant in the following way:

[35] Bodra shares this fondness for traditional music and described how, living away from Newfoundland, hearing it evokes strong memories of the island.

> Lebanon and Syria have inherited the same classic traditions as the other countries of the Arab-Islamic area of the Orient. The specific fund of their folklore has doubtless been strongly influenced if not, indeed, totally impregnated by these traditions - even if, here too, only through Arab prosody and literary types. This osmosis has equally affected the musical instruments which, however, seem originally to have served quite different functions. This was true of the *nay* or reed flute, for example, which as a classic instrument has become more and more an instrument of the folk; the same is true of the *mizmar* and even of the *ūd*, the Arab lute, principal instrument of classical music which today occasionally accompanies folk songs and dances in certain regions of the Near East. (Jargy 1978, 82)

It is possible that, by blurring the lines between traditional and popular music, this "poorly-delimited zone" between musical genres may have hastened the acceptance of Western popular music among the diaspora in Newfoundland.

One possible explanation for the rejection of Newfoundland traditional music lies in the uncomfortable intersection between vernacular music and ethnicity. While diasporic individuals are typically accepted as "ethnic", it has been argued that culturally dominant Anglo-Canadians may be considered ethnic as well (Greenhill 1994). In this way, as a people inhabiting a region with a distinct identity, culture, and history from the rest of the country, Newfoundlanders may likewise be considered at least quasi-ethnic. Indeed, many in the province use the term "Newfoundlander" to refer to their ethnicity (Statistics Canada, 2021), and Newfoundlanders who move to destinations on the Canadian mainland tend to organise themselves into diaspora communities resembling those established by international migrants (Delisle 2008).

If Newfoundlanders can be considered ethnic, then Newfoundland's traditional music can also be considered a form of ethnic music. While the province is today home to a diverse music scene, the genre that has come to typify "Newfoundland traditional music" in the popular imaginary is one that makes use of acoustic instruments – such as

accordion, fiddle, and guitar, and draws on a cannon of European and locally-created vernacular music originating with the island's English, French, Scottish, and Irish settlers (Everett 2016, 112-113). Diasporic in its own right, much of this music has come to be so closely associated with the Irish heritage of the island that it is sometimes referred to as "Irish-Newfoundland music" (Osborne 2016, 25). This loose regional cannon of ballads, dance music, and fiddle tunes therefore represents a distinct ethnic music to which the first Lebanese immigrants had no connection. This connection would also have little chance to form as those in the Lebanese business community generally belonged to a different socioeconomic class than those who performed vernacular music at the turn of 20th century, while experiences of othering and discrimination reinforcing a sense of difference may have further distanced Lebanese Newfoundlanders from the island's traditional music culture.

Meanwhile, Lebanese musicians would not need to look far in order to find alternative musical expression. Indeed, contemporary American music was already beginning to boom in popularity on the island. Even before the arrival of American troops during WWII, St. John's radio stations were broadcasting the popular music of the time, while regular passenger service to New York meant that the city was host to many touring musicians from the North American mainland (Posen and Taft 1973, 20-21). This new and exciting music "from away"[36] may have been the perfect antidote for any alienation, or plain disinterest, felt toward Newfoundland's traditional music.

[36] A colloquial term used to designate things or, more often, people not from Newfoundland.

However, the apparent rejection of “Newfoundland traditional music” by Lebanese Newfoundlanders may also be due, in part, to history. While “Irish-Newfoundland” music has come to be closely associated with the province’s music culture, this was not yet the case when the first Lebanese immigrants arrived. Terry McDonald attributes much of this music’s current ubiquity to songsters published by Gerald S. Doyle, first published in 1927. In addition to popularizing many songs now considered widely considered “traditional”, these songsters reflected Doyle’s perception of a strong parallel between his Irish-Catholic heritage and the culture and history of Newfoundland (McDonald 1999, 183).

So-called “Irish-Newfoundland music” played a role in pre-confederation Newfoundland’s nation-building process. Ireland’s struggle for independence, in which music played an important role, was an inspiration to nationally minded Newfoundlanders who, like Doyle, observed sharp parallels between both nation-states (McDonald 1999, 183). McDonald identifies the key parallel being that “through geography and economics” both islands have “always experienced a subordinate relationship with their larger neighbours. Yet each managed to maintain its own identity, and each found ways of constructing a vision of itself that justified their struggle to assert their ‘nationhood’” (McDonald 1999, 188).

Unlike their counterparts, however, Lebanese immigrants would have no need to look to Ireland to find a parallel to Newfoundland. Indeed, the country that the early Lebanese emigrants left was one for which national aspirations had not yet been realised. Still a part of the Ottoman Empire, Lebanon would not come into being as a sovereign state until 1943. A subordinate relationship with larger neighbouring nations, a struggle to

assert nationhood and national identity, and a need to construct a vision of oneself in order to do so, would be parallels easily drawn between Newfoundland and their home country.

Confounding this analysis is the fact that intermarriage between Lebanese Newfoundlanders and their Irish and English counterparts has been relatively common. Terri Andrews' mother was a Newfoundlander of Irish descent, Lorraine's mother (Bodra's grandmother) was of West Country English descent, and Bodra's father is of Dutch descent. However, all three women related (to varying degrees) feeling more strongly "Lebanese". This may be due in part to the close-knit nature of the community in St. John's and the fact that the non-Lebanese parent of each of these women did not originally hail from the city. Indeed, Lorraine recalled that during her upbringing "all of our socializing was done within the [Lebanese] community" (Lorraine 2018). Significantly, "socializing" in this sense included parties and other occasions during which music might play a prominent role.

Alternatively, it may be that Lebanese Newfoundlanders have been playing traditional music all along. It has been noted that, in the early part of the 20th century, the learning of classical and popular music on piano through sheet music was something of its own tradition in Newfoundland – albeit not unique to the island (Posen and Taft 1973, 20). Interviews revealed that piano and learning from sheet music featured prominently in the musical lives of the first two generations of Lebanese Newfoundlanders, and piano remains popular among many in the community today. This could be considered to represent the continuation of an imperceptibly local music tradition, unrecognizable as such due to its non-endemic status and lack of regional markers.

Familiar Others: Un-Marking, Ethnic Affiliation, and Jazz

During the years preceding the Second World War, second-generation members of the Lebanese community in St. John's began to adopt jazz and big band music. Indeed, when describing the music played by her parents' generation, Terri told me that "they were all big band. They had big bands, they had the stands in front of them with "C.A." for Chrissy Andrews or "M.M." For Mickey Michael and whatever, and they were doing Glenn Miller and all of that stuff" (Terri 2018).

Terri's father, Chrissie Andrews, was a drummer, singer, and band leader – this role likely influenced by his admiration of Gene Krupa. Over the years he led several bands including his big band, and the smaller Jive Bombers.[37] Lorraine's father, Fred, was also in a big band led by his brother, the eponymous Leo Michael Orchestra.[38] Fred played piano, maracas, and sang, while Leo played saxophone and clarinet, with their brother Mickey accompanying on double bass. The three brothers were also joined by a drummer, a guitarist, and, according to photographic evidence, a second pianist who were not of Lebanese ancestry. Alongside the jazz and big band standards of the day, the Leo Michael Orchestra also performed original material. Lorraine recounted their song, "What Chance Have I", as a "beautiful love song" and trademark of the band.

Both bands performed at Newfoundland's American military bases – particularly Fort Pepperell, in St. John's. There is evidence, however, that interest in this music by those in the Lebanese community predates the American military presence. "I think the presence of the US bases had something to do with it", Lorraine told me, "though Uncle

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[37] See Figure 20.
[38] See Figure 21.

Leo played sax before the bases came". This suggests that, while the American military presence in Newfoundland may have helped to propagate these genres, they enjoyed a degree of popularity among some in the Lebanese community prior to its arrival.

Jazz and big band were, as has been pointed out by my consultants, popular genres at the time. However, there may have been factors that made jazz and its derivatives particularly attractive to second-generation Lebanese Newfoundlanders. In her analysis of jazz in Arab American literature, Michelle Hartman states that "The ways in which racially-marked groups in the United States identify and affiliate with or dissociate and distance themselves from African Americans is centrally important to staking their claims to a position in US society", and points to jazz as a site of negotiation of this relationship:

> Within this complex situation of racial, cultural, social, and economic politics involving Arab Americans and African Americans, black music offers a powerful and positive symbolic site for Arab Americans to invoke connections between these two groups. Often, invocations of African American music by Arab American writers are positive and celebratory, underlining a shared understanding through culture rather than establishing a bond between the two groups which is only based on shared oppression. These are complex and layered engagements, however, that cannot be simply reduced to a formulaic description (Hartman 2006, 147-148).

While a black and white racial dichotomy has not formed the same basis for social organization in Newfoundland that is has in the United States, there is evidence that jazz may have facilitated similar negotiation of identity for some musicians in the Michael family. During our interview Bodra likened Fred Michael to Louis Armstrong, one of his major musical influences. ". . . In my mind, my grandfather looked like Louis", Bodra told me. "I never got to ask him, but I imagine he saw himself as Louis. He was short. . . like 4 foot 11 and 3 quarters. . . he was very dark, and you know he was very funny and

very joyous. He was very Bacchus in nature. He had a whole Louis thing going on" (Bodra Elia 2018).

It is possible that, via its positive association with blackness, the performance of jazz may have felt culturally affirming for Lebanese musicians. These performances, while not of Lebanese music, nonetheless represented the performance of a culturally "other" music that was enjoyed and celebrated by locals, visitors, and transient residents alike. It is easy to imagine that, by embodying this musical "otherness" and experiencing its celebration, Lebanese musicians may have felt their own "otherness" celebrated along with it.

However, while jazz originated as a culturally African American music, it enjoyed international popularity at the time during which Fred Michael and Chrissy Andrews were performing it. Due to its status as a popular music, it may be that jazz was also seen as something of an "international" music for members of the second-generation. In this way, part of its appeal may have been precisely that it *wasn't* perceived to be an ethnic music. Lacking the markers of Lebanese or Newfoundland identity, jazz may have provided a safe, neutral, and un-marked space in which to express the cultural aspirations and trajectory of the community.

In this way, as a "neutral" or "international" popular music, the public performance of jazz can also be understood as a performance of un-marking, achieved through alignment with a broadly-defined North American, or even global, culture. This may have been particularly true during performances that took place at the province's American military bases, where much of the audience present were non-Newfoundlanders. Indeed, those not from the island would have had little reason to

question the local authenticity of Lebanese Newfoundland performers. Additionally, because they hailed from a country wherein the boundaries of whiteness were legally drawn to encompass Middle Easterners, white American audiences may have been less likely to perceive Lebanese Newfoundlanders as non-white or ethnically "other". Performing jazz to Americans, then, may have allowed Lebanese musicians to present an un-marked version of themselves with relative ease. As such, jazz may have provided a unique opportunity to experience un-marking while simultaneously performing difference, and to be celebrated for doing so.

For a generation that inhabited the cultural space between "Lebanese" and "Newfoundland", the performance of jazz may have provided an ephemeral alternative to these identities. By subverting expectations of ethnicity and regionality jazz, like the popular genres that succeeded it, allowed for a musical expression that was neither ethnic nor regional, but contemporary and global.

It is easy to recognize similarities between Lebanese Newfoundland musicians and other diasporic musicians who have played important roles in the pioneering, propagation, and performance of popular music in their host societies. Indeed, it was Indonesian musicians who popularized rock and roll in the Netherlands (Mustaers 1990), and Africans who established hip hop in Portugal (Lupati 2016, 685), while major American popular genres from blues to hip hop can be considered to originate from its African diaspora. A more culturally specific parallel may be found in Lebanese American guitarist Dick Dale, whose familiarity with Lebanese traditional music not only helped lay the foundation of his guitar style, but of surf rock as a genre (Holgate 2006). Like

Lebanese musicians in Newfoundland, the position of these diasporic musicians on the margins of society may have also placed them on the cutting edge of musical innovation.

Fred and Louis: "Un-Marked" Music and Cultural Memory

Regardless of its meaning to the second generation, the meaning of jazz and big band to further generations is relatively clear. While jazz and big band came to dominate the popular music of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, they have long since been dethroned by other musical genres. As they faded from mainstream popularity, jazz and big band have acquired symbolic status as the bygone music of a bygone era. For many members of the third and fourth generations, this coincides with the era during which Newfoundland's Lebanese community was perceived to be thriving and, for some, in which the identity of the community remains crystallized. Because of its close association with the second-generation, jazz has become part of the way ethnic history is remembered and recreated for the descendants of families for whom it was popular.

The Michael and Andrews families have strong ties to the semi-cohesive Lebanese community that formerly existed in the area around New Gower Street in St. John's. Indeed, many of the memories shared by Terri and Lorraine recalled the era during which New Gower Street was thriving, and both women spoke of the expropriation of New Gower Street with bitterness, noting the heavy blow its loss dealt to the Lebanese community. This is significant, as my interviews with Terri and Lorraine were underpinned by a sense that the Lebanese community in St. John's is something that

existed more strongly and cohesively in the past and has been in a state of decline since families moved away from the New Gower Street neighbourhood.[39]

That ethnic identity markers can be shifted, altered, or replaced by successive generations is an observation made by Laura Sanchini in her study of Montreal's Italian community (Sanchini 2009, 135). In this way, the non-Lebanese musical expression of the second generation has now itself become an identity marker, and has come to play an integral role in the way the third generation remembers and expresses its ethnic past. When members of the Michael and Andrews families gather to celebrate their history, present their heritage to the public, or, indeed, participate in my research, the musical lives of the second generation feature prominently. It could be argued that while jazz forms part of the lore of these families, it cannot be considered an expression of Lebanese identity. However, the delineation between family and ethnic lore is difficult to draw in such a small and tightly intertwined community. For Lebanese Newfoundlanders, family lore and ethnic lore are one in the same.

The music of the second generation featured prominently in a 2010 family reunion organised to celebrate the centenary of the Michael and Andrews families' arrival in Newfoundland. The program for this occasion highlights the Lebanese heritage of the families, with the coat of arms of the Lebanese Republic occupying a prime spot at the top of the front cover. "From Hadeth to Newfoundland", reads the front of the program, "100 Years: The Michael Family Reunion". The musical performances listed within the

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[39] This sentiment was less evident from Bodra, however, who was born after the land had been expropriated.

program, however, include no music of Lebanese origin. Instead, they are replete with songs popularized by Louis Armstrong, Artie Shaw, and Frank Sinatra. The event's final performance was "What Chance Have I", an original composition by Leo Michael. Additionally, recordings by bands led by Leo Michael and Chrissy Andrews were featured during the reception for the Provincial Historic Commemoration of the Lebanese Business Community in 2023.

The musical lives of the second-generation have also featured prominently in a play written by Janet Michael, Lorraine's sister. The play, *Habib's Unforgettable All-Night House Party* was based on Janet's memories of growing up Lebanese in downtown St. John's.[40] Terri, who was in attendance, described the way in which the play used an incident involving her father to recount the friendly rivalry between the Leo Michael Orchestra and the Chrissy Andrews Band:

> one picture, which is gone the rounds quite a lot, is him playing with Frank Sinatra, which he did do. And had an offer to travel with Frank Sinatra's band and didn't go. And always lamented that he didn't. So this was always a big thing, you know. Like, my dad played with Frank Sinatra and could have gone, and Gene Krupa was his idol, and he replaced Gene Krupa when Gene was sick, and blah blah blah. And then my cousin Janet, Janet Michael, did a play. . . a couple of years ago, and I went to see the play, and I recognized everyone in it, right? [I was probably saying like] "oh that's aunt Theresa. Oh, there's Mom". . . But they were like, the boys – because the Michaels had a band too, an orchestra as well, and this is where I say "Ah" – you just now start to realize there was rivalry too, saying "Oh yea, well. . . sure, he played with Frank Sinatra. Well he played with Frank Sinatra for a half an hour, big deal". And I'd go "oh, that's how they felt about that" [laughing]. (Terri 2018)

For Bodra, this music is also important. "My grandfather and I were very close", Bodra told me, "We really loved one another. And a lot of the songs I covered years later,

[40] This play ran from February 3-14, 2016. I was unable to attend, and have not been able to locate a recording of the performance.

for him. I mean I would sing 'Sunny Side of the Street' and all these tunes to remember my grandfather. And that was my grandfather's love for Louis".

The importance of jazz in ethnic memory may be amplified by the fact that the music composed by second generation members of these families, such as Leo Michael, is written in the style. That jazz represents not only the preferred music of performance for the second generation, but the vehicle for their musical self-expression, has imbued it with additional layers of meaning for their descendants. Jazz is the music that the second generation claimed as its own, made contributions to, and in which its creative expression of self is preserved. Indeed, that "What Chance Have I" was chosen as the song to close the Michael family reunion speaks to this significance.

However, the relationship between Lebanese Newfoundlanders and jazz is not strong enough to support the idea that jazz *is* Lebanese Newfoundland music – particularly as this symbolism may be exclusive to a few families. Lebanese ethnic music was still popular among some within living memory, while other genres of music have been performed by Lebanese Newfoundlanders. Rather, a better understanding may be found in Maija Lutz's study of the musical traditions of Labrador Inuit, for whom musical practices of European origin have nearly become "symbols", and for whom these musical practices and ideas have come to form an integral part of ethnic culture (Lutz 1982, 1). In this case, jazz has come to form an important part of ethnic culture and memory within the families with whom it was historically most popular.

The embrace of jazz and big band as evocations of the ethnic past among third and fourth generation members of these families represents an alternative to generational

approaches toward ethnic identity noted by diaspora scholars elsewhere. Particularly, this relates to Shalom Staub's assertion that:

> . . . what the second generation wants to forget the third generation wants to remember. Because the third generation does not have direct access to the immigrant experience or the Old World experience that preceded it, the third generation's 'remembering' takes on the status of recreation and revival, the movement that exploded on the American scene in the 1960s. (Staub 1989, 34).

While the third and fourth generations do not have direct access to the immigrant experience, nor the old-world experience that preceded it, they are able to access to their own memories of their parents and grandparents. It is perhaps for this reason that, among members of the Michael and Andrews families, "remembering" appears to have centred more on the recreation and revival of the diasporic culture of the second generation than the old-world culture of the first. Therefore, within these families, the music culture of the second generation has become emblematic; the un-marked music of one generation becoming marked by the passing of time for the next.

However, attempts to connect with the old-world culture via music have also been described by some participants. Indeed, Lebanese popular music, such as that of Fairouz, is enjoyed by some in the community. Bob Noah, a musician and avid record collector, keeps a 45 RPM record of Wadi Al-Safi performing "Jayine Ya Arz El Jabal" that belonged to his father. Bob explained that the song is narrated from the point of view of a Lebanese emigrant returning home, and the anticipation felt upon seeing all the villages along the route leading to his home village. Bob recalled to me that his father – who was born in Newfoundland but studied in Lebanon – would get "filled up" when he listened to the song, and that, consequently, Bob now also gets "filled up" whenever he hears it. As

we listened to the recording, Bob's gaze became distant, and his face filled with emotion. "It reminds me of my father", he told me.

This moment exemplifies the way in which the first generation's nostalgia for Lebanon can become woven into the second generation's memory of their parents, thereby also coming to form part of the third generation's memory of the second. The same record that caused George Noah to get "filled up" in remembering Lebanon also causes Bob Noah to get "filled up" as he remembers his father's remembering. More than just reflective, this seemed to be recursive – a metaphorical infinity mirror of Bob remembering his father remembering, triggered by listening to the same record.

From the traditional Lebanese music of the first generation, the adoption of Western popular music by the second, the role of this popular music in the recollection of ethnic memory for members of the third, and now, the discovery of contemporary Lebanese music by the fourth, music has played a vital role in connecting members of the diaspora in Newfoundland to their ethnic history and identity. Because so many Lebanese Newfoundlanders are musicians, music is an important part of the way the ethnic identity is maintained, and the ethno-regional identity constructed. Western popular music is not Lebanese music, nor is it the totality of Lebanese musical expression in Newfoundland. It is, however, one important and early expression of *Lebanese-Newfoundland* music.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has examined the ways in which un-marking has allowed Lebanese Newfoundlanders to integrate socially, while the cultivation and expression of a primarily domestic ethnicity has allowed for the discreet continuation of Lebanese cultural practices. However, after over a decade in Newfoundland, the destruction of New Gower Street in St. John's, and several generations of intermarriage, these processes belie what is perceived by some in the community to be genuine culture loss. "All of that is going to die probably with us", Lorraine told me, "with this generation" (Lorraine 2018). "They're not interested", Charlotte echoed, "The young ones are not interested anymore" (Charlotte 2019). "You just think of it now, okay", Bob reflected,

> You've got a child, and you know little about the Lebanese, *anything* - he'll know even less about it. And you're trying to remember stuff about your father or mother or whatever, and you'd like a little bit of it to be passed on at least. That 'gee I'm Lebanese' you know? Rather than it just be lost and you've got to go through one of these ancestry things to find out who your ancestors are. It kind of shouldn't be, in a way" (Bob 2019).

For some, these feelings have led to a move to document the history of the community. A desire for documentation was expressed by many consultants and was an oft-mentioned motivation for participation in my research. Some had already begun this process, and when I met participants in their homes I was frequently presented with hand-written family trees, vital records, and stacks of photographs. Peter has amassed a wealth of such documents in addition to newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and other records pertaining to the Lebanese history of this province. Desires for official documentation and recognition were partly realized in 2023 when the Lebanese business community in Newfoundland was nominated for Provincial Historic Commemoration.

The commemoration was accompanied by the release of a book, primarily authored by community members, which details the history of the province's Lebanese community as well as their business and cultural contributions.

Concerns around culture loss have motivated some in the community to attempt various forms of cultural revival. "That's why in 2007 I started an association here", said Sharon, "because I felt that I was watching the elders die, and my greatest fear was that the culture and traditions and things like that would kind of slip away. . ." (Sharon 2019). Founded with the intent of strengthening community bonds and preserving Lebanese culture in Newfoundland, the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador organizes an annual[41] community gathering, known most recently as the Cedar Social. It has also published a cookbook containing recipes submitted by community members and has facilitated Arabic language classes in the past.

Due to the close-knit nature of the community the Cedar Social functions as something of a reunion, providing an opportunity for far-flung family and friends to reconnect with one another. It is open to anyone of Lebanese descent, however, and serves as a way for newcomers to meet and interact with their co-ethnics in Newfoundland. Programming has varied over the years, and has featured raffles, musical performances, and speeches by esteemed members of the community. It always includes a large potluck meal of Lebanese dishes, with ample time for socializing before and after. Held at a Parish Hall in St. John's, the gathering has at times involved some distinctly Catholic elements, including portions of Maronite mass.

[41] The 2020 and 2021 gatherings were cancelled due to restrictions related to Covid-19

The Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador also provides a symbolic point of contact with the contemporary Republic of Lebanon. With Lebanese flags displayed, the 2019 annual gathering opened with the singing of the Lebanese national anthem. As those gathered were predominately non-Arabic speaking, this was facilitated by a video featuring a Romanised version of the song's lyrics set against a montage of images of the Lebanese flag and landscape. In the past, the gathering has been visited by representatives from the Halifax-based Honorary Consulate of Lebanon. In 2012, during his first Pastoral visit to Canada, His Beatitude The Maronite Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros Rai presented Sharon with a medal of Special Apostolic Blessing in appreciation and acknowledgement of her efforts, and in 2016 the Honorary Consulate formally recognized Sharon with an award for "her contribution in preserving and promoting the Lebanese Culture and Heritage in Newfoundland and Labrador".

Due to the diversity of the community and the vastness of Newfoundland, some Lebanese Newfoundlanders have little or no connection to the Association or its activities. There are others for whom the Cedar Social represents a valuable time to reconnect with family and friends, with its cultural significance largely consequential. For some, however, it has been deeply impactful. "Sharon Dominic is the one who has really gathered us as a community", said Catherine, ". . . and, for a lot of people, kind of given us a little bit of our heritage back, and kind of made you proud of where we come from and what our relatives went through to get here. . ." (Catherine 2018). As a Lebanese American who has primarily experienced the Lebanese identity among my own family, I have personally found it profoundly moving to be in the presence of so many people of

Lebanese descent at one time, and I have left the Cedar Social feeling more connected to Lebanon, its diaspora, and this province.

Global Imagined Community, The Internet, and Imaginative Reconstruction

Cultural learning, as well as a sense of cultural connection to Lebanon and its diaspora, may also be fostered at home via the internet. Online media facilitates interaction with other Lebanese around the globe, providing immediate access to content about Lebanon and its culture. Migration Studies scholar Nicole Georges Maamary has observed the way that the Lebanese diaspora makes use of the internet to "exchange information without barriers of synchronicity and locality", effectively transforming the diaspora into what she describes as a "global imagined community" (Maamary 2018, 14). In this way, it can also play a significant role in identity construction and cultural revival processes by providing members of the diaspora with a wealth of material which can be used to construct their own ethnic identity.

Relatively few in number, and relatively isolated from the rest of the diaspora, the advent of the internet provided Lebanese Newfoundlanders a new link to the old country. This can be particularly important for the younger members of the fourth generation, who have lived a significant part of their identity-forming years in the internet age. Lacking their own memories of Lebanon, as well as access to those of first-generation relatives, younger members of the diaspora can turn to the internet and its global imagined community in order to satisfy cultural curiosity and facilitate processes of cultural revival. This was something described by Kimberley, who explained the way she uses the internet to "find out more about like what people in Lebanon might do, or wear, or eat, or believe. . . to find ways to connect back to it or learn more about it" (Kimberley 2019).

This contrasts sharply with the very localized ways in which prior generations typically experienced the Lebanese identity, which occurred primarily within the home and among family. For younger generations, the internet has allowed for an experience of "Lebaneseness" that is global yet individual, expanding far beyond the confines of physical space. By connecting points in the diaspora to one another and Lebanon, the internet has enabled members of the diaspora today to seek out fellow Lebanese around the world with whom they share other common interests and identities. This allows a curated experience of digital diaspora in which diasporans can participate in the hyper-specific online communities and experiences that coalesce along such intersecting lines (Maamary 2018, 8-32).

This process was described by Kimberley, who briefly related her own navigation of the digital diaspora in order to connect with Lebanon's LGBTQIA+ community. For her, much of this occurs on social media; "On Instagram I follow, there's one account. . . it's this queer person who posts their art depicting same sex relationships and stuff like that. . ." (Kimberley 2019). Similarly, she has used digital music services to find Lebanese bands and artists that suit her own musical tastes, and whose lyrics touch on subjects that are personally meaningful to her – such as those relating to political and/ or LGBTQIA+ issues. She also follows Lebanese and Middle Eastern news accounts in order to keep informed about events in the region, including at least one that does so through the lens of intersectional feminism.

I would argue that this kind of online activity represents a reflective process – that by seeing our ethnic identity shared by those with whom we share other identities, we are able to more clearly see our own. By observing those in the contemporary ancestral

country who are most like us in other ways, we are more able to imagine ourselves there. Cultural and psychological anthropologist Naomi Leite uses the term "imaginative reconstruction" to refer to processes by which diasporans imagine themselves "there" in the ancestral country, and "then" sometime in its past (Leite 2005, 290). By contrast, the intersectional reflectivity facilitated by the digital diaspora is one in which diasporans seek to see themselves "there" and "now". This allows diasporans to imagine for themselves a contemporary life in the ancestral country, envisioning what might have been if one's ancestors never left.

"To Go Find Out Where I Came From": Travelling to Lebanon

For others, however, this has required no imagining. Interviews revealed that some members of the second generation travelled to Lebanon, and this was a desire shared by several consultants. Thus far Lorraine, Terri, and Peter have all visited. Reconnecting with family in the country was a primary motivation for these trips, as well as a desire, as Terri put it, "to go find out where I came from". Lorraine and Terri both related strong feelings of homecoming upon arrival. "I got in Beirut", Terri recalled, "and the plane hit the tarmac, and [her travel companion] said 'do you feel any different? Do you feel anything?' and I said 'absolutely I do. It's weird. Like I could get out of this plane and kiss the ground'. I just felt something that I didn't feel anywhere else. I've been to Ireland – I didn't feel it in Ireland.[42] But I did there" (Terri). "It was very, very moving. I surprised myself. . ." Lorraine recounted,

> I was sitting by the window, and I must have been dozing for a bit, and then all of a sudden I started to see trees - I knew we had to be coming close. And all of a sudden I knew we were flying over Mount Lebanon and I just started to bawl.

[42] Terri's maternal family is of Irish descent.

> Tears just flowed down my cheeks, and I looked down and we were on top of Mount Lebanon (Lorraine 2018).

For Terri, feelings of homecoming were amplified by interactions in Lebanon. She recalled that every time she told someone the purpose of her trip – "I'm here to find my family" – she would be told "'Oh, you're Lebanese'". If she explained that "'well no I'm Canadian of Lebanese descent' . . ." she would be met with "'No, you're Lebanese. Your father was Lebanese? You're Lebanese. . . you just happen to be living [elsewhere]. You're a daughter of Lebanon'" (Terri 2018). Once Terri did locate her relatives, she recalled how warmly she was received. After arriving in Hadath El Jebbeh, Terri described her first encounter with her 94-year-old cousin, Danyal. "He comes down over the hill, and I looked up and he's just looking at me and he starts talking to me in Arabic, and so my driver is translating, and he says 'I've been waiting my whole life for someone belonging to Atla[43] to come, and now you're here'".

If the experience of emigration is one of displacement, and the process of un-marking an attempt at achieving emplacement, then these experiences in Lebanon may represent a kind of "re-placement". The implications of seeing oneself in Lebanon, being recognized there as Lebanese, and being accepted by Lebanese family, are highly reflective. For Lorraine, the culmination of this process of re-placement came upon stepping foot inside the house where her grandfather lived before emigrating, and gazing upon the old cedar beams and cedar wardrobe that had been in the home when he still lived there. Visiting the ancestral home perhaps represents the full circle of the diasporic domestic ethnic experience; after a lifetime of experiencing and expressing Lebanese

[43] Her grandmother's name.

identity within the home, to set foot in the very home in which that identity originated. Filming the experience, Danyal addressed the camera and his relatives in Newfoundland, saying ". . . 'Je t'aime ma famille, c'est ton histoire.' – I love you my family, this is your history" (Terri 2018).[44]

While travelling to Lebanon can be a reflective experience for diasporic Lebanese, engagement with the diaspora can also prove reflective for Lebanese in Lebanon. Indeed, the relationship between Lebanon and its diaspora has long been bidirectional – "The myth-making process", writes Paul Tabar, "which was essential in the building of the Lebanese nation-state, never failed to allude to the importance of *al-Mughtareb a-lubanani* (the Lebanese émigré) as a crucial contributor to the building of Lebanon, and its image as an adventurous and prosperous nation" (Tabar 2016, 261). Engagement with the diaspora was a priority of the early Lebanese state which, in 1946 – merely three years after gaining its independence – established the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (MFAE) in order to build and sustain relationships with overseas Lebanese.

Understanding the potential soft power to be wielded by leveraging this "diasporic capital", Lebanese representatives engage in various outreach activities within the diaspora to reinforce a sense of shared cultural identity (Tabar 2016, 261). These engagement efforts include consular visits, like the ones paid to the Cedar Social, and the bestowing of prizes upon prominent members of the diaspora, such as those given to Sharon. A 2015 amendment to Lebanese immigration law provided a pathway to citizenship for descendants of emigrants abroad. Outreach to the diaspora took on fresh

[44] Recalled by Terri, who had watched the video.

importance in the leadup to Lebanon's 2018 national election, in which descendants of emigrants were permitted to participate for the first time (Tabar 2016, 264-265; Maamary 2018, 66-71). Indeed Terri, who was in Lebanon that year, recalled that she was encouraged to apply for citizenship, being told "listen there's an election coming up – we can bring you now [to the passport office]" (Terri 2018).

It is difficult to determine the impact these outreach efforts have had on Lebanese Newfoundlanders, though it appears to be limited and/ or subtle. At the time of interview no research participants held Lebanese citizenship, with interviews revealing enthusiasm about obtaining it to be mostly lukewarm. While some who have not travelled to Lebanon expressed a strong desire to do so in the future, others indicated either no desire or, even, their preference against travelling there. However, Lebanese Newfoundlanders have acted compassionately toward their co-ethnics and their ancestral country in times of need. In the aftermath of the 2020 Beirut explosion the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador raised funds for the Lebanese Red Cross, while two participants in this research attempted to help a couple displaced by the explosion settle in Canada.

By bridging the gap between diaspora and contemporary Lebanese culture, revival processes have impacted the way some Lebanese Newfoundlanders construct, perceive, and express their own Lebanese identity. With a majority of early Lebanese immigrants originating from Mount Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley, the Lebanese culture initially carried to Newfoundland was itself a regional one which was then crystallized in time and regionalized in Newfoundland. Indeed, predating the establishment of Lebanon as a sovereign state, the flags displayed and anthem sung at the Cedar Social, for example, would have been unknown to Newfoundland's earliest Lebanese immigrants. As would

certain contemporary Lebanese foods enjoyed by some in the community today – such as falafel, or music genres – such as Lebanese electro-pop. This amounts to a kind of "Lebanonization" of local Lebanese culture, paralleling similar processes among other ethnic groups in Newfoundland, such as the "Irishization" of Newfoundland Irish music (Krajewski 2018).

In some instances, revival processes may even expand diasporans' notions of who their co-ethnics are. Kim explained that the online content with which she engages is not always specifically Lebanese ". . . but Middle East in general" (Kim 2019). This suggests that representations found in media, as well as interactions with the digital diaspora, may influence the ways younger generations perceive their identity. By interacting with media that includes Lebanon within a genericized pan-Arab identity, or that conceptualizes the middle east as a cohesive region of which Lebanon is a part, younger members of the diaspora sometimes position their ethnic identity in differing ways to their forebears. "I've never heard my dad call himself middle eastern or Arab or anything", Kim said. "I think I've only heard him call himself Lebanese. And I think I'm a little bit different – I also call myself middle eastern, as well as Lebanese. . . . I hear a lot of people talk more about the middle east in general, so I would kind of identify myself with that because Lebanon is in the middle east [laughing]" (Kim 2019).

From "Difference" to Making a Difference: Civic Engagement

> *"All of Newfoundland is small compared to the rest of the world, so if one little thing drops into it, it ripples and makes a difference"* (John 2018).

While un-marking allowed Lebanese Newfoundlanders to blend in socially, their general proclivity toward business helped many in the community attain influential

positions in society. In addition to business, civic and political engagement has a long history among Lebanese Newfoundlanders: In 1951 the Baalbek-born Honourable Michael G. Basha became the first Lebanese politician to be appointed to the Canadian Senate. Meanwhile, from 1978-1980 Lebanese Newfoundlander Alphonsus Faour represented the electoral district of Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe in the House of Commons, lead the provincial New Democratic Party (NDP) from 1980-1981, and was appointed to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2003. Lorraine Michael served as a Member of the House of Assembly from 2006 to 2019, and as leader of the provincial NDP from 2006-2015. She is one of four participants in my research who have careers in legal and/ or political professions and, like some others in the community, continues to champion social justice causes.

A concern for marginalized peoples, as well as an emphasis on helping others, may have its origin among some members of the first generation. The experience of immigration and the struggles faced after arriving in Newfoundland sometimes fostered an empathy toward other newcomers in general. This is supported by the metafolklore surrounding acts of compassion toward other immigrants. "She took in boarders", Terri recalled of her grandmother. "And the boarders that she had when I was a kid were primarily Filipino and Portuguese. . . So I know that my grandmother and my aunts identified very strongly with other ethnic groups – not necessarily one ethnic group. Maybe they felt some[thing], you know, common – they were all immigrants, as opposed to *Lebanese* immigrants" (Terri 2018). Similarly, Hannah recalled that her Grandfather "had built this building, and there was a local Chinese family who had also just moved in. . . . And of course, they were struggling, as you know new Canadians tend to do. And he

gave them the building. . . he rented it to them or bought it. . . . you know, to kind of help them out. And they opened a Chinese restaurant" (Hannah 2018).

These feelings toward newcomers are shared by many in the community today. "I do have a real sympathy for anybody coming here who is new", said Catherine, "From wherever they come from. It's not going to be easy for them" (Catherine 2018). For some, this sympathy is expressed in action – particularly for causes around immigration, anti-racism, and issues affecting the Middle East. Indeed, a self-described activist, it was her anti-racism activism that lead Kimberly to my research after reading about it on the Twitter account "Addressing Islamophobia NL" (Kimberly 2019). At the time of interview, the refugee crisis caused by the Syrian Civil War loomed large. Catherine, in her role as a Mercy Associate, was assisting the local Sisters of Mercy in sponsoring a Syrian refugee family. Terri had recently made the decision to donate the proceeds generated by a Christmas concert she organizes to the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC) – a local charitable organization providing support to refugees and immigrants. "There are a lot of Syrian families coming over", she explained, "and if someone hadn't helped my grandmother and grandfather get here, who knows where I would be. Or what I would be" (Terri 2018).

Concluding Remarks

Echoing the official sentiments of the early 1900s, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador has once again turned to immigration as a means by which to curb the province's demographic crisis (Bassler 1992, 44-51). The 2016 Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Immigration Agreement has set the tone for successive policies and programs enacted to attract potential migrants to settle in the province, and in

October of 2023 the population stood at its highest since 1998. International migration accounted for an increase of 2,635 people – among them a number of Levantine newcomers resulting from the ongoing Syrian war and economic crisis in Lebanon (Economics Division, Department of Finance). Between the years of 2016 and 2021 the number of Lebanese-born persons increased by 45, while the number of Syrian-born persons increased by 170. While these numbers may seem small, they represent an increase of 128.6% and 54% respectively (Statistics Canada 2016, 2021).[45]

This thesis contributes to an emerging body of research centring the long-neglected histories, cultures, and traditions of the island's marginalized ethnic communities. As a relative newcomer to this community myself, this research has felt deeply emplacing. By meeting Lebanese Newfoundlanders, by hearing their stories, by sharing Lebanese foods in their company, I have felt my own sense of place more firmly established here. I was moved to see faces not unlike my own peering back at me from century-old photographs. I have recognized a variant of my Lebanese surname (Chibley) among the records of Lebanese immigrants who passed through this island. My grandmother's maiden name has appeared in the signature of the Chorbishop[46] who officiated the marriage of a participant's parents at a Maronite Church in my home state. This research has revealed the historical and enduring presence of Lebanese people in Newfoundland, enabling me to imagine a history in which my own paternal family settled along these shores. By fostering greater awareness of the Lebanese history of this

[45] Based on 25% sample data.
[46] The rank below Bishop, and the highest rank of the Median Orders of the Maronite Church.

province, it is my hope that this research may help to engender a similarly emplacing feeling for other newcomers of Lebanese and Middle Eastern descent.

This study contributes to a relatively scant body of research concerning the early wave of Lebanese immigration that crested between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is my belief that the concepts of un-marking, domestic ethnicity, and reflectivity may articulate similar approaches to acculturation among early Lebanese immigrants and their descendants elsewhere. Within the scope of diaspora studies more generally, I hope that these concepts may provide useful frameworks for understanding other diasporas that exist in similarly small, culturally distinct, and relatively remote parts of the world.

Facilitated by the use of symbols, reflective processes are the mirrors with which we reveal and examine those parts of ourselves often left unseen. Encoded in some of the deepest layers of culture, such as foodways, this symbolic language may outlive the ethnic language by several generations in diaspora. Among those diasporans for whom ethnicity is expressed subtly, unfamiliar co-ethnics can recognize one another by recognizing familiar symbols. They foster a shared sense of cultural identity during times when the imagined community becomes “real” – such as when travelling to Lebanon, meeting Lebanese newcomers in Newfoundland, or visiting Lebanese cultural events, centres, or food establishments outside the province. Reflective traditions allow diasporans to examine and inhabit identities hidden by factors such as un-marking, acculturation, and time.

Evoking the ancient image of the Ouroboros, recursion can encompass all processes that are the source of their own beginning. By this definition, the reflective

processes elaborated in this thesis are also generally recursive in nature. A Lebanese Newfoundlander may eat Lebanese foods because they are Lebanese, for example, but eating Lebanese foods can be an important part of maintaining or restoring one's sense of "Lebaneseness". In a culturally hybrid context, these processes may be further encoded with other ethnic or regional symbols. In binding together multiple facets of identity, this kind of recursion may be more accurately imagined as a rope doubled back on itself. Multi-stranded and self-reinforcing - its flexibility the source of its own strength - such recursive processes form the knots that hold the self together.

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Appendix

Figure 1. Photo of New Gower Street at the intersection of Springdale Street circa 1950s. Photo 11-02-120, courtesy of City of St. John’s Archives.

Figure 2. A photo displayed in Lorraine’s home of members of the Michael family attending a gathering her grandparent’s house (Bedra and Habib).

Figure 3. Photo of George Kalleem Noah on a fishing trip. Courtesy of Bob Noah.

Figure 4. Gravestone of Joseph Michael Gosine showing Arabic inscription.

Figure 5. Heirloom bracelets worn by Catherine Ryan.

Figure 6. Backgammon board belonging to Bob Noah.

Figure 7. Heirloom jurn belonging to Lorraine Michael.

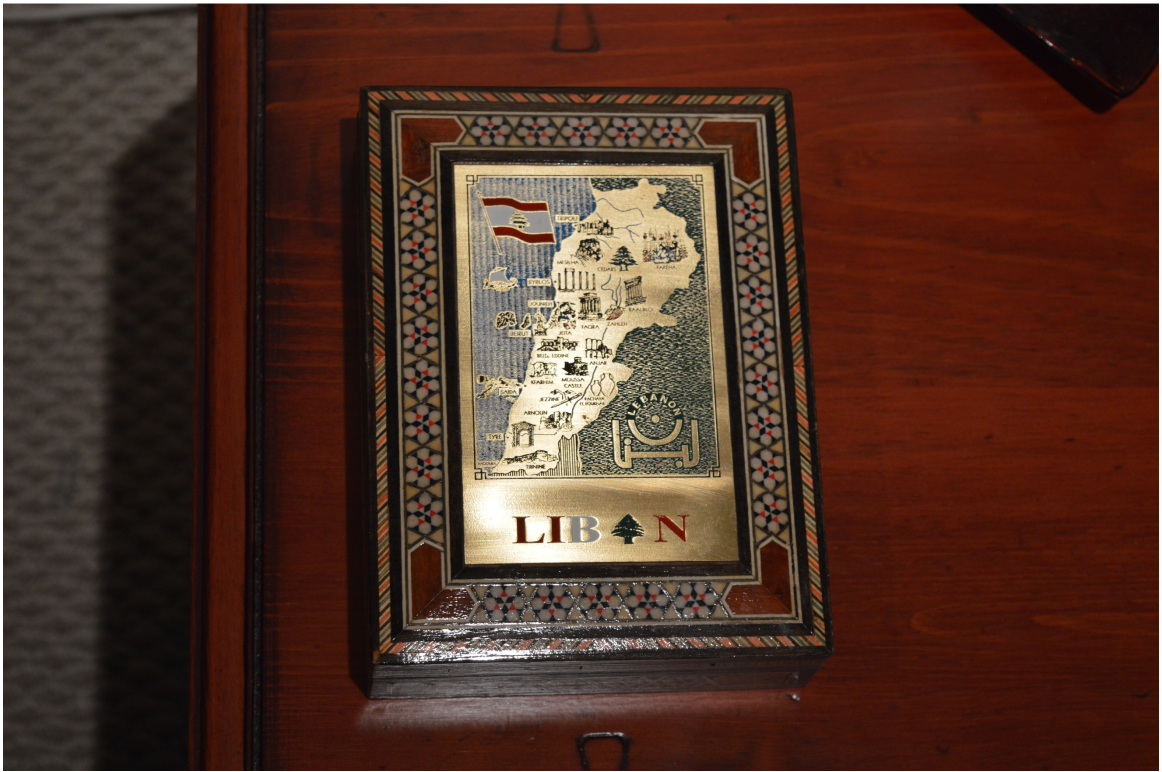

Figure 8. Decorative box displayed in Sharon's home featuring traditional wood inlay.

Figure 9. *Rakweh*, or Lebanese coffee pot, with matching dish. Displayed on top of a cabinet in Sharon Dominic's kitchen.

Figure 10. Miniature decorative jurn displayed in Bob Noah’s kitchen.

Figure 11. Decorative jurn displayed in Peter's living room.

Figure 12. Pyrography belonging to Lorraine Michael displayed near the entrance of her home.

Figure 13. Cedar relief carving displayed in the home of Terri Andrews.

Figure 14. The cedar growing in the back yard of John and Kimberley Offspring. Photo courtesy of Kimberley Offspring.

Figure 15. Cedar planks displayed by Sharon Dominic featuring Psalm 92:12 and Madonna and Child.

Figure 16. Medal of Special Apostolic Blessing presented to Sharon Dominic by the Maronite Patriarch, displayed in her living room.

Figure 17. Recognition Award presented to Sharon Dominic by the Honorary Consulate of Lebanon, displayed in her living room.

Figure 18. Photo depicting a portion of the spread at the 2019 Cedar Social. Clockwise from top: fatayers, hompsa, mujaddara, stuffed grape leaves, olives, and Lebanese-style pickled turnips.

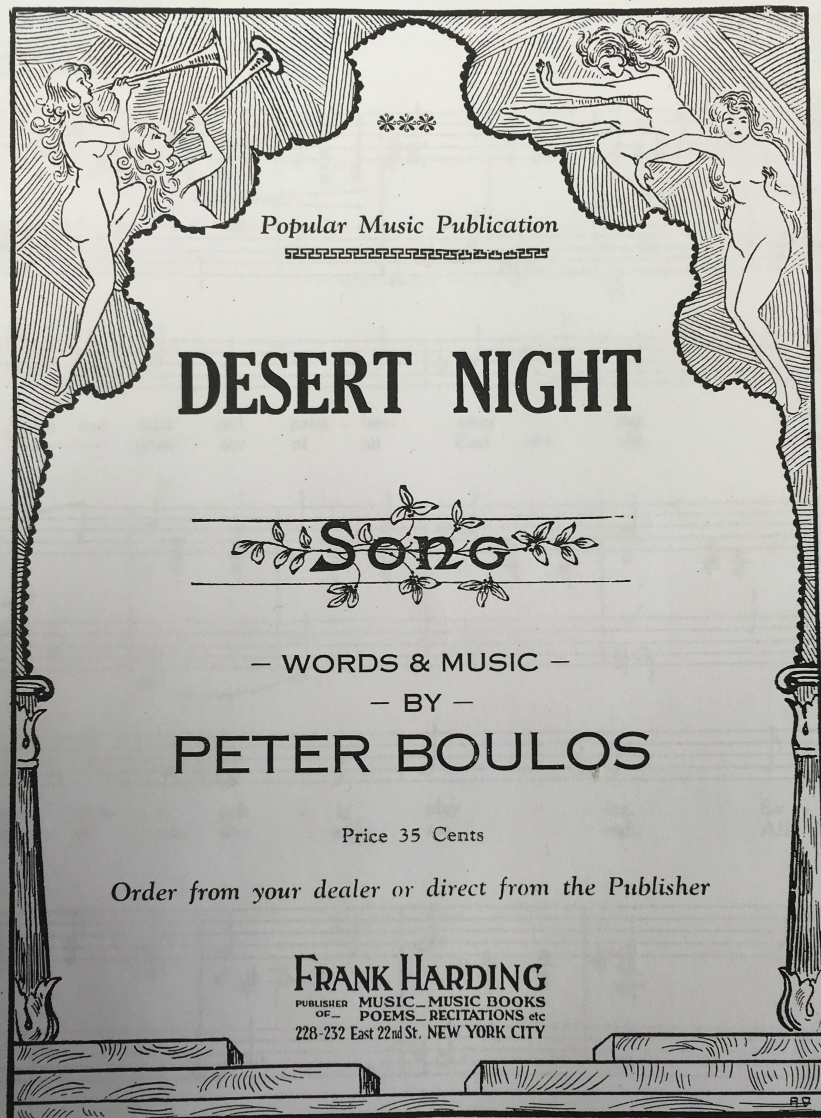

Figure 19. Cover page of “Desert Night” by Peter Boulos. Courtesy of Joe Boulos.

Ringman—Telegram

The happy smiling crowd shown grouped around Chrissie Andrews and his orchestra are part of the large attendance at last night's dance which was given by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Newfoundland Division, and held in their own building recreation hall. It was a most enjoyable evening with everyone present enjoying themselves to the fullest extent. Many prizes donated by the Ladies' Auxiliary for the Blind, were won by the participants, who for the greater part were blind. A delightful tea and supper were served during the dance and this too was enjoyed immensely. Mrs. George Ehlers, President of the Ladies' Auxiliary, looked after the presentation of the prizes while likeable Ed. Walsh officiated as M. C. for the affair. Present at the proceedings were Mr. J. W. Gillespie, Superintendent of the Newfoundland Division C.N.I.B., and Mr. A. W. MacDonald, Business Manager for the aforenamed institute. A very important point which might be mentioned is that Chris Andrews and the Orchestra handle the music at most of the Institute dances, and this he and the boys do entirely "gratis" and out of the goodness of their most generous hearts. It goes without saying that his most gracious contributions are deeply and fully appreciated.

Figure 20. Photo of a newspaper article about the Chrissy Andrews band. Courtesy of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Digital Archives Initiative, Lebanese-Newfoundland Collection.

Figure 21. A photograph of the Leo Michael Orchestra. Front row L-R: Wince Lewis, Freddy Michael, Leo Michael, Ralph Walker. Back row L-R: Mickey Michael, Frank Cromwell. Courtesy of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Digital Archives Initiative, Lebanese-Newfoundland Collection.