Young Arabs in Canada: Ethnic Identity and Intersectionality

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in Psychology
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Abstract

Arabs make up almost 2% of the population in Canada, and their numbers are growing rapidly. Yet, literature on Arabs in Canada is sparse, both from academic and governmental sources. Using ethnic identity and intersectionality frameworks, this study explores the meanings of Arab identity for youth in Ontario, Canada, and the interactions between their Arab identity and their other identities. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in Arabic and English with 30 participants (ages 18-30) who are from, or whose background is from, the Arab world. Findings highlighted the diversity of the population, and the themes that emerged regarding self-identification with labels, the meanings of being Arab, the identity crises and conflicts that Arabs experience in the Canadian context, and their intersecting dimensions of identity. Results further our understanding of ethnic identity in Canada and have practical implications for Arabs in Canada.

Keywords

Arab, Arab Identity, Ethnic Identity, Intersectionality, Immigrants, Race, Ethnicity.
Summary for Lay Audience

Canada has a long history of immigration, and it continues to welcome hundreds of thousands of immigrants per year (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Immigrants come from many different countries, and represent a range of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious heritages (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Arabs are one of the largest non-European ethnic groups in Canada, making up almost 2% of the population, and their numbers are growing considerably faster than the overall population (Statistics Canada, 2007; 2022c). Arabs have been immigrating to Canada from the Middle East and North Africa since 1882 (Abu-Laban, 1980). Yet, despite their large presence and history in Canada, literature on Arabs is sparse, both from academic and governmental sources. Thus, the current study aimed to explore the meanings of Arab identity for youth in Canada. Thirty participants (18-30 years old) who resided in Ontario, and who were from, or whose background was from, the 22 countries of the Arab world were recruited to take part in the study. Participants were interviewed over Zoom and asked a series of open-ended questions about their identities and their experiences in Canada. Their responses were then recorded and analyzed to examine whether participants identified as Arab, what being Arab meant to them within the Canadian context, and how the different dimensions of their identity, such as their gender, sexual orientation, religion, and others, impacted their Arab identity and experiences in Canada. Our results indicated the identities and labels with which participants identified, the meanings of Arab identity for young Arabs in Ontario, the identity crises and conflicts that participants experience in Canada, and the interaction of their Arab identity with other dimensions of their identities. Our findings further demonstrated the diversity and heterogeneity of the Arab population in Canada. This thesis betters our understanding of the ethnic identity of Arabs in Canada and creates a launching pad for future studies that focus on this population. Our findings have implications for research in psychology as well as practical implications for policies and programs that impact diverse communities across Canada.
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, a huge thank you goes to my supervisor, Dr. Victoria Esses, for her guidance, support, and encouragement. I always left our meetings feeling more excited about this project and more confident in myself as a researcher than when I walked in. I am truly grateful for that.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to my amazing parents, who have had to make difficult choices to ensure that I can achieve all that I have. They instilled in me a deep passion for education and the eagerness to constantly improve. Mama w Baba, I aspire to make you proud every day.

A special thank you goes to my aunt Mawia, who has always been in my corner; to my aunt Raya, who insisted that I learn about my roots, and learn to speak, read and write Arabic fluently; and to my brother Yazan, who encourages me to dream bigger and reach higher, even when I doubt my own capabilities.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of my supervisory committee and to the faculty and administrators at the Psychology and Migration and Ethnic Relations departments, who helped turn an ambitious idea into a thesis project. I am also thankful to the research assistants and the community partners and organizations who volunteered their time, and of course to the participants who took part in the study, for their honesty, self-reflection, patience, and willingness to talk to me.

My love and appreciation go to my incredible friends, who are scattered across the globe, and to Mahgoub, Nini, and Bidushy, who have put up with me talking about this project for years and have always offered words of encouragement and kindness. Neither the ups nor the downs would have been the same without any of you.

I would like to thank Dr. Ward Struthers, whose teaching and mentorship ignited my love for research; Dr. Hala Tamim, who is a wonderful example of empathetic mentorship and leadership, and an Arab-Canadian role model; and the wonderful teachers at PISOD, who nurtured my curiosity from a young age and helped me develop a trust in myself and in what I know.

Most importantly, I want to acknowledge all the extraordinary women whose influence has shaped me into the person I am today, some who I’ve mentioned above and many who I have not. To the family, friends, mentors, teachers, and role models, thank you. Your strength, compassion, intelligence, ambition, and courage inspire me. شكراً
# Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................................................... ii

Summary for Lay Audience .......................................................................................................................... iii

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................................................ iv

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................................ v

List of Figures .............................................................................................................................................. viii

List of Appendices ....................................................................................................................................... ix

1 Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 1

  1.1 Overview ............................................................................................................................................ 2

2 Who Are Arabs? ......................................................................................................................................... 4

  2.1 History of Arab Immigration to Canada ............................................................................................ 6

  2.2 Arabs in Canada Today ....................................................................................................................... 7

3 Intersectionality ....................................................................................................................................... 11

4 Ethnic Identity .......................................................................................................................................... 13

  4.1 Acculturation ...................................................................................................................................... 13

  4.2 Arab Ethnic Identity ............................................................................................................................ 14

  4.3 Current Research ............................................................................................................................... 19

5 Methods .................................................................................................................................................. 21

  5.1 Researcher Positionality ...................................................................................................................... 21

  5.2 Recruitment and Participants ........................................................................................................... 24

  5.3 Procedure .......................................................................................................................................... 25

  5.4 Materials ........................................................................................................................................... 25

    5.4.1 Pre-screen questionnaire .............................................................................................................. 25

    5.4.2 Letter of information and consent form ..................................................................................... 26

    5.4.3 Interview guide ............................................................................................................................. 26

    5.4.4 Demographics survey .................................................................................................................. 27
9 Conclusions ........................................................................................................................................84
  9.1 Summary .....................................................................................................................................84
  9.2 Contributions and Implications .................................................................................................84
  9.3 Limitations ..................................................................................................................................85
  9.4 Directions for Future Research .................................................................................................86
References ..........................................................................................................................................89
Appendices ..........................................................................................................................................96
Curriculum Vitae .............................................................................................................................129
List of Figures

Figure 1: Participants’ City of Residence ...................................................................................... 31

Figure 2: Participants’ Country of Birth ....................................................................................... 32

Figure 3: Participants’ Country of Origin/Background ................................................................. 33
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Approval from the Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board ........................................ 96
Appendix B: Recruitment Flyers ........................................................................................................... 98
Appendix C: Pre-screen Questionnaire ............................................................................................... 99
Appendix D: Letter of Information and Consent Form .......................................................................... 102
Appendix E: Interview Guide (for Arab-identifying Participants) ....................................................... 106
Appendix F: Interview Guide (for non-Arab-identifying Participants) ................................................. 113
Appendix G: Sociodemographic Questionnaire ................................................................................ 120
Appendix H: Debriefing Form ............................................................................................................. 125
Appendix I: List of Resources ............................................................................................................ 126
Appendix J: Table of Participants’ Demographic Information ............................................................ 127
1 Introduction

Canada has a long history of immigration, and it continues to welcome hundreds of thousands of immigrants per year (Statistics Canada, 2022b). In 2021, more than 8.3 million people, or almost one-quarter (23.0%) of the population, were immigrants to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Immigrants are persons who come from another country or territory to Canada to live permanently. The term immigrant refers to “a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident,” and includes “immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization” (Statistics Canada, 2022c). Immigrants come to Canada through four routes of entry: as economic immigrants, as immigrants sponsored by family, as refugees, or for humanitarian or other reasons (Statistics Canada, 2022a). Immigrants come from many different countries, and represent a range of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious heritages (Statistics Canada, 2022b).

Arabs are one of the largest non-European ethnic groups in Canada and their numbers are growing considerably faster than the overall population (Statistics Canada, 2007; 2022c). Arab immigrants began to arrive in Canada in small numbers in 1882. Their immigration was relatively limited until it increased in the mid and late 20th century (Abu-Laban, 1980; 2013). Arabs in Canada are those who originate in the region commonly referred to as the Arab world (Statistics Canada, 2007). The Arab world extends from the Arabian Gulf through the Middle East to North Africa, and encapsulates the 22 countries of the Arab league: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Abu-Laban, 2013; Mandil, 2019). Arab immigrants share some cultural traditions and the Arabic language, but are diverse in terms of race, religion, country of origin, languages spoken, and more. Further differences between Arabs in Canada exist in terms of migration journeys, immigration statuses, integration into Canadian society, and knowledge of Canadian official languages. These differences may even create a hierarchy within the Arab group, wherein those from certain nationalities, such as Lebanese or
Syrian Canadians, dominate the cultural hierarchy, and those who are more proficient in English or French are regarded as higher on the hierarchy than those who lack proficiency in these languages (Awad, 2010; Al-Saadi, 2022).

Despite their large presence and history in Canada, the term and designation of who is Arab and who identifies as Arab remains unclear, as Arab can refer to a geographic region, a language group, an ethnicity, or a population group (Abu-Laban, 2013). In Canada, Arabs are considered a visible minority group, defined as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (Statistics Canada, 2021a). Note that the terminology of visible minority is under review and more recent reports refer to visible minority groups as racialized groups instead (Statistics Canada, 2022c). This designation of Arab as its own separate visible minority group was introduced in 2009, whereas Arab and West Asian were classified into one joint category before then (Statistics Canada, 2017). The lack of clarity in definition and the heterogeneity and diversity of Arab communities may be why there is a dearth of research with this population. Arab immigrant experiences and the ethnic identity of Arabs in Canada remain understudied in many fields, including in psychology.

1.1 Overview

The current paper aims to fill the gap in the literature on Arab identity in Canada and explore the meanings of ethnic identity and other intersecting dimensions of identity for Arab youth in Ontario. The thesis begins with background on Arabs and the history of Arab immigrants in Canada. A brief explanation of what intersectionality is and how intersectionality can be a useful lens to study Arabs in Canada is further included. Next, ethnic identity is defined and a review of the literature on Arab ethnic identity is provided. The methodology is then described, including the materials and procedures and the researcher’s positionality. The findings from the study are shared, consisting of a description of the participants’ demographics and the themes from the interviews on Arab identity and its intersection with the other dimensions of participants’ identities. The findings are then discussed and situated within the broader literature on ethnic identity, Arab identity in North America, and Arab intersectionality. The paper concludes with the
study’s contributions, implications, and limitations and recommendations for future research.

Before we proceed, it is important to acknowledge that all “Arabs in Canada,” including the author, are settlers on Turtle Island. I recognize and respect that Indigenous Peoples have long-lasting relationships with the land where the author and the participants were situated, now often referred to as Ontario. I am fully aware of the historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples endure in Canada, and I acknowledge that the violence and mistreatment that Indigenous Peoples have been exposed to has allowed me, and other immigrants, the privilege of living here and the opportunities we have received. I am committed to actively listening and learning, and to constantly reflect on my position within the settler colonial system. I hope to contribute to a society that instead emphasizes reconciliation and decolonization, and places Indigenous experiences and voices at the forefront of these processes.
2 Who Are Arabs?

In the past, the term "Arab" was used to describe a distinct community that was relatively uniform in terms of physical attributes and culture (Abu-Laban, 1980). The best contemporary representatives of this community are probably the nomadic Arabs of the Arabian Near Eastern deserts and the North African Sahara (Abu-Laban, 1980). As time has passed, the definition of who Arabs are has changed. Typically “Arab” refers to a person whose origin or ancestry is from the 22 countries of the Arab league located in the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Abu-Laban, 2013; Mandil, 2019). Arabs are typically Arabic-speakers, and all share some historical, cultural, linguistic, political, or social background. Abu-Laban (1980) wrote, “Notwithstanding the diversity of lifestyles in the Arab world, there is a rich interweaving of customs and values throughout the entire region.” (p. 9). Nonetheless, they are a heterogeneous group, varying by country and even within countries. Arabs are sometimes grouped by geographical region, wherein the countries, and the people within each of the groupings, tend to be seen as more similar. These geographical regions are the Levant (e.g., Syria and Lebanon), the Gulf (e.g. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia), and the Maghreb (e.g. Algeria and Morocco). People who are from, or whose background is from, the countries of the Arab world are diverse. They come from different continents and geographic regions. They have a variety of physical features and skin tones. They speak a range of languages other than Arabic, and even those who do speak Arabic have vast dialectical differences wherein those from one region may not understand someone from a different region even though they both speak Arabic (Elfar, 2016). These dialects are so distinct that there has been an argument that they are distinct languages altogether (Sarde After Dinner, 2023).

Moreover, not everybody who comes from these countries is necessarily Arab, as the region is “characterized by a complex and diverse composition that is tied to colonialism of European nations” (Mir, 2019, as cited in El-Saadi, 2022). There are communities from and within those countries who do not identify as Arab, even if they...
speak Arabic, as it is seen as an inaccurate descriptor of their identity, heritage, ancestry or ethnoreligious background (Awad et al., 2021; Britto, 2008). These communities, such as Coptic Egyptians, Babylonians, Amazigh, etc. existed before the introduction of Islam and Arab culture to the region (Awad et al., 2021). Although they are sometimes used interchangeably or lumped together, there is a distinction between the terms Arab, MENA: Middle East(ern) and North Africa(n), and West Asian. West Asia refers to a particular region in Asia that includes some of the Arab League countries, such as those in the Levant area, as well as some non-Arab League countries like Georgia, Cyprus, and Azerbaijan (Shvili, 2021). However, it does not include any countries in Africa, Arab or otherwise. On the other hand, MENA includes all Arab League countries in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as non-Arab countries in those areas such as Armenia, Iran, and Turkey. The MENA label is sometimes considered the most inclusive term because it includes those of Arab descent as well non-Arab ethnic groups within the region (Awad et al., 2021; Rahal et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, there are similarities within Arabs. Arabic is the official language in all Arab countries and being from, or having ancestry from, those countries often entails having Arabic as a first or familial language (Britto, 2008; Elfar, 2016). Despite the dialectical differences in spoken Arabic, a shared form of Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, is used for writing and other forms of communication, which shares the same alphabet, grammatical rules, and vocabulary (Elfar, 2016). Arabs also share similar cultural norms and familial dynamics, especially compared to Eurocentric Canadian norms. Arab culture values collectivism, prioritizing the collective good over individual interests and family situations over independent obligations (Awad, 2010; Rasmi et al., 2017). Family members, especially women, are responsible for maintaining and contributing to the family identity, as well as preserving the family’s honor and reputation (Elfar, 2016; Al-Saadi, 2022). Generosity, hospitality, hard work, and positive engagement with the community, as well as pursuing higher education, are thus highly encouraged, whereas engaging in any illegal or immoral conduct is highly discouraged within Arab culture and can lead to individuals being ostracized from their family and community (Elfar, 2016). The Arab family structure commonly includes extended family members who are all involved in family matters, and a high emphasis is placed on
seniority and respect for elders (Al-Saadi, 2022; Elfar, 2016). Families tend to be patriarchal and hierarchical yet warm and interconnected (Rasmi et al., 2017).

2.1 History of Arab Immigration to Canada

The history of Arabs in Canada dates back to 1882 with the arrival of the first immigrant from present-day Lebanon to Montreal, which coincided with the opening of a mass immigration (Abu-Laban, 1980; Asal, 2020). In the late 1880s, Canada adopted an official immigration policy, and had demographic and economic immigration objectives, based on the belief that increasing the population increases the country’s power (Asal, 2020). During the late 19th century and early 20th century, the early wave of “Arabs” primarily immigrated from the Ottoman Empire, specifically Lebanon and Syria, and resettled in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec (Asal, 2020; Abu-Laban, 1980). They were mainly Christian, from different denominations, and were often uneducated and could not speak English or French (Asal, 2020; Abu-Laban, 1980). Many worked as pedlars and shopkeepers upon arrival, and changed or anglicized their names during this time, changing Boutros to Pierre in French and Peter in English, for example (Asal, 2020). These immigrants were categorized as “Turks” since they were coming from the Ottoman Empire, despite the majority being Arabic-, not Turkish-, speakers (Asal, 2020). “Arab,” “Egyptian,” “Syrian,” and “Turkish” categories were eventually developed, although it is unclear how immigrants were being categorized into each (Asal, 2020). This is indicative that the difficulty and inaccuracy in defining and categorizing “Arabs” has a long history in Canada.

A progressive closing of the borders of Canada and the world wars during the first half of the 20th century meant that the number of Arabs immigrating to Canada during that time was low (Asal, 2020; Abu-Laban, 1980). Canada adopted restrictive immigration policies, including the “‘continuous journey rule,’ requiring that all immigrants arriving in Canada come directly, without any stopovers from their countries of origin or citizenship, on a ticket bought in that country.” (Asal, 2020, p. 19). This meant that all those travelling from Asia, who would typically stop at European ports before arriving to Canada, including Arabs, could no longer immigrate to Canada. Additional discriminatory policies were introduced at the time restricting the entry of
immigrants from certain nationalities, ethnic origins, and professions (Asal, 2020; Abu-Laban, 1980). Nonetheless, the number of Arabs in Canada continued to gradually increase naturally, as those who were already in Canada were building roots and making families (Abu-Laban, 1980).

The mid to late 20th century saw a significant increase of Arabs in Canada. More permissive immigration policies were passed after World War II, with the removal of the previous discriminatory policies and the permittance of immigrants, including Arabs, to sponsor more degrees of relatives (Abu-Laban, 1980). More Arab immigrants began to arrive, not just from Syria and Lebanon, but also from Egypt, Somalia, Iraq, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and other countries (Abu-Laban, 1980; Asal, 2020). The shift in Canadian policies in the 1960s from origin-based selection to focusing on family reunification and skills-based migration further led to the arrival of a more diverse Arab population, including Muslims and Druze (Abu-Laban, 1980; 2013; Asal, 2020). Arab immigrants were now more educated, seeking economic opportunity, and were moving further west and across Canada (Abu-Laban, 1980; 2013; Asal, 2020). In addition, the Arabs that had arrived generations earlier were further establishing themselves. Arab Canadians started to establish community organizations, including churches, cultural associations, newspapers, and social clubs, to maintain their heritage and support one another (Abu-Laban, 1980; 2013; Asal, 2020). Secular associations were also established by both the early pioneers and later immigrants to serve social, cultural, charitable, and political needs (Abu-Laban, 2013). This growth continued into the late 20th century and early 21st century. Arabs came to Canada from all Arab countries and through all routes of immigration, as economic immigrants, refugees, temporary residents, etc. (Abu-Laban, 2013).

2.2 Arabs in Canada Today

As mentioned, defining the term “Arab” is complicated, as it can be used to refer to a race or an ethnicity, a geographic region, a language group, or a culture. The categorization of the term and its implications differ in different contexts and countries. For example, in the United States, Arabs are characterized as “White”, making many of their experiences “invisible” and making the data on Arab Americans inaccurate (Awad
et al., 2021). In Canada, Arabs have been defined as “people or Canadians of Arab origin, … an origin that originates in the region commonly referred to as the Arab world” (Statistics Canada, 2007). Thus, anyone who identified their ethnic origin as from one or more of the 22 countries of the Arab league, or identified their ethnic origin as “Arab, not otherwise specified” was considered ethnically Arab in Canada. The 2021 Canadian Census collected information on respondents’ ethnic or cultural origins and population group by asking respondents to choose from the 11 population group options available and/or specify an “Other” group, wherein respondents can include write-in responses (Statistics Canada 2021a; Statistics Canada, 2020). These responses are then used to designate the respondent’s origin and visible minority status. Arabs are considered a population group (previously “race”) and a visible minority group in Canada. However, until as recently as August 2021, the visible minority designation did not apply to all Arabs in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021b). If someone identified as Arab, or as Arab and Egyptian, they were considered a visible minority. On the other hand, if they identified as Arab and White, or as Arab and French, they were no longer considered a visible minority. In contrast, if someone identified as South Asian, as South Asian and White, or as South Asian and French, they would still be considered a visible minority. This is also true for those who identify as Black, Filipino, Chinese, Southeast Asian, Korean, and Japanese (but not for West Asian and Latin American; Statistics Canada, 2021b).

Arabs currently make up 1.9% of the population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022c). The 2021 Census noted 690,000 Arabs in Canada, which was an increase of 171,000 Arabs from the previous Census in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2022c). The Arab population in Canada is young and well-educated, compared to the general population (Mandil, 2019). More than 60% of them have a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree, and the top three fields of study for the Arab population in Canada are business and management, engineering, and health professions (Mandil, 2019). The majority of Arabs are first-generation Canadians, having been born outside of Canada. The three main regions of birth for Arabs are West and Central Asia and the Middle East (40.1%), North Africa (29.4%) and Canada (27.6%; Statistics Canada, 2022c). Nonetheless, the number of Canadian-born Arabs is increasing: the number of Arab children under the age
of five born in Canada rose 14.7% between 2016 and 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022c). The most common ethnic or cultural origins of people classified as Arab in the 2021 Canadian census reported that they are Arab (29.8%) with no further clarification, Lebanese (15.3%), Egyptian (9.3%), Moroccan (8.8%) and Syrian (8.8%), illustrating the main source countries for immigration of this group (Statistics Canada, 2022c). In Canada, most Arabs reside in Ontario and Quebec (Statistics Canada, 2022c). The largest share of the Arab population (35.5%) lives in Montreal, with Toronto ranking second, and Ottawa-Gatineau ranking third (Statistics Canada, 2022c). Most of the people who reported being only Arab in the 2021 census also reported Arabic (70.8%) as their mother tongue, alone or with other languages, while a sizeable share of Arabs reported English (21.9%) and French (17.2%) as their mother tongue. Among the Arab population in Canada, 73.6% reported being Muslim and 19.5% reported Christianity as their religion (Statistics Canada, 2022c).

Unfortunately, Arabs, and other racialized groups, share experiences of othering and discrimination in Canada (and other host countries). In both Canada and the United States, Arabs and Muslims have suffered a significant increase in incidents of discrimination and other negative consequences, since the September 11, 2001, attacks (Al-Saadi, 2022). The attribution of terrorism to certain cultural and religious communities led to an increase of prejudice and discrimination against Arabs, Muslims, immigrants, and racialized individuals generally (Awad et al., 2021; Al-Saadi, 2022). Given the conflation between Muslim and Arab identities, Islamophobia is experienced by both Muslim and Christian Arabs (Awad et al., 2021). Arabs also experience anti-Arab racism, which is distinct from Islamophobia although sometimes overlapping (Salaita, 2006). Arabs are thought of as “others” compared to Whites and non-immigrants (Rahal et al., 2022) and are subjected to inequities or barriers from a structurally oppressive system (Al-Saadi, 2022). Arabs experience ethnic discrimination in schools, civil institutions, and the workplace, profiling based on name, religion, or origin, and dehumanization by continually referring to them as terrorists (Salaita, 2006). In the workplace, for instance, Arabs potentially face barriers to their job prospects in Canada, such as “difficulty in fitting in,” “having a strong Arabic accent,” and “having a name that sounds Arab” (Bueckert, 2021). Arabs further experience these barriers differently
based on their intersectional identities, such as race/ethnicity, gender, and religion (Al-Saadi, 2022). In this context, intersectionality is important to consider.
3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality, as a theoretical framework, has gained significant recognition in social science research, offering a nuanced understanding of how different dimensions of identity intersect and shape individuals' experiences within various social structures. This approach recognizes that individuals embody multiple social categories simultaneously and emphasizes the interplay between these categories. The concept of intersectionality originated in the United States in the 1980s by feminist Black scholars and activists (Cole, 2009), and was coined by Crenshaw (1989). Intersectionality was introduced as an analytic frame capable of addressing the particular positionality of Black women and other women of color within the law (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). It disrupted “the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139). This work pointed to the fact that Black women’s experiences are not merely a combination of White women’s experiences and Black men’s experiences, but are unique to Black women themselves (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). This phenomenon has since been applied to additional categories of identity beyond race and gender.

An individual’s identity consists of interlocking categories and perceived group memberships that result in one’s complex identity (Al-Saadi, 2022). Commonly, these identities relate to or result from demographic factors such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and religion (Al-Saadi, 2022; Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality allows researchers to further examine these categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage with a new lens, paying attention to how they are jointly associated and how they depend on one another to form meaning (Cole, 2009). Adopting this framework in the proposed study allows for the analysis of identity and experience in relation to systems of power and subordination and subverts the Arab-non-Arab binary in the service of theorizing identity in a more complex fashion (Cooper, 2015). Approaching the proposed research from an intersectionality perspective allows us to ask: Who is being included in the category of Arab and in other categories, and why? What are the similarities, rather than just the differences, between these categories? What role does inequality play? (Cole, 2009). The third question draws attention to structural-level issues
and makes social justice and equity more central to the analysis (Cole, 2009; Rosenthal, 2016).

In the context of studying Arabs in Canada, intersectionality provides a powerful lens for exploring the complex interactions of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, and other social markers that shape the experiences of this diverse community. For instance, the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and religion can influence Arab women in Canada’s social, economic, and political participation, wherein the experiences of a hijabi woman will differ from those of a non-hijabi woman and those of a Black hijabi woman from those of a non-Black hijabi woman. Arabs in Canada are understood as simultaneously occupying multiple categories, all of which interact to create unique meanings and experiences, within social structures and institutions in Canada and the Arab world. The layers of participants’ identities that were explored in this research are ethnic identity (including but not exclusive to Arab identity), race or skin color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, country/countries of origin (and parents or grandparents’ country/countries of origin), language and dialect, and immigrant status in Canada. Some of these layers of identity, such as gender, religion, and country or countries of origin have been shown to impact Arabs’ acculturation in North America, their experiences of discrimination, and other outcomes (Britto, 2008; Rahal et al., 2022; Awad, 2010; Awad et al., 2021; Elfar, 2016). Others were included because there was little to no research about their relationship to Arab identity and were hypothesized to be relevant, such as immigrant status, race/skin color, and sexual orientation. Where one lies on these spectrums of identities may lead to multiple levels of marginalization within Canadian society (Al-Saadi, 2022).
4 Ethnic Identity

According to Cokley (2007), “ethnicity refers to a characterization of a group of people who see themselves and are seen by others as having a common ancestry, shared history, shared traditions, and shared cultural traits such as language, beliefs, values, music, dress, and food.” (p. 225). The study of ethnic identity originated from social identity theory and theories on identity formation (Elfar, 2016). In psychology, Phinney is one of the pioneers of ethnic identity research and theorized ethnic identity as a person’s sense of identification and membership with an ethnic group (Phinney et al., 2001; Al-Saadi, 2022). Ethnic identity involves self-identification and sense of belonging with the ethnic group, as well as a common hereditary culture (Phinney et al., 2001; Al-Saadi, 2022). This includes eating traditional meals, practicing customs and traditions, speaking a language, and following certain beliefs and values, among others (Elfar, 2016). The more a person immerses herself in her ethnic culture, and places value in maintaining her heritage, the stronger her ethnic identity (Elfar, 2016; Al-Saadi, 2022). Immigrants’ ethnic identity depends on self-identification with a culture, religion, kinship, race, or tribe, and on the larger society in the host country (Phinney et al., 2001; Al-Saadi, 2022).

4.1 Acculturation

Phinney et al. (2001) considered ethnic identity to be the aspect of acculturation that focuses on the individual’s sense of belonging to the group. Acculturation refers to the process of adjusting to a new culture and can involve changes to an individual’s cultural orientation, values, and identity (Rasmi et al., 2017; Berry, 1997). Although it was initially viewed as one-dimensional concept where immigrants assimilated into the receiving society, more recent perspectives consider it a bidirectional and multidimensional process (Berry, 1997; Awad, 2010). Berry proposed that four acculturation strategies are possible: assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation, depending on the level of immersion in both the ethnic and dominant societies (Berry, 1997; Awad, 2010). Assimilation occurs when there is less immersion in the ethnic society and full immersion in the dominant society whereas separation occurs when there is full immersion in the ethnic society and lack of immersion in the dominant
society. Marginalization occurs when there is lack of immersion in both societies and integration occurs when there is full immersion in both societies (Berry, 1997; Awad, 2010). Integration is considered the most beneficial strategy, associated with positive psychological, sociocultural, and economic outcomes, and is promoted in Canada (Rasmi et al., 2017; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

Immigrants face challenges when adapting to Canadian society, which has different norms and values compared to their home countries, as they have to navigate conflicting expectations from their family, peers, religion, and the larger settlement society (Rasmi et al., 2017). These challenges are typically more apparent for first generation immigrants and newcomer parents than their children (Rasmi et al., 2017). Rasmi et al. (2017) studied acculturation, parent-child relationships, and conflict (intergenerational conflict and ethnocultural identity conflict) in a sample of immigrant Arab Canadian emerging adults. The researchers used a narrative approach to capture the perspectives of 12 participants (19 to 25 years old) who self-categorized as “Arab” or “Arab Canadian” or with an Arab national identity. Rasmi et al. (2017) found that Arabs experienced acculturation gaps with their parents, which are differences in how parents and their children acculturate, wherein immigrant children tend to be more oriented to the receiving society than their parents. These acculturation gaps co-occurred with intergenerational conflict and ethnocultural identity conflict in Arabs, which can be particularly detrimental to Arabs whose culture emphasizes interconnectedness between family members and a strong attachment to Arab values and norms (Rasmi et al., 2017).

4.2 Arab Ethnic Identity

This section reviews the quantitative and qualitative academic literature on Arab ethnic identity (and acculturation) in North America. Although there are likely differences between the identity and experiences of Arabs in Canada and in the United States, I provide an overview of research from both countries as there are many social, political, and historical similarities between Canada and the United States in relation to Arab ethnic identity in Canada. Moreover, given the smaller amount of research that has been conducted on Arabs in Canada compared to Arabs in the United States, including selected studies from the U.S. allows for a more comprehensive picture. As discussed in a
previous section, Rasmi et al. (2017) studied Arab Canadians’ acculturation, parent-child relationships, and intergenerational conflict and ethnocultural identity conflicts, and emphasized the significance of the relationship between parents and emerging adults in immigrant Arab Canadian families (Rasmi et al., 2017).

Al-Saadi (2022) examined recent Arab immigrant emerging adults’ perspectives on acculturation, using a Critical Race Theory framework. The study applied qualitative inquiry, particularly psychological phenomenology, with a sample of 27 Arab immigrant emerging adults living in Windsor-Essex. Al-Saadi (2022) aimed to understand how Arab immigrant emerging adults perceive the acculturation phenomenon, how their Arab identity influences their engagement in Canadian society, what factors shape their perception of positive acculturation, and how Canadian society influences their immigration and acculturation experience. Results indicated that participants recognized the process of acculturation in Canada as a shared commitment and collaborative exchange of cultural knowledge between the Arab immigrant community and the dominant Canadian society. They viewed the welcoming and supportive nature of Canadian society as important factors for successful adjustment. Arab immigrant emerging adults faced emotional challenges in balancing their Arab identity and heritage with the desire for acceptance and integration into the local Canadian community. Their experiences of acculturation were influenced by their intersecting identities and exposure to racism and discrimination rooted in the colonial structure of Canadian society (Al-Saadi, 2022).

Moreover, Eid (2007) focused on the ethnoreligious identity of Arabs in Montreal utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods with a sample of 250 respondents of Arab origin attending a Montreal CEGEP. In particular, they administered a questionnaire and conducted in-depth interviews (with select respondents only) with a sample of Christian and Muslim Arab young adults to study the creative ways in which second generation Arabs negotiate their ethnic and religious identity in Canada. The study found that the majority of Arab youth favored the “Arab” label, but that Christian Arabs were more hesitant than their Muslim ethnic peers about using the Arab label as a source of self-identification. Participants showed a knowledge of and familiarity with their ethnic
culture, including having a good command of the ethnic language - Arabic, eating ethnic food, and listening to ethnic music (Eid, 2007). Eid’s (2007) research also provided insights into the relation between perceived stereotyping, discrimination, and ethnoreligious identity building, wherein a strong majority of the participants were under the impression that Canadians portray Arabs in a stereotypical and prejudicial manner: Arabs and Muslims as terrorists, Arab males as wife abusers, and Arab females as submissive wives. Eid (2007) also found attitudinal discrepancies between Arab parents and their children, and between Arab women and men, particularly in relation to traditional gender roles, normative constraints on women, and society’s expectations.

In the American context, some of the literature focuses on the self-identification and ethnic labelling of Arabs in America, particularly in relation to the categorizing of Arab Americans as White. Ajrouch and Jamal (2007) examined how ethnic traits of immigrant status, national origin, religious affiliation, and Arab American identity contributed to the announcement of a White racial identity among Arab Americans. The study uses data from the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS), which is representative of all adults of Arab or Chaldean descent who resided in households in three counties during the six-month survey period in 2003. The findings suggest that those who were Lebanese/Syrian or Christian, and those who did not feel that the term "Arab American" described them, were more likely to identify as White. Among those who did identify with the term "Arab American," strongly held feelings about being Arab American and associated actions were also linked with a higher likelihood of identifying as White. The study highlights different patterns of assimilation among Arab Americans, with some reporting both strong ethnic and White identities, while others report a strong White identity but distance themselves from the pan-ethnic "Arab American" label. The article concludes that racial identity is fluid and situational, and that ethnic traits play a role in assimilation patterns towards a White identity. Moreover, Awad et al. (2021) examined the identity and ethnic/racial self-labeling of Americans of Arab or Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) descent, particularly in relation to their perception of being an ethnic minority in the United States. The study surveyed 146 individuals of Middle Eastern and North African descent to answer two primary questions, “Would you call yourself an Arab or Arab American?” and “Do you consider
yourself a minority in the U.S.?”. Awad et al. (2021) found that 84% of the participants considered themselves an ethnic minority specifically mentioning experiences with discrimination and lack of representation, and 51% were comfortable with the Arab American label. The authors also analyzed participants responses for reasons why they did or did not identify as Arab or Arab American, which included pride in being Arab and perceiving Arab as an inaccurate label. Overall, the study highlights the heterogeneity and diversity within the Arab/MENA population and emphasizes the importance of recognizing the ethnic minority status of this population in the United States (Awad et al., 2021).

Other studies from the United States have examined additional factors that may impact Arab identity. Britto (2008) reviewed the literature that was available on the ethnic identity formation of Arab Muslim children in the United States and provided recommendations to expand this body of research. Given that ethnic identity development begins at a young age and is central to immigrant children’s social development and overall well-being, Britto (2008) argued for a better conceptual understanding of the ethnic identity of Arabs and the intersection of ethnic identity with Muslim identity. Britto (2008) further highlighted the need to reconceptualize the interaction of identities for this population in American life, looking at not just religion (Islam) and ethnicity (Arab), but also age (adolescents and children) and gender (girls and boys). In addition, Rahal et al. (2022) examined the ethnic identity of Arab Americans in relation to gender, religious affiliation (Muslim, Christian), and age. They surveyed 391 participants, recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk, who self-identified as Arab American. The survey included measures of ethnic centrality, private regard, public regard, and cultural practice, which were created based on pre-existing scales, including the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (Sellers et al., 1997; Rahal et al., 2022). Overall, the study found differences in ethnic identity between groups, wherein Arab American women reported higher private regard and lower public regard than men, and young adults were lower in centrality and private regard than older adults. In addition, Arab Americans who were raised in Muslim households reported higher ethnic centrality and cultural practice than those raised in Christian households. Overall, the study contributes to understanding
the complexity of ethnic identity in Arab Americans and provides insights into the factors that influence their sense of identity (Rahal et al., 2022).

Elfar (2016) examined the relation between ethnic identity and gender, and ethnic identity and country of origin, among second-generation Arab Americans. The study recruited 335 participants through social media sites to complete an online survey. Ethnic identity was defined as “a person’s level of identification with his/her hereditary culture rather than the culture of his/her place of residence” (Elfar, 2016, p. 21), and was measured using the Multigroup Ethnic Inventory Measure (MEIM), a Likert-type scale wherein higher scores indicate higher ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992). Results indicated that gender and country of origin do impact the level of ethnic identity in second-generation Arab Americans, wherein females scored higher on the MEIM than males (Elfar, 2016). Overall, the study quantitatively studies Arab ethnic identity of second-generation Arab Americans and highlights the influence of gender and country of origin on their ethnic identity levels. Bazzi (2022) aimed to investigate the impact of perceived religious discrimination on the ethnic-racial attitudes, religious identity, masculinity, and psychological well-being of Muslim Arab American males, as well as their intersectional identities when faced with discrimination. The study used a mixed-methods design, combining a web-based survey and in-depth interviews with Muslim Arab American males. However, the study did not have a large enough sample size to explore all three of the objectives of the study, as only 55 participants were included in the analysis. Results indicated that perceived religious discrimination may have a negative impact on the ethnic-racial identity and religious identity of Muslim Arab American males and may be associated with lower levels of psychological well-being among the participants (Bazzi, 2022). Analysis of the qualitative data indicated that participants experienced conflict between their various identities (i.e., ethnic-racial, gender, religion) and struggled to find ways to integrate authentic aspects of themselves into American society overall (Bazzi, 2022).

The literature review provided is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather it provides some context for the current study in terms of previous research on Arab ethnic identity in North America. Overall, the ethnic identity of Arab immigrants differs between
individuals and may change over time (Al-Saadi, 2022). The social, political and cultural contexts are a key influence on Arabs’ ethnic identity (Britto, 2008). Moreover, ethnic identity seems particularly relevant for younger Arabs and can impact other factors such as well-being and integration. The level of association with Arab identity depends on family dynamics, wherein Arabs more closely associate with their Arab ethnic identity when they feel prouder of their heritage and when their families value maintaining Arab values and traditions (Al-Saadi, 2022; Abdul-Jabbar, 2019; Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007; Awad et al., 2021). It also depends on their desire to disassociate from the “White” label, wherein those who are motivated to disassociate from the “White” label associate more closely with the Arab label. Alternatively, others may associate with the Arab identity less to avoid discrimination and structural violence, being labelled terrorists, or to distance themselves from the political regimes and conflicts in the Arab world (Al-Saadi, 2022). In addition, the review highlights the intersectional nature of ethnic identity and the impact that other factors, such as gender and religion, can have on the ethnic identity of Arabs in Canada and the United States (Elfar, 2016; Rahal et al., 2022; Britto, 2008; Al-Saadi, 2022).

4.3 Current Research

In this work, I aim to better understand who Arabs are and what Arabs think of themselves and of other Arabs in Canada. Literature on Arabs in Canada is sparse and literature on Arab ethnic identity in Canada is even more so. Previous literature has largely been conducted in the American setting and with Arab American samples. The current study focuses on the Canadian context by recruiting participants across Ontario. The sample recruited was defined as people from the 22 countries of the Arab region, as opposed to those who self-identified as Arab or Arab-Canadian, which allows for more nuance and diversity. By adopting an intersectionality framework, the current research allows for a more holistic view of the experiences of Arabs in Ontario and allows us to identify the ways in which the multiple dimensions of participants’ identities impact their Arab ethnic identity and their experiences as Arabs in Canada. Moreover, the current research does not exclude participants based on their immigration generation by focusing on newcomer first-generation immigrants or second-generation young immigrants, as
past research has done. The current research thus allows for the identification of themes and patterns that are shared between a larger group of young Arabs in Canada, while considering their immigrant status and history as an intersecting dimension of their identity.

This study aims to better understand the experiences of young Arabs in Canada and the unique needs of subcommunities within that pan-Arab category. The hope is that this research will also shed light on those individuals and communities who are marginalized within an already-marginalized group and whose experiences are sometimes invisible. Given the exploratory nature of the research, we are able to use it as a starting point for future studies that highlight the unique social issues and challenges that Arabs face when trying to integrate to Canadian society, including discrimination, racism, and cultural stereotypes. This understanding of Arab identity and experiences in Canada is crucial for addressing systemic barriers and promoting social justice and equity for all Canadians. Moreover, by studying their social, economic, and political integration, we can identify potential barriers and develop strategies to promote Arabs’ full participation and sense of belonging. This knowledge helps foster a more inclusive society and promotes cultural understanding and tolerance between Canadians. In summary, studying Arabs in Canada is important for promoting cultural diversity, social integration, economic development, social justice, and fostering positive relationships both within Canada and globally, and the current study is a step in that direction.
5 Methods

This study utilized qualitative methods to investigate the research questions, specifically semi-structured interviews with participants. Qualitative methods are well-suited for exploratory research such as the present study, as they allow for flexibility in the research process and offer the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of participants’ experiences and perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research study, including all procedures and materials, was approved by the Office of Human Research Ethics at Western University (see Appendix A).

All materials and procedures were made available to participants in English, Arabic, and French, allowing participants to use their preferred language. The goal was to eliminate language as a barrier to participation for those who were newcomers, who had not completed many years of formal education, or who simply didn’t speak English. All materials were initially created in English and then translated into Arabic and French. Arabic was chosen as it is the official language in most countries of the Arab world, and French was chosen because it is the other official language in Canada and is spoken in many North African and some Middle Eastern countries. However, none of the participants chose French as their preferred language and only two participants chose Arabic as their preferred language. Nonetheless, even when participants chose one preferred language, often English, many spoke Arabic and English interchangeably. This pattern of code switching, or code mixing is common among Arabs and among immigrants or children of immigrants (Alami, 2016; Alkhresheh, 2015; Elfar, 2016).

Before describing the procedure and materials, it is important to acknowledge the researcher’s positionality and the active role that the researcher played in the research process (Holmes, 2020; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

5.1 Researcher Positionality

The aim of this positionality statement is to locate myself with respect to the subject, the participants, and the research context and process, in accordance with Savin-Baden and Major’s three ways to identify positionality (2013). I bring myself and my
background into this research. It is because of my background and experiences that I am well-suited to conduct this research, and not despite them. I am a young cis-gendered immigrant woman from Damascus, Syria, who has been living in Ontario, Canada for eight years. I speak, read and write Arabic and English fluently, and have done so for as long as I can remember. I speak English with a “non-Canadian” accent. I have wavy dark hair, Middle Eastern features, and “olive” skin, which means that I am paler than many of my Brown and Black friends but not quite as pale as my White/European ones. It also means that I often get mistaken for being Persian, North African, or Latina, among others, except for when people recognize my (fairly easily identifiable) Arabic name. The findings presented are a product of my understanding of existing literature, my interactions with participants, my interpretation and analysis of the data, and the many decisions I made throughout the research process.

My interest in the subject of Arab identity and what that means for youth in Canada comes from my lived experience as an Arab immigrant, who initially moved to Toronto as an international student. The motivation to embark on this project came from a frustration with the lack of literature on the topic, and on the Arab population in Canada more generally. Moreover, having lived in multiple Arab countries, I saw the similarities and vast differences among Arabs, and as I met more diverse Arabs, the term lost its meaning. Thus, I embarked on this project with a true curiosity to explore the meanings of Arab identity for youth in Canada and with a defined research question and methodology on how to do that.

My relationship to the participants is that of an “insider” in that I fit the inclusion criteria for the study, and I share many of the identities and lived experiences with the participants. I approached this research with an understanding of the community and anecdotal as well as research knowledge, from my own experiences with the Arab community in Canada and as an Arab in Canada. However, I also approached this research with an understanding that the participants know more about their own experiences than I do. Given the diversity and heterogeneity of Arabs in Canada, I am also an “outsider” to this group in many ways. I do not share the same intersectional identities and lived experiences that each of the participants have. On the social
hierarchy, I am privileged in some respects yet disadvantaged in others. I recognize that in every interview, I am likely both more privileged and more disadvantaged than the participant I am speaking to. Nonetheless, the dynamics of being the researcher asking the questions and the researcher approaching this topic from a “Western” academic perspective create a power imbalance. However, I think that was mitigated often by the fact that the participants could identify or guess many of the layers of my identity that make me similar or familiar to them. Whether through me disclosing that I speak Arabic and English or through what they could see with my camera on, participants could likely tell or assume many things about me during the Zoom meetings. Perhaps this gave me an advantage of trust, of being regarded as “one of them,” of being able to understand certain references and cues, and of knowing what kinds of questions to ask and when to ask them (Holmes, 2020). It likely made it more comfortable for participants to speak about sensitive and challenging topics, which was evident in that many of the interviews went on for well over an hour.

In terms of locating myself in the research context and process, this was my first time conducting a qualitative study of this nature. I had previously been trained mostly on quantitative methods, through my undergraduate studies in Psychology at York University and my work as a research assistant on multiple projects. I had also developed some quantitative and qualitative research skills working on a research project examining the health and integration of Syrian refugee parents in Ontario. It was when I worked with this community that I saw how surveys are often not the most suitable method for soliciting information from newcomer communities, and I experienced the frustration that is associated with fitting everything into neat little boxes like Western academia (especially quantitative psychology) often tries to do. This probably also informed the qualitative nature of the current study and shed light on the importance of flexibility and reflexivity. Further, although the research topics are fairly different, the sample of participants are somewhat similar to those who participated in the earlier study in which I gained qualitative research experience. In the earlier study, I relied heavily on my bilingualism and translated between English and Arabic often. I also learned how to build rapport with members of the Arab community in Canada, particularly Syrians. I was also
often meeting and interacting with their children, and hearing about the challenges they face with acculturation and identity as people and as parents.

5.2 Recruitment and Participants

To take part in the study, participants had to be between 18 and 30 years old, as 18 is the youngest age that a participant would not need parental consent to participate in the study and 30 is the extended age definition for youth in Canada (Government of Canada, 2021; El Samaty, 2020). Participants also had to reside in Ontario and indicate that their country of origin or their background was from one or more of these 22 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. These countries constitute the 22 states of the Arab league. The final sample consisted of 30 youth who fit these inclusion criteria.

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling. Recruitment flyers (see Appendix B) were shared with my personal and professional networks, with students at various universities across Ontario, and with Arab community members. Potential participants were also recruited with the help of community partners across Ontario, consisting of Local Immigration Partnerships, immigrant-serving organizations, student organizations, and other not-for-profit organizations. Examples included the Canadian Arab Institute, the Middle Eastern Students’ Association at York University, and the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership. The flyers were shared through their ebulletins and social media platforms. In addition, physical flyers were posted in some locations in London where Arabs and other community members frequent, including a mosque, a public library, and a Middle Eastern grocery store. Both electronic and physical flyers contained some information regarding the study procedures, the participant inclusion criteria, the researchers’ contact information, and a link (or QR code) to the pre-screen questionnaire, as well as indicated that the participants may be compensated.
Recruitment efforts began in September 2022. The recruitment flyers directed participants to a pre-screen questionnaire, used to ensure that participants met the inclusion criteria and that a diverse sample was obtained. I received several hundred sign-ups to the pre-screen questionnaire, but many seemed suspicious based on the demographics provided, the email addresses being utilized, and the timing of responses (particularly with many responses flooding the survey almost all at once, often at odd hours). Nonetheless, I was able to select legitimate participants for the study with diverse characteristics and backgrounds. Interviews were conducted between October 2022 and March 2023.

5.3 Procedure

First, potential participants indicated their interest in participating by filling out a short pre-screen questionnaire online and providing their contact information. The researcher then contacted the eligible participants who were selected for an interview to schedule the Zoom meeting. During the Zoom meeting, the study procedures were explained to the participant, their questions were answered, and their verbal consent was obtained. Participants were reminded to use the language they were comfortable with, to be honest, and to treat the interview as close to an informal conversation as possible. Participants were encouraged, though not required, to switch on their video cameras. With participants’ permission, the recording was then started, and participants were asked a series of questions in accordance with the interview guide. Participants then completed the demographics survey verbally, and the researcher noted down their responses. Upon completion of the interview and the survey, participants were thanked for their participation and debriefed. Lastly, participants were emailed a $30 e-gift card to the store of their choice (Amazon, Walmart or Tim Hortons) as compensation for their participation.

5.4 Materials

5.4.1 Pre-screen questionnaire

Potential participants signed up to participate in the study by filling out a short pre-screen questionnaire (see Appendix C), hosted on Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT).
The questionnaire asked potential participants to complete several demographic questions, including questions about their gender, age, place of residence, religion, and country of origin or background. This was to ensure that the participants fit the inclusion criteria and to allow the researcher to select a diverse sample. The pre-screen questionnaire also asked potential participants to indicate the language in which they preferred their interview to be conducted, if selected, and to provide the email address at which they would like to be contacted (or phone number if an email address was not available).

5.4.2 Letter of information and consent form

The letter of information and consent form contained information on study procedures, privacy and confidentiality, and risks and benefits of participating (see Appendix D). Participants were provided with a copy of the document prior to the interviews, had the letter of information read and explained to them, and had any questions answered at the start of the interview. Participants provided their verbal consent, and the researcher noted down their consent and signed and dated the consent forms.

5.4.3 Interview guide

The interviews were conducted using an interview guide to maintain some consistency across interviews. The interview guide was developed based on the study goals and research questions, on previous literature on social identity, stereotypes, and discrimination, and on my personal and anecdotal knowledge about Arabs in Canada. The interviews were piloted to make sure that the questions were clear and that the interview could be completed in a reasonable amount of time. The interview guide consisted of a series of questions, with follow-up prompts, that explored the participants’ identities, their experience with Arabness, perceptions of Arabs in Canada, and experiences of discrimination. The interviews covered several topics that are beyond the scope of this analysis and report. The present study focused on the meanings of Arab identity for youth in Canada, other dimensions of their identities, and how those dimensions intersect with
their Arab identity. Thus, only responses to questions related to ethnic identity were included in the current analysis.

Two versions of the interview guide were developed, one for participants who identified as Arabs (see Appendix E) and one for those who did not (see Appendix F). During the interview, participants were asked questions from one of two versions of the interview guide: for Arab-identifying participants and for non-Arab-identifying participants. The researcher determined which version to use based on the participants’ response to the question “Do you identify as Arab?”. This is in recognition of participants whose background may have been from the Arab league states but who did not identify as Arabs themselves. Their narratives and experiences can still help shed a light on the meaning of Arab identity, and it is therefore important to include their responses. The two versions of the interview guide were virtually the same, covering the same topics. However, the questions and probes about identity were phrased more generally in the non-Arab-identifying version of the interview guide, as Arab-specific probes were not relevant to them.

5.4.4 Demographics survey

Participants verbally completed a short demographics survey at the end of the interview and the researcher noted down their responses (see Appendix G). Participants were asked about their gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, immigrant status, income, place of residence, ethnicity, country of birth, country of origin or background, marital status and number of children. The purpose of this survey was to identify the characteristics of the sample.

5.4.5 Debrief and resources

The debriefing form was shared with participants at the end of their Zoom meeting (see Appendix H) and contained information about the study and contact information. A list of resources that participants might find useful, particularly if they felt any negative emotions while sharing their experiences, was also shared with participants (see Appendix I). The list included the names and contact information of some helplines and service organizations.
5.5 Data Analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed automatically by Zoom through its built-in closed captions feature. Six trained research assistants then edited the transcripts to ensure that they accurately represented the English interview content. Two of the research assistants spoke some Arabic and were able to translate and transcribe some of the Arabic interview content into English. I then went over all of the interviews to further ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, and completed the translation and transcription of any portions of the interviews that the research assistants were not able to translate and/or transcribe. After all transcripts were finalized, I conducted thematic analysis of the data to explore the study’s themes in relation to the research questions. The analysis was conducted using MAXQDA 2022 (VERBI Software, 2021), which is a software tool that allows for the organization, coding, and categorization of qualitative data.

5.5.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns, or themes, within large volumes of qualitative data, such as transcripts of interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It provides a flexible and useful tool to develop a rich, detailed, and complex account of the data that offers insight into the experiences and perspectives of participants while also being meaningful and relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I used thematic analysis to explore the self-identification of the participants, the meaning of Arab identity to them, and the impact of their other identities on their Arab identity and vice versa. Given the exploratory nature of the study, an inductive approach was adopted wherein the analysis was data-driven rather than driven by existing theories. Nonetheless, some of the analysis was guided by categories that were pre-determined when creating the interview guide. In particular, the intersecting dimensions of identity that participants were asked about, such as gender, race/skin color, and religion, were chosen prior to the analysis and were used as pre-set categories when analyzing responses. Themes were induced within these categories for each of the identities.
I conducted inductive thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guidelines, in six phases. 1) I familiarized myself with the data (listened to the audio recordings, transcribed and translated some of the recordings, and read and re-read the transcripts). 2) I generated initial codes (categorized portions of the data into categories. For example, I highlighted in yellow some words and sentences, and coded them as “Arab parents,” “Arab family,” and “Arab ancestry.”). 3) I searched for themes (further categorized codes into themes and sub-themes. For the previous example, I reviewed the data that were highlighted in yellow and categorized the three codes under one sub-theme “Arab family and/or ancestry.”). 4) I reviewed the themes (refined the themes, considering how well they fit the overall data as well as how they fit against each other. For the previous example, “Arab family and/or ancestry” was categorized under “identified as Arab.”). 5) I named and defined the themes (further refined the themes, labelled them, and determined the story they are each telling. For the previous example, the categories “identified as Arab” and “didn’t identify as Arab” were identified, under the umbrella theme of “self-identification and labels,” and were named the “identifying as Arab” sub-theme.). 6) I produced this report (reported on the findings and analysis below.).
6 Description of Participants

The sample of 30 participants was almost evenly split in terms of gender, with 16 participants identifying as women and 14 participants identifying as men. The participants’ ages ranged between 18 and 30 years old, with an average age of 23.4 years. The highest level of formal education that most participants (18) had completed was a university undergraduate degree, while the rest of the sample (12) had completed secondary school education. Most of the sample were students (22), with some employed part-time (12), employed full-time (9), or self-employed (4). Note that the total for employment does not add up to 30 as participants were able to choose more than one option. Many participants were students who were also employed part-time. In response to the question, “In your current situation, how would you say most people would categorize a household like yours?”, half of the participants (15) chose “middle income,” and the rest chose “lower-middle income” (7), “upper-middle income” (7), or “don’t know/prefer not to answer” (1).

The majority of the participants identified as Muslim (19) while others identified as having no religion/ being atheist or agnostic (5), Christian (4), or Druze (3). Note that the total does not add up to 30 as one participant chose both Muslim and Druze as their religion. The Druze are a religious and ethnic minority group primarily concentrated in the Middle East, particularly in Lebanon and Syria (Obeid, 2006). The Druze have a distinct religious identity that emerged as a branch of Islam, though many who follow the Druze faith do not consider themselves Muslims (Obeid, 2006). Moreover, most of the sample were single, never married (26), with a few living with their common-law partners (2) or married (2). None of the participants had any children. Twenty-five of the 30 participants identified as heterosexual, two participants identified as gay, one participant identified as bisexual, and one participant identified as pansexual. The remaining participant preferred not to answer the question regarding their sexual orientation.

All participants resided in Ontario, with the majority living in London (11) or Toronto (10). Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the cities in which the sample
lived. Note that the total does not add up to 30 as one participant chose both Mississauga and London as cities they lived in. The "Other” category includes Newmarket and Milton.

![Bar chart showing city of residence of participants]

**Figure 1: Participants’ City of Residence**

Of the 30 participants, 8 participants were born in Canada and 22 participants were born outside of Canada. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the countries in which the participants were born. The vast majority of the participants were permanent residents or citizens at the time of the interviews (25). Other participants selected “student” (4) and “temporary worker” (1) as their current immigration status in Canada. On average, participants born outside of Canada had lived approximately 7 years in Canada. None of the participants’ parents were born in Canada.
Participants were asked what best describes their country/countries of origin or background. Their responses are represented in Figure 3. Note that the total does not add up to 30 as participants were able to choose more than one option. The “Other” category included Jamaica, Panama, and Ethiopia. Furthermore, participants were asked what best describes their ethnicity. The majority indicated Arab as their ethnicity (27), with some indicating Black (5), West Asian (2), South Asian (1), and “Other” (4) as their ethnicity. Note that the total does not add up to 30 as participants were able to choose more than one option. For example, some participants indicated their ethnicity as being both Black and Arab. The “Other” category included “Middle Eastern/North African/Mediterranean”, “Sephardic Jewish”, “African”, and “Mixed”.

Figure 2: Participants’ Country of Birth
Lastly, participants spoke a variety of languages at home. Some spoke Arabic only (8) or English only (2), whereas the majority spoke both English and Arabic at home (19). One participant spoke both English and French at home.
7 Themes and Findings

Several themes and sub-themes were identified in relation to the research’s objective. The section below highlights the primary themes and sub-themes that were identified. For theme 1, *self-identification and labels*, all 30 transcripts were analyzed. However, for themes 2 and 3, *intersecting dimensions of identity* and *the struggle of being Arab in Canada* respectively, only 26 transcripts were analyzed. Those who did not identify as Arab were excluded from the analysis for themes 2 and 3 as their interviews did not cover topics related to the identified themes. Quotes from participants have been used to demonstrate the findings throughout the next few sections. Speech disfluencies including false starts and fillers were removed to improve readability. Ellipses were included to indicate omitted material within a quote. Participants are referred to by the numbers they were assigned by the researcher to maintain their anonymity. More information about each participant can be found in Appendix J.

7.1 Self-identification and Labels

7.1.1 Identifying as Arab

Although all participants were from or had a background from a country of the Arab league, not all participants self-identified as Arab. Overall, 26 participants self-identified as Arab and four participants did not. However, this identification was not so binary for some. Those who did self-identify as Arab discussed contexts and conditions in which they would not necessarily identify as Arab.

When the participants discussed identifying with the Arab label, five primary sub-themes were identified: Arab family and/or ancestry, speak Arabic, born or grew up in an Arab country, culture and values, and lack of a better label. Participants often identified multiple reasons (or themes) each for why they identified as Arab. A majority of the participants identified as Arab because they had an Arab background and ancestry, their parents or family members were Arab, and they were raised Arab.

*All the history has been there. Like parents, grandparents, all the basically family members are Arab in my family, I have been brought up in that culture and mindset of being an Arab person.* (Participant 10)
My parents are Arab. I was raised on Arab traditions and cultures. And just me as a person, that's how I identify myself, that's just the things I resonate with. (Participant 30)

In Morocco . . . there's like two. There's Arab Moroccans and there's Berber Moroccans, but my family is on the Arab side, so we speak Arabic and I identify as Arab. (Participant 19)

Many participants also identified as Arab because they spoke Arabic, Arabic was their first language, and their family members spoke Arabic.

That's just what I was taught from when I was younger, speaking Arabic. My grandparents only speak Arabic. (They) don't speak English, so we did have to learn the language for them (Participant 15)

In general, I think being Arab means speaking the Arabic language as a mother tongue. That's my first language so that's what I feel. I feel like the word, being Arab, it's more of a linguistic and social aspect of identity. So, I think the linguistic part really matters a lot. If you can't speak a lot of Arabic, like if I was born in Canada and I didn't speak Arabic, I don't feel like I would say I'm Arab that much, even though I'm originally (from) there. (Participant 7)

For some participants, their Arab identity was tied to where they were born and where they grew up. Note that some participants did not grow up in the same countries in which they were born and/or the same country of origin of their parents.

Because I grew up in the Middle East. I grew up in an Arab country. I was born in an Arab country. I hold an Arab citizenship. (Participant 30)

Not only because of my background but also where I grew up my entire life . . . I grew up in Qatar which is a predominately Arab society. (Participant 5)

Some participants’ self-identification as Arab was tied to Arab culture and values.

I think for me, I've just surrounded myself with a lot of Arab people because I think that I have similar values, similar upbringing, and we can kind of relate to each other and all that. So, yeah, I feel like, that's probably why I relate to being Arab - because I feel like I share a lot of similar values and I feel like my understanding in the way that I view the world has been shaped by other Arab people. (Participant 13)

All of my culture and ... my core is just Arab. (Participant 4)
A few participants even shared the sentiment of “if not Arab, then what?”. It seemed that those participants found Arab was the most appropriate label from what is available to them or perhaps the only one available to them.

*I don't know what else I labeled myself as, to be honest. If I wasn’t Arab, I would have a bit of an identity crisis. Yeah, so I guess it's what's home to me. (Participant 12)*

*I guess, you know, what's the alternative to calling yourself Arab? (Participant 26)*

When the participants discussed not identifying with the Arab label (including some who did overall identify as Arab), four primary sub-themes were identified: non-Arab family and/or ancestry, difference in culture or values, bad experiences or rejection from Arabs, and disassociation from stereotypes. Participants (both those who self-identified as Arab and those who didn’t) noted that Arabs and non-Arabs live or lived in “Arab” countries and that many are not ethnically Arabs, even if they speak Arabic (including Amazigh, Coptics, Kurds, and Assyrians). Some participants who did not identify as Arab noted that their ancestors are not Arab and noted the inaccuracy of the Arab label.

*Egyptians aren't Arab, and especially because I'm Christian. Arabs invaded Egypt and the original occupants of Egypt, Coptic individuals, and because my ancestors are Coptic, when the Arabs invaded, that has nothing to do with my identity, because we were always Coptic. We're not Arab. So, I think, instead of saying Arab, I'm Coptic. That's a social identity that I use instead of Arab . . . If people think I'm Arab, they think I'm Muslim . . . When people know that I'm from Egypt, they don't even think about the idea that there can be non-Muslim people in Egypt, and that's not true. I am Christian. I don't want my social identity to be perceived in a different way than I actually am (Participant 17)*

*I know, technically, the Gulf is the Arabs and Saudi Arabia. That's the technical term for Arab. I feel like I'm taking away from them because I don't necessarily take up that much genetically over there. I may be a little bit Saudi Arabian, but really not that much. Most of my genetic makeup is between Morocco, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon and Palestine and Israel, I guess those are interchangeable . . . but because we all speak Arabic . . . we share certain parts of the culture . . . but that doesn't mean that's interchangeable like that, because we all have specific food, specific practices, especially with prayer . . . I feel like I would be overstepping, and I would more just say, I'm Lebanese. I'm from the Levant area, Levantine, with a little North African. (Participant 18)*
Participants further acknowledged that they did not identify with the culture or certain values that Arabs have.

*I feel like Arab is a lot more loaded, with the stereotypes at least, (of) the money aspect and the whole culture around, you know, having maids and whatnot. I don’t think I'm integrated that far in that culture, and also just the culture in general. Our (North African) countries are more - I don’t want to say conservative, because that's not the word, but it is more segregated . . . not mixing with the Western culture. In Egypt it’s more so, or North Africa in general. (Participant 21)*

Moreover, some of the participants found it challenging to identify as Arab given the negative experiences that they have had with Arabs. One participant felt rejected by Arabs and had been bullied for being Black and Sudanese, whereas another participant struggled with self-identifying as Arab due to the stigma and discrimination he had faced from Arabs as a gay man living with HIV.

*I've been treated like crap by a lot of Arabs as I was growing up . . . But if that's the view that I'm getting of Arabs, as I'm growing up, (then) if I identify as that, and other people are seeing those views, they’ll identify me as someone who has similar views which are going to be harmful to others the same way they were harmful to me. (Participant 24)*

LGBTQ+ individuals often experience limited acceptance within Arab society. While homophobia is less prevalent in Canada, some participants still encounter remnants of it (amongst the Arab community). Their history of facing homophobia in Arab countries and the restrictive gender roles imposed on them have led some participants to distance themselves from their Arab identity. They aspire to blend in with the broader society as much as possible while also holding onto their personal heritage and cultural roots.

*I tried to distance myself of speaking Arabic or being within the Arabic community, even within the LGBTQ community. So, you know, I wanted to be whitewashed at a point, because I just wanted to blend in. (Participant 2)*

Some Arab individuals experienced war or injustice in their countries of origin and found themselves with nowhere else to seek refuge but Canada. The pain and trauma that they experienced made them want to distance themselves from those countries and from being Arab.
Some people, unfortunately, were super traumatized (to the point) that they don't even want (their Arab identity). We don't want it. They wouldn't want anything to do with it, the language. They cut ties with the Arabic community. They don't want to deal with it. Maybe this is because of their experience with, maybe, religious or political oppression or something like that. There is something there, like trauma related. They want nothing to do with it . . . So people are injured right? So the war happened, they lost that house, and they lost money, you know some people died. And then they left this country in pain, and they had to start here from all over again. So some people are like, okay, we’re done, you know what, I don't want to have to go through all the pain again. (Participant 8)

I want to distance myself from my community so I’m always cursing at Lebanon . . . I would identify as a Canadian at a point. Then thinking about it, I was thinking to myself, ‘do you hate your background this much?’ Because sometimes between yourself, you want to know, Is this hate coming from a place of love because you love this country so much? You’re so angry about everything (you’re) going through, everything your family’s going through. You just want to disassociate yourself with it? . . . The anger you have towards everything that you’ve been through, I believe, is the main reason why I would, at least at this moment, I would identify as a Canadian rather than Canadian-Lebanese or Canadian-Arab. (Participant 2)

Lastly, participants distanced themselves from the Arab identity to not be associated with certain stereotypes and misconceptions about Arabs.

In the Western world, when they look at Arabs, it’s either they look at the wealthy Arabs or the terrorist Arabs, certain stigmas that are kind of related to Arabs. (Participant 27)

Not going to lie. There are some times where I try to distance myself from it, especially when it comes to hearing racism, when it consists of “terrorism” and stuff like that. Stuff like that when I come across it, (it) kind of just makes me want to dissociate from it . . . like “Arabs are terrorists” so that makes me get really defensive, and it's like, “No, we're not”. It brings me back to feeling dehumanized again. So I feel like as a result, I try to dissociate from it. I just run away . . . I do this as a defense mechanism in order to protect myself from feeling like I'm a bad thing. (Participant 14)

7.1.2 Arab identity is not fixed

The identities and labels with which Arabs in Canada choose to identify are not fixed and can change over time or depending on certain factors.
But I think I do identify as Arab, but I do that depending on the audience. And what I mean by that is, I wouldn't tell another person that I'm just Arab, but I'd tell them where I'm from cause they have usually a bit more knowledge of countries. But even then, if it's someone from the same countries, we will talk about what regions our family is from. (Participant 11)

Participants’ self-identification changed depending on who was asking (the nationality and ethnicity of their audience), on the setting in which they were asked (workplace, social, etc.), and on where they were (in Canada or in an Arab country).

It just depends on who asks because if I’m pursuing a career and they accept diversity, I think maybe they’ll pick Arabs more, so I’ll pick Arab first. But, when you’re with Arabs and you say you’re Canadian and they know you’re Arab, they’ll give you bad looks and they’ll tell you “Why aren’t you saying that you’re Arab? Aren’t you proud of your heritage?” So, it depends on who asks. (Participant 23)

Canadian if Canadians ask. Arab if Arabs- if Arab people ask. (Participant 23)

The way participants identified has also changed over time. Sometimes, moving to Canada made participants identify more as Arabs, as opposed to identifying with their nationalities only.

Arabness apparently is featuring now in my lexicon more than I thought it would . . . So now I'm defining myself as a newcomer in certain spaces or an immigrant. With others, I'm differentiating myself more as Arab. If it’s more intimate, then no, the nationality and the actual lived experiences come (up) . . . with work, it might start with the Arab world, and then I kind of make it smaller. (Participant 6)

I think living in Canada helped me to more of like zoom into my identity . . . Before, I would say it was an identity that (was) taken for granted, because everyone around you sort of grew up into the same identity. And it’s just like you don’t think twice about whether that means to you or how you define it and how you interpret it in your own terms, and all of that. I feel like the context and being in a Canadian context gives you that space to actually like zoom into what that really means to you. (Participant 25)

Others had distanced themselves from their Arab identity and other Arabs when they were younger, wanting to assimilate to White Canadian culture instead, but grew out of that way of thinking and then embraced their Arab ethnic identity and culture.
When I came to Canada, I wanted nothing to do with Arabs. If I see an Arab, I’ll just go the other way, because I wanted that Western environment, but that was just a perception. It was a wrong perception because I’ve met some really good Arabs here who, although they were born in Canada, they still have extreme passion. They love being Arab. *(Participant 23)*

Initially, when I came to Canada, I was like, “Okay, maybe this is a fresh start for me. I need to adopt a new identity and a new culture,” and I tried, for example, dating people from different cultures. While I respected them and they respected me, they didn’t understand a lot of my references, my experiences, the way I grew up . . . I think that it took me a little time to accept that. At first, I was like, “No. I’m gonna change that. I’m becoming Canadian only, and I don’t care.” But then, I realized that this was actually pretending to be someone I am not, which is harming me and making me more anxious, and making me kinda like having to make up stories and that was not, personally, comfortable. So now, I accept the fact I am Arab, Middle Eastern . . . and this is something I’m not ashamed of anymore. *(Participant 8)*

Before I was in an area that was mainly, I guess, Arabs or Muslims, I used to be very whitewashed. I wasn't exactly proud of my culture. I don't know, it was more trying to fit in with them, so I was trying to not stand out with any other sort of identity. Now, I don’t really care. I'm proud of my culture. But before, I was very influenced by the majority of everyone else that was there. *(Participant 19)*

### 7.1.3 Identifying with hyphenated labels

Participants were asked if they identified as Arab-Canadian or Canadian-Arab. Some did identify with these labels. Of those who did, most, though not all, preferred Arab-Canadian over Canadian-Arab.

*Arab-Canadian. I think there is a joke that if you get a Canadian citizenship then you keep the (other identity) . . . so you know like Spanish-Canadian, Arab-Canadian, but in the States, you become American.* *(Participant 8)*

*I would say Arab-Canadian, but I think that for me at least, if I were to hear someone say Arab-Canadian, I would be under the impression that ‘oh, they immigrated here, or maybe they weren’t born here,’ because Arab is first before Canadian. So I might be influenced to say Canadian-Arab but to me Arab-Canadian sounds nicer.* *(Participant 13)*

Many participants rejected both hyphenated labels, with the primary reason being that they did not identify, or did not want to identify, as Canadian.
If you were just to ask me, “Oh, what’s your identifier?” I would say Arab, or I would just say Syrian and Palestinian or something. I don’t even think to bring (up) Canada. In my Instagram bio, I have a Syrian flag and a Palestinian flag, I don’t have the Canadian flag. (Participant 26)

How can I justify my existence on this land in a way that does not contradict my morals? How can I claim to empathize with the Palestinians whose lands are usurped, and I’m kinda doing the same thing but because there is no killing. How do I really negotiate that? So the Canadian label is very loaded. (Participant 6)

For some, they explained that they did not have Canadian citizenship or a passport yet or they have not been in Canada long enough to identify as Canadian. Others did not identify culturally with Canada, did not like living in Canada, or could not consider Canada their home.

No, I don't think I identify as Canadian. I've never lived here before. I don't feel a strong connection to other people's culture here. Although I like understanding and meeting people from different cultures, I don't think I get that sense of safeness with this culture. (Participant 16)

A few participants who did not identify with the Arab-Canadian label, chose to identify as Canadian only, indicating that it is unnecessary or that hyphenating takes away from the other identity.

It doesn’t feel like it adds any value, or represent, or adds anything to myself. I don’t think it’s necessary in that way. I would say, actually, it takes a little bit away from who I am, because now I feel like if I say, ‘I’m Arab-Canadian or Canadian-Arab,’ I feel like it takes away from my Canadian identity – as if I’m somehow less Canadian, because, you know, White people don’t get a hyphen. They don’t get like a ‘Scottish-Canadian.’ I don’t think I’ve heard that before. Or, like, ‘I'm a British-Canadian,’ right? . . . So I feel by putting that hyphen there, it’s gonna be a little bit of a negative distinction. (Participant 20)

Others offered alternative hyphenated identities, mostly related to their nationality instead, such as Egyptian-Canadian and Lebanese-Canadian, and one participant indicated identifying as Afro-Arab instead.

I usually say Iraqi Canadian . . . I think it goes back to the “where do I have recognized status, citizenship, passport?” and so there's no place called Arab land or Arab. It's just I’m Iraqi Canadian. (Participant 11)
7.2 Intersecting Dimensions of Identity

The participants talked about how they are often at crossroads with their different identities of nationality, skin color, gender, sexual orientation & religion, influencing their experiences and sense of self. Some of these identities were in direct conflict with their Arab identity.

7.2.1 Gender

It is interesting to note that for most female participants, their gender identity was mentioned first along with their name. However, for male participants, it was not a term they commonly used to define themselves. Nonetheless, navigating gender roles, family dynamics and expectations, Arab identity and Canadian identity or the Canadian context was a source of conflict for many participants.

My dad was pushing me towards being more of a toxic male. Even with my brother. My brother, he’s a person who loves to cook. He likes to sew. He likes traditionally feminine stuff. He’s straight, by the way, we talked about it. He’s straight, but my dad is non-stop bullying him. He goes and tells him, “You fag” but in Syrian, I forgot what it was. But it’s non-stop. So, even whenever my dad sees me doing something that’s not aggressively male, he’d either just scream at me or put me under pressure. *(Participant 4)*

I would definitely put my womanhood over being an Arab so if it's something in Arab culture that's going to take away from my strength as a woman, then I'm not identifying with it. I'd rather protect my womanhood. *(Participant 30)*

Some participants spoke of Arab culture, traditions, and values as being inequitable towards women, privileging men and treating women as inferior. Participants rejected those prejudices, stating that this does not align with what they believe, and that things in the Arab society were changing for the better.

*I think that being a male overall in an Arab society does have a lot of influence on you, on your upbringing, on your freedom, as I mentioned before. To a certain extent, males are more of a dominant gender within the Arab ethnicity . . . As a male Arab, I get away with a lot of stuff like for example, growing up, a young teenage man is allowed to stay out late, whereas (for) a girl, if you see (her) out late, she's considered disrespectful, or doesn't respect herself, or she’s not a good person. *(Participant 27)*
Even though I'm older than (my brothers), I always felt the attention was always on them, because they were boys, and I feel like that's a thing in Arab culture, where it's just boys boys boys, no matter what you do. You can do literally everything that is expected of you and more. You can go above and beyond, and it's still not going to be enough, because you're not a guy. (Participant 30)

Overall, young Arabs tend to feel a sense of pressure to meet their family expectations. Sometimes the pressure is the same for men and women, whereas in other cases it is about different things. Female participants felt that they were expected to be perfect and to carry the reputation of the family and community. Female participants who wore the hijab also felt that they were expected to maintain the image and reputation of the religion of Islam.

I'm the oldest son. So (my parents) expect a lot out of me. They expect me to be strong. They expect me to basically power through my adversities, just things like that . . . There's obviously the societal and the cultural pressures . . . they kind of intersect at some point. Because you're a man, because you're Arab, you have to act like this . . . (My parents) expect a lot out of me. You know what I mean, cause I'm the oldest guy, I'm oldest son. They expect me to be able to...not right now, obviously, I'm still young, but they expect me in the future to go out and become something big . . . They believe I'm going to be something big in the future, right? And it creates a lot of pressure. But I think the pressure, you learn a lot from it. It helps (Participant 28)

(Being a woman) makes me feel like I have to prove myself a lot. It makes me feel like there's no room for mistakes, because a mistake is more easily remembered than something good that I've done. So it makes me more hard on myself, and it makes me feel like sometimes I have to put on a wall . . . from other people, colleagues, classmates, people in my life, men specifically. I feel like I have to be cautious at all times. (Participant 30)

There's still a lot of people that think that women are subordinate to men, and I don't agree with that. (Participant 20)

This may be due to the defined gender roles in the Arab community. Women are perceived to be demure and quiet whereas men are pressured to be tough. Women are perceived to be more responsible for domestic responsibilities and parenting whereas men to be responsible for financial responsibilities.
My parents expect me to always study, don't hang out with friends. I'm not allowed to at a certain time of day, if I'm not with people I'm not really allowed to go out. Growing up, I think they were more strict on me being allowed to go out, but then, knowing the people, meeting my friends and stuff, they've been a little more lenient, but it's nowhere near as lenient as they are with my older brother, purely because I am a female, and they don't feel that the world is as safe, compared to my brother who's a guy, and they're like, “Oh, no! He can take care of himself”, but with me it's different. (Participant 1)

I've seen it mostly, honestly, with my friends, especially the ones who are living here and have kids. The toll of bringing up the kids with that Arabic or with the Muslim identity, is mostly thrown on the mother. It’s all on her. The father just going to work, coming back, and that's it. And she is the one that has to make sure that they don't get whitewashed, they still have that cultural identity in them that, “yes, we're Arabs.” (Participant 10)

7.2.2 Sexual orientation

Generally, sex and sexuality are taboo topics in the Arab community and young Arabs are expected not to talk about or engage in any sexual activities outside of their heterosexual marriage. Non-heteronormativity is also taboo and stigmatized, and many young Arabs do not openly talk about their sexual orientation or explore queer identities.

I mean, obviously, being Arab, you might understand this as well, you don't really get taught about other orientations or other ways of thinking. So it's like, you're kind of born into it, you don't really want to explore. Cause, you know, I'm talking just from my point of view, right? You know, it's like, maybe it's not worth the hassle, and you, just you're born straight. You are straight. It is what it is, you know. (Participant 28)

The majority of participants identified as heterosexual/straight and found that their sexual orientation had no influence on their Arab identity. They noted that being straight aligns with the norm.

I don't think it influences my identity, because being straight is considered a norm within my identity . . . In Arab cultures, being straight is considered a norm as opposed to the other sexualities. (Participant 27)

Being a straight man? I’d say it’s expected as an Arab. Most Arabs wouldn't really say they're not straight. So I guess it's the norm and everything else is different. I guess being Arab kind of almost infers you’re straight, almost, even though it's not true. I know lots of homosexual Arabs or whatever, but they wouldn’t say that. They’re still in
the closet. So for me though, I would say, if I see a guy, if I see someone and I think they're a guy and they're Arab then I'll probably assume they're usually probably straight . . . if you’re not straight, . . . it'll be something you'd have to keep hidden. (Participant 12)

A few participants noted the privilege that they have as straight/heterosexual Arabs, and many participants (who identified as straight and who didn’t) noted that there is a conflict in being Arab and queer and it would be difficult.

I feel like, at least in the past, being straight was considered the standard. So I am at an advantage, being in the majority group compared to people who are part of the LGBTQ community . . . I know that it benefits me way more than if I wasn’t a straight individual, because of how conflicting it is, conflicting being part of that community in the eyes of my parents or other Arab family members that I know. (Participant 1)

I think it doesn’t impact me as much because it’s almost the default . . . I can see this conversation being a lot more challenging if someone isn't (straight) and you’re having a conversation about how they might identify as Arab and part of the LGBTQ community and they're at odds . . . I think the Arab identity almost emphasizes being straight as the norm so they're not really at odds with each other. (Participant 11)

This often stems from religious beliefs, but it is not limited to religion. Participants noted the conflict that arises between religious beliefs and being part of the LGBTQ+ community or supporting them. However, it is important to note that some participants were discussing this as a general attitude of the Arab community but not necessarily their own.

I feel like religion also ties into this a lot. My parents obviously grew up (with), and they taught me, the traditional (norm) of heterosexuality. So they don't understand the spectrum of sexuality that there is. But I have taken a lot of politics and sexuality, or gender and politics courses so I do have a background. (Participant 15)

I've tried (engaging with Middle Eastern spaces here in Canada). I wouldn't say I'm super religious but . . . during Ramadan . . . (I) want(ed) to go to the mosque, see what's going on . . . (I) knew going in with an earring with the (colourful) style of clothing, (I'm) going to at least get (looks), but I wouldn't expect to be confronted this hard. Thinking (I'm) in Canada, you know, it's not going to- I was surprised (about people) being so upfront about it. “You’re a fag and you’re going to mosque! You can't mix.” Then, I tried speaking about intersectionality with them. “This is how (I) identify. It is my right to identify how I want to be.” But again, sometimes, giving up
on the conversation and the conflict is easier than just being in a loop. So that’s one of the major conflicts which eventually led (to) “I don’t give a fuck anymore about religion . . . They gave me the idea of “You’re not welcome.” So I was like okay, that’s not an inclusive space for me. (Participant 2)

In the Middle East, there is a lot of discrimination towards homosexuality and LGBTQ and whatnot. So for me personally, I did not struggle at all in the Middle East or here with that because I identify as straight. I was accepted by my parents. I was accepted by people, and I didn’t face any difficulties within the Arab community here. I would say though, unfortunately the Arabic community who are not straight, like have different sexual orientations, they do struggle a lot because they are looked at as people at wrong, sometimes sick people who need to be corrected and who need to seek treatment to fix them. So, to give you an example, I have a cousin who is gay. He’s in a relationship with a man and like pretty much everybody stopped talking to him in the family, including his own parents, my parents, his uncle, grandparents. So like they pretty much cut him off and they didn’t accept that is a possibility to be or a choice to make, unfortunately. So, he went to Germany. He had, like he had to leave. But, yeah, it’s funny because when he was there, it never came up. When he was in the Middle East, I think he never shared it with anybody. But then when he traveled, he came out and publicly told them and there was also pictures on Facebook and whatnot. And I think that that caused a lot of anger at him and outrage and, you know, that was not accepted at all, unfortunately. So, for me, I accept him. It’s his own choice and we still talk and whatnot . . . I’d consider it traumatizing to be honest . . . I think that’s very, very hurtful. (Participant 8)

For Arabs in Canada who identify as LGBTQ+, social stigma within the community is a huge barrier. The non-acceptance made participants reluctant to completely embrace their Arab identity. Some participants had to remain closeted and found ways to survive, especially when living in Arab countries. They had to hide their queerness or deal with negative consequences, including ostracization.

I chose the specific spaces I can reveal this part of my identity in, and they were already safe spaces. Once you leave that safe space, you have already prepared your other safe personality that you can face the community with . . . We have gotten used to it, as I told you the strategies to live with it, how you can interact with the community. When your girlfriend becomes your ‘close best friend.’ . . . I had to actually learn to strategize and communicate, at least perform, different identities depending on the country that I am living in. So, this is from a sexuality aspect (Participant 6)
It's a rigid identity and feeling like ‘I'm going to be handcuffed’ standing in this kind of space. If you want to go get Shawarma, sometimes I really think about it, you know. Me and my partner, we're out late at night, driving, then we’re like “we're not going to go there because now we're going to have to go change then go there.” Especially if you want to get good stuff, you're not going to get decent stuff downtown. If you want to go to Mississauga, to Scarborough, the biggest Arab population are there so everybody knows everybody. The auntie will talk, you know. So sometimes, you sacrifice these kinds of pleasures that you want just to distance yourself from these kinds of spaces and these type of comments. I'm sacrificing my shawarma for this. (Participant 2)

7.2.3 Race and skin color

Arabs vary greatly when it comes to race, skin color, and appearance. While it may not be an identity that many participants mention initially (except for Black Arabs), race and/or skin color can strongly impact their experiences in Canada. Participants’ skin color often triggers assumptions about their identity in Canada. Light-skinned individuals struggle to assert their Arab identity as they are often mistaken for Europeans or White-Canadians. On the other hand, Black Arabs are frequently perceived as African rather than Arab. Consequently, participants find themselves repeatedly explaining and justifying their identities, feeling the need to defend their Arab heritage.

So being Middle Eastern, we're tan. We're not Black, we're not White. We're tan . . . Growing up back home, the color thing is not something for us, whether you're White, whether you're Black, regardless what your color or skin tone is, I never saw it as a part of someone's identity. You're just born with that color. It doesn't define much in you. I never saw it that way until I got here, and I'm like, “Oh, no! People do define you actually by your skin tone,” and I'm like, “that's weird.” (Participant 10)

The majority of participants were unsure what race category they fall under, and many stated that it depended on the options presented to them.

I still don't know. Honestly, I don't know what to... I guess it just depends on the context that I'm talking about, because that's a question that everyone actually that is Arab is trying to answer, “where do we fit?” sort of thing. (Participant 26)

It's different every time I'm filling out something. When I see Middle Eastern, I click Middle Eastern, even though I'm technically not Middle Eastern . . . Most of the time I see African-American and that usually means Black people, so I usually don’t click
that unless it just says African by itself . . . If there's Arab, I click Arab. Sometimes there's just White, I click White. So I guess all those, but I wish it was more inclusive because I don't really know ... every time I'm doing something different . . . If there's an option to write it, I usually just write North African. (Participant 19)

Of note, participants often made a distinction between race and skin color, categorizing themselves into different categories in each. Race categories included “Arab,” “Middle Eastern,” “North African,” “Black,” among others, whereas skin color included “white,” “lighter/lighter-skinned,” “tan,” “olive,” “wheat,” among others.

Race . . . the one that works with me is that I am Arab, but again that’s how I identify. Is Arab even a race? For skin colour, wheat-coloured. I am not sure how they are categorized. (Participant 6)

I guess, skin color, I would be considered white. Race, I'm not sure if Middle Eastern would count in this context, Arab, Middle Eastern, one of those. (Participant 1)

Yeah, so for skin color I don't think it actually matters that much because it's really just a color. But for race I feel like I’m Middle Eastern because that's the only race for Arabs if I’m not mistaken. But if you want the answer for what color, I guess brown. (Participant 7)

See, I look at my skin color and its brown, golden brown. But I would say that when it comes to race . . . I would say that I tend to identify as Black. I remember someone told me that Arab is not a race . . . so I just tend to identify more as Black because of that, or mixed race or other. (Participant 14)

Some clarified that they were a visible minority, not White, but were unsure about exact labels, whereas a few others were more comfortable with the White/Caucasian categorization.

This one's a bit tricky because from a purely objective perspective, my skin is quite light, but at the same time, I never get mistaken for Caucasian. So I'm kind of in a weird in between area, where I know I'm a visible minority, but I also have the privilege of being lighter-skinned, and what society brings me with those aspects. But yeah, definitely, I would say person of color, but on the lighter end. (Participant 3)

On surveys when you have to click off what race you are, I feel like if there's an Arab option, I'll click Arab, but if not, I'd probably just say Caucasian White. I feel like that makes sense. I mean my skin's white. I won't deny it. If I wasn't wearing a hijab, I have
brown hair, brown eyes. I could play the part kind of thing. I could blend in. So, yeah. If Arab is an option, then Arab, but if not, Caucasian White. (Participant 13)

White-passing Arabs acknowledge the privileges they benefit from in contrast to other Arabs.

I feel like I sort of have an advantage in the Arab identity, because I feel like in history, and especially my parents, growing up, they've seen that as a better beauty standard than if I was more tanned. (Participant 1)

I think there's definitely certain privileges that come with that, maybe even just being on the lighter side of being Arab. . . I don't know if this is light-skinned privilege or male privilege or whatever, but I can go outside and walk at 3 am. I wouldn't even think about it. I guess also I live in Mississauga, not downtown Toronto, (which) definitely helps with that as well, but even when I'm back in London, I don't really worry about anything. That's just a good example to think about in general when you're thinking about “am I privileged?”, “can I go anywhere without really having issues?” and I do think I can. So yeah, definitely, it has an impact. (Participant 26)

However, that privilege is sometimes revoked by other factors, such as wearing the hijab, having an Arab name, or having an Arab accent when speaking English.

I think (my white skin color) gives me some privilege. Yes, but also that privilege is quickly taken away by my hijab. (Participant 21)

Even we look a bit White but once they know your name (or) hear you speaking, your privileges just out of the window in a second. (Participant 2)

On the other hand, Black Arab participants express the sense of otherness they feel within the larger Arab community, and that their Black and Arab identities are at times at odds.

It's kind of a thing where they think if you’re a darker skin tone colour, you’re less Sudanese or less Arab, and to a certain extent, being Arab is more superior than African for Arabs, or for Sudanese people, in specific. (Participant 27)

(Being Black) is very much the first thing you see about me. The first thing people look at me is that “she’s Black.” They never think that I am Arab . . . Even within the Arab society, I am not seen as Arab unless I am with people who have been around people like me, who would be aware. . . When I’m out and about in public and then people will be talking in Arabic around me, thinking I don’t understand what they are saying, and later realize that I actually do. I guess that’s where that is one of the main
examples where you physically see that it is not necessarily seen as one but two different identities. (Participant 5)

I feel like (my skin colour) makes me able to relate to people of color more than Arabs, because, you know, Arabs have a paler skin tone or lighter skin tone, whereas me being Black and Arab, it opens me to being able to relate to Black Lives Matter, and to people from African countries and Black Americans, Black Canadians and such. (Participant 27)

Interestingly, some White/light-skinned Arabs also experienced a sense of otherness because their skin was too pale/white. There is a perception of the “Arab” shade/skin tone, which is not too pale and not to dark, and participants must fall within it to feel Arab enough.

I don't like the assumption that I'm not Arab. Again, it's not about me. I don't think this for myself and go like, ‘oh, man. I should spend some time in a tanning bed and look more Arab.’ I just don't like that when I go and speak Arabic to people, or (when) I'm in an Arabic store, they assume that I’m not Arab. Because they tell me. Arabs have no filter, so they just go like, “oh, you're not Arab. You don’t look Arab.” So I guess there's a conflict in that. It doesn't take away from who I am, but it takes away from who I want to be perceived as. So, you know, if I'm in an Arab environment, I want to be seen as Arab. When I’m speaking the language and I'm in that environment, I want to be part of it. But somebody assuming that I’m not, or that I’m somebody’s White friend, it doesn’t feel too good. (Participant 20)

It feels like I'm not fully Arab sometimes, but only when I'm hanging around Arabs, because they're the ones who make me feel that way, or Black Muslims . . . they're gonna be like, ‘oh, you need to go back to your country and learn some stuff.’ It's just a joke. It's an ongoing joke, but sometimes it does feel like it is conflicting . . . It's almost like being Arab and not having the skin tone, and especially cause I'm paler than most Arabs. Most of them are kind of like an olive skin tone, or a little bit more tan. (Participant 21)

7.2.4 Country of origin or background

Participants saw the advantage of belonging to a larger Arab community. One participant used the Arab identity as a label that encompasses all the countries of origin he is from, a way to not have to choose between the country of origin of his father, Iraq, or his mother, Lebanon, or where he grew up, the UAE. However, most participants identified with their country first & then their Arab identity. When asked “start by telling
me a little bit about yourself” by the researcher, these were some of the participants responses:

*I'm 19 years old. I was born in Syria, and I moved to Dubai when I was one year old, and I lived there till I was 15. Then I came to Canada, and I finished high school here, and now I'm going to university for finance.* (Participant 28)

*So, my name is (Participant 25). I am from Saudi Arabia. I came to Canada, I would say 6 or 7 years ago, to continue my education.* (Participant 25)

*So my name is (Participant 16). I'm 18. I grew up in Abu Dhabi until I was like 12, and then I lived in Lebanon until I was 18, so until this year. I am Lebanese, and yeah, I just moved to Canada a few months ago.* (Participant 16)

*Okay. My name is (Participant 9) and I was born in Jordan. I have lived in the Emirates. Then I came to Canada when I was 14 years old.* (Participant 9)

*Okay, so my name is (Participant 10). I'm 29, I'm Egyptian, but I spend most of my life in Kuwait. And I came to Toronto 2 years ago.* (Participant 10)

Participants spoke of the differences between the countries of the Arab world and the prejudices that exist between members of some countries. These prejudices had an impact on some participant’s Arab identity.

*Not (that) I would rank Lebanese as first, but I’ve talked with other people. In the Levant, because we’re lighter skin, we look down on Sudanese or Northern Africans. I've been in these kinds of conversations. Or also Jordanian or Syrians, we look down on Bedouins from the Gulf, you know, on the camel. We make fun of White people making these assumptions about us, but we still do these assumptions about us as well.* (Participant 2)

*I basically stopped associating with people who are from my father’s region in North Africa. So I stopped really associated with people who were North African . . . It was not until I started venturing outside of people who are North African, it’s when I felt awkward around them. I don’t feel awkward around Algerians now. I feel like I'm one of them but when it comes to . . . the region, the Levant . . . like Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon . . . just basically when I'm around them, I'm really, really othered. And I can clearly see that I am not one of them which is a bit painful. So then it just basically resulted in my Arab friends being Sudanese or Moroccans or Algerians or Tunisians.* (Participant 14)
Many participants grew up in a different country than that of their country of origin/background, be it in Canada or somewhere else. This created an identity crisis for participants who were mixed or who interacted with others from different countries. In addition, most participants face the additional challenge of growing up in a country that differs from their parents' homeland. These participants’ identities were sometimes at odds with that of their parents, which created conflict at times. A common example was participants who were Levantine or Egyptian but grew up in the Gulf countries, like Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE.

*I think there is definitely this conception of just because your dad is Iraqi, you’re only Iraqi, for example. You’re not just of one country just because your dad’s from somewhere, doesn’t mean that you’re only from this country. I think it’s more than just black and white. Growing up I didn’t wanna be seen as Iraqi because of much bullying I got. I was bullied a lot. But I’ve come to embrace that I’m both Iraqi and Lebanese. I was bullied by, for example, Lebanese people and I never told them I was Lebanese, just because (when) they heard Iraqi, they shut their ears and they only saw Iraqi.* (Participant 23)

*Even though I personally haven't lived (in Syria), I still think about my family that lives there, and because my parents obviously raised me, they raised me with the values that they were raised with growing up in Syria. So that definitely plays a role in my identity. I know that there are some things that my parents will try to implement in me, but I won't personally want to do that, because the people around me aren’t doing that. My parents grew up in a very small town in Syria. So everyone there is getting married to people from the small town. That's something that I don't want to do. I don't want to get married to someone from that small town, to be honest. So when I would have this type of conversation with parents where I don't want to marry someone from there, or someone even necessarily Syrian or Arab, they’ll get really angry, but this is their norm. It's not my norm. People around me are doing that, and people in the UAE, where I grew up, are also doing that.* (Participant 30)

Growing up in Saudi Arabia, I think that there’s definitely a little bit of a conflict between being Khaliji Arab [from the Gulf] and being like Levantine Arab. I didn’t really feel it growing up, I’ve learned a little bit more about the discrimination there as I’ve grown up. Talking to other friends who have family who have spent time in Khaliji [the Gulf] pipeline of “you’re from a Levant country, and then you move to a Gulf country, and then you move to Canada,” it’s very real. So many people do it. If you’re from the Levant, I’m like, “Did you come here straight from the Levant or did you live in a Gulf country first?” and it’s very much a 70/30 split between the people I
talk to in terms of 70% have all lived in the Gulf. Some people do tell me accounts of, “Oh, yeah, it was pretty discriminatory against Levantine Arabs.” *(Participant 26)*

7.2.5 Language

For many young Arabs in Canada, the Arabic language is the thread that weaves together the Arab community and is fundamental to Arab identity. Some participants saw the Arabic language as the foundation to Arab culture.

*I don't think I would feel as Arab if I didn't speak Arabic, and I definitely wouldn't feel as Arab if I didn't read Arabic . . . It makes up a huge part of my culture. It allows me to understand the culture much more clearly and it allows me to be part of that culture in a way that I absolutely never could if I didn't speak Arabic. I see it firsthand with some of my friends whose Arabic is not that good. They just miss certain aspects of it or underappreciate it.* *(Participant 20)*

*Language, I think it really shapes every aspect of how you think, to be honest . . . like certain points when I'm trying to illustrate them to myself, even when I'm speaking to myself, I illustrate them in different languages. If I'm trying to express self-love, or whatever, it's gonna be in English, but if I'm trying to express discipline, and all of these other values, it's gonna be in Arabic. So I definitely know that there's a very distinct relationship between language and the way I am and the way I think. I think it just shapes the way you think . . . about so many different concepts, including like social justice concepts, including your own self, your own perception of others, or yourself, or whatever. And like obviously, the sayings in Arabic, some of them like in Egyptian Arabic, a lot of them identify fake friends and manipulation, because that's what happens in Egypt. But in Bahraini Arabic, all of a lot of them imply like people who use you for money. So you're trained to look for different things in different cultures in people.* *(Participant 21)*

Participants used Arabic to connect and communicate with others, both Arabs and non-Arabs in some cases.

*I'm very fortunate because I connect with people through Arabic language . . . I connect to my Muslim patients way better through Arabic language. So let's say I'm seeing a patient in the hospital and they're from Pakistan or Afghanistan or India and they identify as Muslim, and they're like feeling worried, and they may speak very fluent English but sometimes they may want to pray or they say like “Inshallah” [If God wills it] or “Mashallah” [God has willed it] or “Alhamudullilah [Praise to Allah], I'm doing better.” . . . When you understand what they're saying and you wish them well like “Inshallah [If God wills it] you're going to get better” or something, it*
makes them also feel better. So not only connect with your own Arabs, but also connect with whoever speaks the Arabic language in a religious manner as well. (Participant 8)

Language influences my identity in a way, where I'm able to communicate with more people, and I feel like language does bring a sense of community, especially because of all the Arab immigrants . . . I work at Starbucks, right? If someone's struggling to order, and you see them distressed, and then I'll be like, “Oh, are you Arab?” Then, they'll say, “yes,” and I'll speak to them in Arabic, and it just gives them a sense of peace that somebody understands them. Even my grandma, when we go out and she doesn't know how to ask for something, I'll be the translator in the middle, and I don't know it just, it does give you a sense of community and belonging, helping others. I feel like it's a really good feeling. You're able to just help others. (Participant 15)

Participants who were not fluent in Arabic, because they grew up in Canada or went to international schools in other countries, felt a disconnect with the community. Sometimes, they are perceived as "whitewashed" and as "less Arab."

With other Arabs, I stick out like a sore thumb, because I don't speak Arabic as well . . . My dad's mom, for example, just a typical Lebanese village woman, obviously she's not going to know English, so it was pretty hard to communicate. I feel like it degraded my sense of being Arab and especially religion-wise, I can’t practice my religion because of that. Yeah, it's socially...I'm definitely labeled differently. I don't know how, but it's obvious that I don't speak Arabic. (Participant 12)

There's kind of a disconnect because I didn't really grow up speaking the language. When I was born, both my parents started going to university here so they tried their best to speak the language [English], and use that as much as they could cause, because they were still getting used to using that on a daily basis. So there is a little bit of a disconnect . . . for me, I feel like it's particularly tied to language, because when I meet people who are also Arab, immediately they want to start speaking Arabic with me, and I don't know enough to have conversations, especially not with people who aren't Iraqi because it's the only dialect that I was raised and surrounded by. (Participant 1)

Moreover, the Arabic language is very rich and is spoken with many accents and dialects.

I love the Arabic language. I think it's just so rich, and it drives people crazy because there are so many accents and dialects. Even within Syria, again if you go north, it’s different than South. It’s different but I love it, and no one can understand our jokes even if they speak Arabic. (Participant 8)
I’ve never spoken the dialect I’d speak at home, outside of my home, even in Baghdad. Because my grandparents are from Mosul, we speak Mosulian, which sounds quite different from the Arabic from Baghdad, that people often perceive as an Iraqi Arabic. We sound more like people from Qamishli in Syria, which is North Eastern. So I grew up, speaking Mosulian, and then in school, I had to speak Baghdadi Arabic, and then we moved to Syria, and so I learned Shami specific to Damascus. So those three I’m quite comfortable in . . . I use those distinctions for the dialect as part of that, embracing the detail and the diversity of the Arab language instead of just saying, I speak Arabic . . . just say I speak Arabic I think sometimes brushes over so much . . . I think it’s even more powerful with dialects because they’re spoken. They’re not written. I think part of what holds back Arab identity from being as strongly held in Western countries like some other identities . . . is because the Arabic that ties us all together is just written it’s not spoken, and we don’t really talk about that. It’s that language that ties us together (that) generations growing up here will never read and willl never write . . .Whenever I see Arabs using WhatsApp, they’re big on the voice message and if they’re using letters, sometimes they’ll use English letters and numbers and write in the dialect, but no one's writing in what the uniting language is. That's just for the books and the newspapers. (Participant 11)

Sometimes, this created a disconnect for participants who cannot understand, or communicate in, certain dialects.

In terms of Arab identity, I always found it a bit frustrating how different the dialects were because I always wanted to relate more with other people from different countries, but I had a really, really tough time understanding and communicating with people from other Arab countries and even neighboring countries . . . So that was a tough one because in my head I'm like, “oh, I can have a whole conversation with my parents in Arabic, but how come I can’t speak to someone just like casual conversation from another dialect?” . . . It felt like it separated me a bit from other Arabs that are not Lebanese. (Participant 3)

So for me, it’s all just Libyan, Arabic . . . but when it's speaking to other people from other countries who don’t speak that same dialect . . . for the most part, I usually understand what they're saying. It more so comes from my end when I try to talk back to them and they're like, “You lost me. I don’t know what you’re saying” . . . I think that because our language is so different, that for me (is), kind of very obvious, a distingerisher between the Arab and the more North African, or African, identity . . . Because of the fact that the language is different, that’s kind of one of those constant reminders that, “oh, yes, it's Arabic, but like there's more to it”. So, yeah, I think that it has had an influence (on my identity). (Participant 13)
A lot of other Arabs make fun of Moroccan Arabic, saying that they either can't understand it or that it's not actual Arabic . . . I have a lot of Arab friends, but if I were to speak Moroccan, nobody would understand me, because they're used to a different type of Arabic. I learned the Syrian dialect, which is, I guess, the most common. So if I'm speaking with my Arabic friends, I usually speak like that. *(Participant 19)*

Lastly, a couple of participants spoke of people from Lebanon not just using the Lebanese dialect but having a specific language, wherein they speak Arabic, English, and French at the same time.

*Especially for Lebanese identity, I think the language is a very, very, very big part of the culture. I always found it really interesting how those three languages, English, French, Arabic, really come together in the Lebanese culture. I really like it because growing up, going to French school (in Canada), Lebanon would come up, and I liked that there was a link there. But then at the same time, I learned a lot of English through Lebanese people. So it was just kind of nice that the three of them were so connected, the three languages within the Lebanese culture. (Participant 3)*

7.2.6 Religion

Religion is a crucial part of Arab identity, with many participants seeing their religious identity and their Arab identity as one. This was especially true for participants who identified as Muslim and as Druze.

*I think that being Arab ties a lot with being Muslim, and I know that those aren't the same thing. You can be Arab and not Muslim, or you can be Muslim and not Arab. But for me at least, I think that both of those identities, to me at least, are the same. I think that having that label, having that identity, the way that I carry myself and the way that I participate in life, I know that being someone that wears a hijab, it's hard to not make it obvious that you practice a certain religion. (Participant 13)*

Well, Druze are all Arabs. I don't think there are any (non-Arab Druze). There are no non-Arab Druze I can think of. Yeah, they might speak Spanish because some of them are in South America, but I'd say being part of the Druze religion means your background is Arab, is Lebanese. I don't think there's a single Druze person whose genes aren't at least 80 to 90% Lebanese. So if you're Druze, you're probably Lebanese or Syrian and therefore by extension Arab. So that's what I'm trying to say. For me at least it's not like you can distinguish between them. *(Participant 12)*
For others, the identities were distinct, and sometimes even at odds with each other. This was true of some Muslim participants, as well as Christian and agnostic participants.

*You think in a different way to everyone you know, friends and family, and it influences the amount of culture, because I think culture and religion is really tied together in Arab culture, and it kind of makes you just (move) away from the culture . . . I've drifted away quite a bit from my culture because I'm kind of agnostic . . . You want to be part of your culture, want to learn more about your culture, but you're not really into the religion so it kind of discourages you in a sense.* *(Participant 28)*

*A lot of my friends are religious so if I was more religious, I wouldn't identify with Arabs that much . . . If I was very religious, then I would say I'm just Muslim, doesn't matter if I'm Arab, doesn't matter if I'm Indian, Chinese. And so, maybe because I'm not that religious, maybe that's why identify a lot with Arab.* *(Participant 7)*

The perception that all Arabs are Muslims erases the identities of those who belong to other religions, such as Christians and Druze.

*When you say you're Middle Eastern, the assumption goes directly to the religion. Like if you're from Middle East, you must be Muslim. They don't know there is a little bit of religion minorities . . . Being a woman from Syria and Christian, we don't add up, because the moment people ask me where I'm from and I say, “I'm Middle Eastern,” they assume I'm Muslim. If I say, “no, not (that) religion,” I think some people may get offended.* *(Participant 8)*

*I'm not Muslim, so it's always (that) if I identify as Arab, I almost get the bonus identity, auto-attached, and so that plays out a lot in very small ways and not necessarily bad ways. An example that happens way too often is, let's say someone is ordering pizza, whether it's a social gathering or even an event on campus, they'll always save me a slice of cheese pizza and go “Oh, I know you don't eat pepperoni,” and I ask them, “why did you think that?,” and they just go “Oh, because you're Arab”, and I go “but do Arabs not eat pepperoni?” and they go “No, but Arabs are Muslims, so they don't eat pork,” and I have to give them the quick “Oh, but not all Arabs are Muslims. Most of them are.”*(Participant 11)*

Further conflicts arise when certain interpretations clash with participants’ personal beliefs, such as regarding gender roles, sexuality, and wearing a hijab. To address this, participants selectively choose the aspects of the religion they identify with and adapt them according to their personal values and beliefs.
I just know that when I read about Islam, when I actually learn about Islam, I'm just like, “that's not what these people are doing.” Sometimes they'll take up a religious scripture and completely misinterpret it to just reinforce some rule on women. Then, I'll look into the Scripture, and I'll be like, “that's not what it says. Like, what?” And I'll see the contextual cues, the tafseer [interpretation], the elaboration or what it actually means, and how it's been taken out of like context to just piss us off I think at this point, like just to piss me off. When I read Islamic-related stuff, I feel really understood and heard, but when I see how the culture has repackaged it somehow is very disturbing and upsetting. (Participant 21)

Some participants hold on to the cultural aspects of religion, including traditions and celebrations, but do not consider themselves religious.

I don’t consider myself a practicing Christian at this point because I don’t go to church regularly, but again, this doesn’t mean that I don’t celebrate Christmas. I like Christmas, but I don’t like, you know, the prayer itself. But I also celebrate Ramadan. I celebrate Ramadan because I have a lot of Muslim friends and they invite me to iftar. And although I don’t fast during the day, I like going and having a meal with my friends. So, I don’t think I’m a good one to talk about religion, because I got this weirdly “just celebrate” (attitude). To me, it's peace. It's making connections with people, respecting them, and doing good for the community. Like volunteering, making small donations if you can, being a good person, regardless of how many times you pray, regardless of how many times you visit the places. (Participant 8)

I wouldn’t say I want to be so religious, because I wasn’t, even before (I moved to Canada), but this culture aspect of religion... festivity... we grow up with that, so you just want to stay connected in a way with these. (Participant 2)

7.2.7 Immigration status

The majority of the participants felt that their immigration status had no effect on their identity as Arabs.

No, not really, the (Canadian) passport is just to make it easier to go to other countries without the visa. That's basically the only thing I see it useful for. (Participant 10)

Some participants noted that having a Canadian passport and being a Canadian citizen allows Arabs in Canada certain freedoms and privileges that non-citizens do not have.
I think that being a Canadian citizen has obviously granted me a lot more privileges than other Arabs who might just be here on a student visa, or here as a permanent resident or don’t have that citizenship status. I also think that when it comes to even coming to university, having to only pay the tuition fee as a Canadian citizen, as opposed to an international student, that is a huge barrier to accessing education, because the fee difference is so drastically different as an international student versus a citizen. So I think that, in that way, it has definitely benefited me, even in terms of health care. As a Canadian citizen, obviously you get OHIP. You get stuff like that, whereas if you were someone who had recently immigrated here and didn’t, was only on a visa, or only on whatever it may be, there’s a lot of resources and things that you might not (have). There might be more barriers too, because of the fact that you’re not a Canadian citizen. I think that, as a result, that obviously has impacted my identity. (Participant 13)

I was born here, then grew up in the Middle East, then came back . . . It was pretty easy for me to come back here. I didn’t have to go through a lot of the things that other people who grew up elsewhere and don’t necessarily have citizenship here would. (They would) have a completely difference experience than I did, but it was pretty much very easy for me when I moved back here in regards to immigration status specifically. (Participant 5)

One participant had a complicated relationship with the idea of becoming a Canadian citizen.

I am still a (permanent resident), so I don’t have the passport. So even officially I cannot refer to myself as (Canadian). This alone is something that makes me wish I remain as a (permanent resident). I do not want the citizenship, but I know this society is going to obligate me. I have mobility better than before. I can visit whenever I want, at least to the countries that I care about, say like Amman, where my family lives and stuff. But long haul, I’m thinking that I have family in America that I can’t visit unless my dad goes to the embassy . . . God forbid, if someone from my family dies, and I stay here in Canada as usual. I’d say that’s my number one fear is that if something happens to my family and I need to be there and I’m here waiting for the passport and approvals until I can join them. (Participant 6)

On the other hand, some participants noted how difficult it is to be an immigrant or a newcomer to Canada, and the barriers immigrants have to face that those born in Canada do not.

I think that everything is harder as an immigrant. Even right now, a lot of my mindset is about career development and finding work and stuff. When I talk to my (university
program) peers, it's like, “Oh, I know this person who knows this person who knows this person”, and it's very much a networking game these days. And I'm like, ”I came here not knowing anyone, not knowing anything.” It's like you have these third, fourth, twelfth generation Canadians who understand the system here and their parents teach them when they're in middle school, “this is what you need to do to make a lot of money when you're older. This is when you need to start investing. This is when you start doing this, that, this, that.” As immigrants, you don't have that knowledge. You don’t know what's going on, and so you're automatically at a disadvantage. (Participant 26)

7.3 The Struggle of Being Arab in Canada

Arabs in Canada undergo a complex journey as they navigate their identities, balancing Canadian society with their cultural ties to the Arab world. Many of them experience an identity crisis influenced by their personal experiences, how others perceive them, and their own internal biases. The participants deal with the challenges of blending and reconciling the contrasting cultural norms, beliefs, and societal expectations of Arab and Canadian cultures.

I don't think I'm a special case. Everybody who has this dual citizenship, it's either you're not Canadian enough or you're not Arab enough. (Participant 2)

7.3.1 Meaning of being Arab

Several themes were identified in relation to the meaning of being Arab and Arabness. Being Arab comes down to practicing Arab culture and traditions and having certain values. Participants often referred to speaking Arabic, with family and friends. Participants also described listening to Arabic music, watching Arabic TV, and having an Arabic name.

I think with language comes, you know, feelings and certain emotions . . . That is a big thing that binds me with others, like my peers. And music as well, again, relevant to the language. Just it hits different, I guess, when you listen to an Arabic song. (Participant 25)

I accept the fact I am Arab, Middle Eastern. I love the language. I love our music. I love listening to Fairuz in the morning, and I speak Arabic with my parents, with my family, every day. (Participant 8)
I'm a very musical person. I've been in music since I was really, really small . . . Algerians have something called Raï music; “la musique Rai.” It's absolutely just amazing and beautiful. (Participant 14)

Participants described practicing their (Arab and national) cultures by eating cultural foods and wearing cultural clothing.

We have like Moroccan style living room . . . I don't even know how to describe it. It's really pretty . . . We have Moroccan clothes. Every year we go to Morocco, we bring back a bunch of Moroccan clothes with us . . . There's a Moroccan kaftan. It's like a woman's event dress type of thing. It's super pretty. It's generally just like a long thobe, and it has very heavy jewelry on it. There’s like a big belt in the middle. The guys’ Moroccan (dress), it’s called a djellaba. And then there's other women's (clothes), like abayas type of things. They're Moroccan. Yeah, like Moroccan pajamas. Those like pajama dresses for women. Yeah, those are the types of clothes. (Participant 19)

Being Palestinian, it's more of a cultural identity so obviously the food, that would be the biggest thing. We eat a lot of hummus and we love falafel. Even when I was studying in Ontario, where I was away from my parents, a lot of times when I first started cooking, for example, I would try to learn a lot of Palestinian food. So that's one thing where if you're trying to get closer to your culture, try to learn the food. (Participant 7)

For example, you always find an Arab that always has perfume on, that you can smell from five meters away. (Participant 9)

Participants also described attending Arab gatherings and celebrations and adhering to Arab norms.

A bunch of my friends are White. So you know the belly dancing skirts? So I have a bunch of them. They came over and they tried (them on) and played Arabic music and then I'm bringing a bunch of them to the MESA gala just so they could see how our parties are, cause I feel like they're very different obviously if you compare an Arab wedding, to someone who's European . . . When (Arabs) come with the dirbake [drum], they come in a big group of people . . . Over the summer, my cousin, obviously he's Arab. He married, I think, a Portuguese lady, and their side (were) not underdressed, but they were more casual, and then our side was very fancy . . . They did play a lot of Arabic music and then when they were playing more English music, because my family don't speak English, they would sit down. But then her side wouldn’t dance . . . (Arabs) come in with the dirbake drum. They have the belly dancer
in the middle and a bunch of performances . . . We have a lot of traditions. (Participant 15)

They're mostly rooted in culture, I would say. Also, for extended family, I still adhere to the sort of cultural norms, I would say. When we're visiting aunts and uncles or visiting my brothers in-law, there's all these things that I still adhere to cultural norms and Arabic cultural norms and traditions. Like, I still celebrate the Arabic holidays. I guess we could say Arabic cultural holidays, Arabic dress on special occasions, that type of thing. (Participant 20)

Participants often related their Arabness to their family and community and described the meaning of being Arab in relation to generosity and hospitality, and collectivist values.

They want to pay for the bill, they're fighting for it. (Participant 9)

I feel like in my household, or even in Arab culture, being kind and helpful and wanting to- that like community aspect has been very prevalent in my upbringing. I feel like my family and being around my culture and stuff, being kind, and being nice and being respectful, were very big values. (Participant 13)

As an Arab growing up, you're always taught to first self-respect yourself, or self-respect others. It taught me manners on how Arab people have specific types of manners, have to be generous to others. Examples, such as also to be ambitious and to a certain extent, the importance of education. Stuff like that. (Participant 27)

I resonate with the Arab cultures. I feel like I resonate with the parts that is very family oriented, and the parts where, you know, you're very selfless. I feel like Arabs are always trying to help people. They're trying to give back. If you have guests over, you're going to make your guests feel comfortable. That's something I really resonate with. Our values and morals are very centered towards making other people feel comfortable and helping others out and closeness in community. (Participant 30)

7.3.2 Canadian and Arab societies are different

Participants often spoke about what it means to be Arab in comparison to what it means to be Canadian and compared Canadian values to Arab values. Some participants noted that Canadian and Arab values are the same when it comes to basic “human” values.

I think that (the) core values of respect, kindness, stuff like that. I think are definitely the same. Even in terms of Canadian values of health care or education or stuff like
that, I think that those are very similar, but I think that there are definitely discrepancies, but I think (the) very rooted core values are the same. (Participant 13)

I feel like Canadians pride themselves on being nice people, but also Arab culture values being nice and respectful to others. So that's a similarity I can see there. (Participant 30)

Some participants pointed out the difficulty in defining what Canadian values are.

Canadian values are not really solid. They're sort of they ambiguous, not clearly defined values, that change with time. (Participant 20)

I mean I don’t know what can qualify as Canadian values or European values. (Participant 6)

However, most participants compared the two, describing Canadian society as much more individualistic and Arab society as more communal and family-oriented. Many participants often view the community as a crucial aspect of their Arab identity. Arab culture values strong family ties and emphasizes living with parents and being part of extended family gatherings.

We differ in the sense that the Canadian society is more individualistic, everyone to themselves. However, the Arab community is a community-based, so from the aspect of putting a community-based society in an individualistic-based society, it’s going to be hard within the aspect of adapting. For example, “Oh, why don’t you move out of your parent’s house?” Because it does not work that way in our society. It’s more community based. (Participant 9)

To a certain extent, for some of our traditions or culture is considered to be odd for Canadians, and the other way around . . . For us, extended family extending beyond your immediate family is important for Arabs, whereas for Canadians, it’s considered to be odd for you to be very close to your extended family. (Participant 27)

Arabs will go, I think, in my experience, above and beyond for you. Canadians not as much. The individualistic culture versus the collectivist culture. But if the Arabs who lived here for long enough have lost that collective side of things. I found that's as a pattern . . . I think a lot of Arabs . . . feel guilty for being individualistic if they're still being drilled to the collectivist side of things . . . I was like that in Bahrain, as well. When I lived there, I always felt guilty for putting myself first or being more individualistic. I don't think humans are supposed to be that individualistic, to be honest. (Participant 21)
In an extension of Arab society's collective identity, there is a strong emphasis on reputation, particularly within their community. This can lead to participants feeling pressure to maintain a positive reputation. In contrast, Canadian society tends to be more individualistic, with less importance placed on the concept of "family shame."

*In Canada, there's less focus on the role of honor or shame that you might see in Arab culture. So that can include things like Canadians might be less worried or thinking about their reputation versus Arabs might be a bit more concerned about what their parents' friends will think about them.* *(Participant 3)*

*The other thing (is) about people's opinion. My mom cared a lot. My mom cared a lot about what people think and their opinion. So, just because the Arabs focus a lot on the reputation of the family and on honour and all this stuff.* *(Participant 4)*

Overall, Arabs are more conservative than Canadians. Many participants dress modestly and avoid drinking, especially those who follow Islam.

*I think that in some aspects, I think that there are differences between Arab values and Canadian values, and I think that actually, let me rewrite that. There are some differences between traditional Canadian values and traditional Arab values in the sense that when I think of things like marriage equality, for example, that might not necessarily be a very traditional Arab value, but that might be seen as a more modernized Canadian value, and I don't know if Arab values have kind of caught up with that. So I think that there are kind of some differences or some discrepancies,* *(Participant 13)*

*Modesty for both genders is a big (difference). Free mixing (between men and women) is another one.* *(Participant 21)*

*I guess it’s a little bit more conservative within the Arab values and a little more just open, I would say, within the Canadian values . . . There are certain things that are looked down upon within Arab society, where it is not necessarily the same with the society here . . . like (if) someone who is in arts or a more creative career line, that would be seen as like ‘wow, that’s very different’. You don’t really run into a lot of Arabs that are within those careers because of the way they’re perceived in Arab society.* *(Participant 5)*

Generally, participants find ways to deal with these differences and tensions. Some adopt a little from each society to fit their lifestyles and beliefs. Certain Arabs, especially those
from LGBTQ+ groups and women, feel a greater sense of freedom and acceptance in Canadian society and find themselves adopting certain Canadian values.

Going out to the bars, that's something that's completely unacceptable back home, or whatever, but I've become more open to it, (and) interacting with guys. (Participant 30)

I’ve seen many examples of (male) Arabs my age embracing themselves, for example, either wearing dresses or skirts, or dancing on the buses in Pride, or even wearing the flags like me. Basically, living the life they want, because here, you don’t have anything that chains you down, or that basically prosecutes you for being yourself. (Participant 4)

Participants further highlighted these differences, comparing Arabs in Canada to Arabs in the Arab world, with participants identifying with one group of Arabs but not the other. However, participants were not consistent in their descriptions of either group.

I feel like Arab-Canadians, when you put that hyphen there, they try too hard to be like other Canadians. They try to fit in too much. From my experience interacting with other Arab-Canadians, they either try to isolate themselves or they try to fit in. There's no sort of a middle ground, where I see myself, where you still preserve your culture and your understandings and your practices while at the same time, being part of greater society. From what I've seen, my personal experience has been either it's a small, isolated group that don’t learn English or just the minimum needed, and just sort of reserve themselves within their community and within their neighbourhood. They live next to each other, and that's it, and they don’t really play a larger part in society, Canadian society. Or it's the complete opposite, and it's usually their kids. So they're born here, barely or a little speak Arabic. They just treat themselves as White-Canadians, you know. Every Mahmoud would call himself Mike and Alex or whatever. I even have a friend of mine, his name is Abdelrahman but he calls himself Allen because it's, 'oh, it's easier that way.' I don't like it . . . So there's a lot of things that I'm more conservative about that. I wouldn't necessarily align with Canadian values or Canadian culture. But then, I would fit in perfectly fine with the Arabs from the Arab world. And I think, again, that's not special. It's not unique to me, but it's a perspective that I haven't really seen often in my groups or the groups of people that I associate with. (Participant 20)

The Arabs here are kind of different to the Arabs in Dubai, in terms of everything, culture, the way they act, the way they think, and I don’t really resonate with that . . . Arabs here are a lot more conservative in terms of kind of close-minded, really sticking to how Arabs “should” be . . . In Dubai, the Arabs are like I don’t know, it's a
different culture, it's a different environment . . . when I meet an Arab here, right? And they...it's just the way they act . . . It's a lot more religious . . . In Dubai, it's way less religious, which obviously that's not a bad thing, right? It's just not kind of how I was brought up. I was not brought up like that. *(Participant 28)*

Arabs raised in Canada usually have a different perception, or they have a different perception of being Arab, especially ones that haven't been to the Middle East. For example, there was this Iraqi girl last year in my dorm and she says, “yeah my background is Iraqi.” She's kind of almost ashamed to talk about it. Whereas Arabs, for example who were raised in an Arab country, they will be very open about being from their country. *(Participant 12)*

7.3.3 Fear of losing identity and preserving Arab identity

Navigating multiple identities, the participants expressed concerns about losing their Arabic heritage and diluting their Arab identity. The young Arabs are afraid of losing certain practices and traditions, both religious and cultural. Many participants want to retain their distinctiveness and unique culture. Some participants shared a sense of nostalgia for their home country while residing in Canada. These cultural ties to their parents and ancestors are the most important, and they are determined to carry on their family legacy and cultural heritage.

*I guess it makes me proud that I come from a long generation of people who were born and raised in Arab countries. And there's so much history, and there's so much culture that comes with that. And I'm proud to have and know.* *(Participant 1)*

Participants want to preserve their Arab identity as they are proud to be Arab. Most participants love Arab culture - its hospitality, generosity, music, food, poetry, and the richness of the Arabic language. They feel a deep sense of pride in the unique and multicultural nature of the Arab world.

*I am proud that us, as Arabs, we’re social. Our food, our culture, our customs. Like for example, when I go to a wedding, I get happy that our weddings are like this.* *(Participant 9)*

*A lot of times, (identifying as Arab) makes me proud, especially if you look at the history and the culture, the rich culture, the Arabic language of course, poetry and music. All that does make me feel proud in general and more Arabs would be proud of their identity, their Arab identity.* *(Participant 7)*
They are afraid of being the last ones in their families/lineage and many want to carry on their culture, heritage, and religion to their children.

*I think for me, it's just really important for my kids to connect with their roots and all that. I definitely hope to take them at some point to Syria and Palestine and all these places, and show them where I grew up, and all that.* (Participant 26)

*For me, like cultural continuity and having a household in the future that's my own household that reminds me of what my parents created. That would be really nice. Continuity is the main thing for me . . . the food, the music, the hospitality, the family dynamics, that kind of stuff... that would be nice.* (Participant 3)

*I guess it being a closed-off religion is also a pretty big factor. It makes me feel more connected to my ancestors because they were all Druze, because you can't convert to being Druze. You have to be born into it. I have this expectation that I have to keep, if that makes sense. I tried to find other Druze people, because it's such a small religion. It's something that's important to me because it's small and I feel like I don't want it to die out. I don't want to be the last generation. I don't want to be the weak link that breaks however many hundreds of years we've been around, so I don't want to be the weak link.* (Participant 12)

When choosing a partner, having the same religion as their partner was crucial for the participants. Many Arab participants preferred partners who were also Arab, but not necessarily from the same country of origin as them. They wanted the ability to pass their identities and practices on to their children and preserve their heritage.

*Religion is important because, a part of my religion is you have to marry someone from the same religion. So for religious purposes, I will want someone who is the same religion as me. And for just specifically being Arab, and not a country, I feel like most Arabs, anyway, have pretty much the same culture, the same things that they follow. We grew up on the same values.* (Participant 30)

*I think, in the future, it would be important for me for them to be Druze, but for now and for a long time coming, it is very important for me for them to be Arab. I don't mind if they weren't Lebanese, but Arab (for) sure . . . When you do have a partner, I think the main thing is that they're supposed to understand you, and I don't think I could ever feel that intimacy of being understood from someone that isn’t Arab.* (Participant 16)
7.3.4 Feeling othered and not enough

The participants often face conflicting judgments, criticized for being "too whitewashed" to be considered Arab or "too Arab" to be accepted as Canadians. These external perceptions not only create internal conflict but also weaken their sense of identity. Many participants felt that they were not Arab enough and/or not Canadian enough because of the way they spoke and their language fluency, the way they acted or dressed, and other factors.

*Being in Arab circles, I am seen as the Canadian. I am seen as the person who speaks English. I am seen as the person who knows Western pop culture whereas they don’t necessarily relate with me a lot of the time, and, in my experience, the same thing would be with me to them.* (Participant 5)

*Before I came (to Canada), I was not alienated back home, but now I’m alienated here and back home . . . too Canadian for the Arabs and too Arab for the Canadians.*

( Participant 21)

Depending on their intersecting dimensions of identities, Arabs in Canada felt othered, not just by other Arabs but also by non-Arabs in Canada. Participants find themselves repeatedly explaining and justifying their identities, feeling the need to defend their Arabness.

*Sometimes I'll get the comment from other Middle Eastern people of, “Oh, you’re Canadian,” but then other times, I'll get comments from Canadian people kind of reminding me of how Middle Eastern I am.* (Participant 3)

*In Iraq, at least the way my parents were raised, the clothing there is more modest and more covering compared to here, and especially going to certain formal events in Canada, people dress a certain way, slightly more revealing, tighter clothes. trying to explain to people that, “No, I don’t really feel comfortable dressing this way,” because of how I was raised, and I don’t think my parents would approve of it because of the way they grew up, having to explain that to people and having people think like, “Oh, your parents are just really strict. Why do they care so much about how you dress? That makes no sense. What do they care about how your body is showing?” and me having to defend it and be like, “No, this is how they've grown up, just what they're comfortable with. This is what I'm comfortable with,” and having to convince people that, “No, it's not a bad thing. It's just different, and what I'm okay with.”* (Participant 1)
I don't think Arabs of any faith can escape some level of the impact of Islamophobia, even if they are not Muslim themselves. It's just so intertwined that it comes with the baggage of that (Arab) identity . . . I think it’s very much tied because if you draw the Arab world and the Muslim world on a map, I don't know how many people will tell you “We’ll be able to spot the difference”, even though they should be (able to). (Participant 11)

Young Arabs in Canada also experience exclusion and discrimination in Canada because of their ethnoreligious identities and practices. This was particularly true for Muslim participants and for participants who were not very fluent in English or who had a non-Canadian accent when speaking English.

I feel like people are always congregated together and more than one job I’ve worked was the same issue. For me, I feel like... I wouldn’t say discriminated against a lot, but I definitely experience it. I am an Arab girl living here. They know I don’t drink alcohol and every conversation would be on alcohol, so I feel excluded. For example, the conversation would be about their food like mashed potatoes and things, so I feel excluded. They make sure that they talk about it so that I feel excluded kind of thing . . . For me, I had a strong accent before I came here, but I had to make sure to get rid of it so that people don’t be like, “What? What are you talking about?” or something like that. If someone seriously listened to the words, they would be able to understand the talk. They just don’t want to put in the effort to understand people with stronger accents. (Participant 9)

I feel like (being in Canada has) made me more introverted because I feel out of place sometimes, like when I was living in the Middle East, I was definitely not introverted. I was very extroverted actually but then when I came here, I just realized that I’m different than the people here, so it made me feel kind of not really insecure, but definitely less confident. I kind of went to my own corner just kind of mind my business. I don’t really speak. It’s just made me more quiet. (Participant 30)

Participants also struggled with certain perceptions and stereotypes that non-Arabs in Canada had of Arabs. This complicated their relationship with the Arab identity as they did not want to be seen as those stereotypes. Women were especially cognizant of this and didn’t want to be seen like that. These stereotypes and misconceptions are often gendered.

I might fall into different gender roles, not willingly, by identifying as an Arab woman. So I might have certain expectations either from non-Arab people or from Arab
people. I might be expected to behave in certain ways potentially. There is a stereotype, for example, that I've encountered that Arab women are a bit more maybe tamed, like well-behaved or well-behaving I'd say. (Participant 3)

I'm proud to be Arab but at times, you see a lot of the things going on in the media. I wouldn't say I'm ashamed definitely because I just said I'm proud, so that would be contradicting myself, but I would say I get scared that people have different perceptions of me because I'm Arab. I want other people who are not Arab to know that just because I'm Arab, doesn't mean that I'm any different or have different feelings or views towards certain things. (Participant 30)

(Arabs,) we’re really very different in a sense that, even in Syria, the people who lived in the coast, like Latakia, Tartous, they’re different than people who lived in Daraa, or who lived in Damascus. It’s different in a sense of how we practice religion, how we go to school, even our attire is different. So not everybody in the coast cities wears hijab, let’s say. And people, to larger extent, thought that I had had to wear hijab in Syria and then when I came to Canada, I made the decision to take it off, but that’s not true. I never had to. So, for some people there is these assumptions that comes up and I wonder if that also influences them when they see me . . . (non-Arabs) thought that we’re all the same, we all kinda dress the same way, and follow kinda the same thing. (Participant 8)
8 Discussion

The findings present the self-identification and labels of participants from or with backgrounds from the countries of the Arab league. While some participants identified as Arab, others did not, and for some, it was not a straightforward binary identification. Reasons for identifying as Arab included family background, speaking Arabic, growing up in an Arab country, cultural ties, and lack of alternative labels. Those who did not identify as Arab cited reasons such as non-Arab family ancestry, cultural differences, negative experiences with Arabs, and wanting to dissociate from stereotypes. The Arab identity was found to be fluid and subject to change depending on various factors, such as the audience, setting, and location (Canada or an Arab country). Participants' identities also evolved over time due to experiences and cultural influences. Regarding hyphenated labels, some participants identified as Arab-Canadian or Canadian-Arab, while most rejected both, citing reasons such as not identifying as Canadian or preferring to emphasize their nationality over the Arab-Canadian hyphenated label.

The results also present young Arabs’ intersecting dimensions of identity, including gender, sexual orientation, race and skin color, country of origin or background, language, religion, and immigration status. Participants often faced conflicts and challenges in balancing their different identities within both Arab and Canadian societies. Arabs in Canada experienced struggles in maintaining their Arab identity while adapting to Canadian society. They expressed fears of losing their cultural heritage and the need to preserve their Arab identity. External perceptions often led to feelings of being othered and not being considered enough of either Arab or Canadian. Overall, the findings provide insights into the complexities of Arab identity in the context of Canada and the various factors that influence individuals' self-identification and sense of belonging.

Overall, the findings point to the diversity of the Arab population. Looking at the data from the demographic questionnaire, we see a diversity in terms of ethnicities, countries of origin or background, countries of birth, and religions, among other factors
in the sample. Interviews also show the diversity of perspectives of the participants and those who come from the countries of the Arab league.

_For me, how I see (it), it is a rich culture, a diverse one, and sometimes I think oversimplified for that name of unity. I find it very interesting how, instead of embracing the different kinds of what it means to be Arab, there's a big emphasis on being the same kind, and connecting on the same things when I don't think that's very realistic, and it doesn't really honor what was there before the Arabs came. So what civilizations, what cultures existed, and which ones persist?_ (Participant 11)

### 8.1 Identifying with Labels and Categories of Race and Ethnicity

Those who are from, or whose backgrounds are from, Arab countries identify with a variety of labels and identity categories. The analysis indicated that not all participants identified as Arab, although the majority of the sample did. These findings align with those of Awad et al. (2021), who examined the identity and ethnic/racial self-labeling of Americans of Arab or Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) descent. Around half of their sample did not identify as Arab, which is likely due to their sample including non-Arab countries from the MENA region, such as Turkey, Iran, and Armenia. The themes they identified for the Arab-identified subsample were _Culture and Identity, Born and Raised Arab, and Pride in Being Arab_, and for the non-Arab identified subsample were _Ancestral Country or Region-Specific Preference, Arab as an Inaccurate Label, Arab as Muslim/Arab Invasion, and Negative Connotation_ (Awad et al., 2021). The current study identified similar themes for why participants identified as Arab or not, despite our sample only consisting of participants whose background is from the Arab league, further highlighting the ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural diversity of the people of the Arab countries. Awad et al. (2021) criticize the pan-Arab label and encourage the use of the MENA label instead, claiming that it is more inclusive of non-Arab and/or non-Muslim communities. Their recommendation is specifically targeted towards the addition of a non-White category to the American census to represent Arabs and MENAs. However, it is important to distinguish who we are talking about when using certain terms. Future research must investigate the differences in the terms and whether people in Canada would be more likely to use one over the other. For now, the term MENA is to be used when referring to all people from that region, including non-
Arabs, and the term Arab is to be used when referring to those who identify as Arab, considering that the pan-Arab label has historical and political importance.

Al-Hroub (2022) makes a distinction between “hard Arabism” and “soft Arabism,” wherein the former refers to “grand political projects of Arab unity as promoted by Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950s and 1960s, or by the Arab Ba'ath party of Assad's Syria or Saddam Hussein’s Iraq” (p. 1), and the latter refers to a form of Arab nationalism that is “apolitical in form and functions spontaneously at the level of people rather than political elites, exhibited in culture, entertainment, language, media, sport and other soft areas” (p. 1). Al-Hroub (2022) argues that “hard Arabism” is long dead, with the Arab world being full of political conflicts and state-to-state tensions, rivalries, and disputes that influence the attitudes of the people from those countries. However, as “hard Arabism” declines, “soft Arabism” is strengthening, clearly demonstrated during the 2022 Qatar World Cup, with fans from all over the Arab world supporting the few Arab teams who were participating, regardless of country (Al-Hroub, 2022). I argue that this Arab solidarity may not only translate to major sports events but also to immigrant and diasporic communities. Although young Arabs in Canada might not know about, not care about, or reject “hard Arabism,” they hold on to “soft Arabism” and nurture it within the community. This phenomenon is further demonstrated in the finding that for some young Arabs, moving to Canada solidified their Arab ethnic identity and intensified their sense of belonging to the Arab community. Moreover, Al-Hroub (2022) argues that although “soft Arabism” appears apolitical at the moment, it very much can become political. This may also be seen in the Canadian context as Arabs are becoming more politically involved, with campaigns like Yalla Vote Canada encouraging Arabs to vote in the federal elections (Canadian Arab Institute, 2023b), and with Bill C-232 having been introduced to the House of Commons, which calls for the recognition of April as Arab Heritage Month in Canada (Canadian Arab Institute, 2023a).

Another area of findings where labels and identity were relevant is race and ethnicity categorization. Not unique to this population, there was a lack of clarity about the definitions of race and ethnicity for these young Arabs. The current study found that they use the terms “Middle Eastern,” “Arab,” and “North African” interchangeably, and
their identification often depended on the category options with which they were presented. Although some were okay with choosing the White label, many were clear that they were not White and highlighted their visible minority or person of color status. Awad et al. (2021) also found similar results, wherein over 80% of their sample identified their group as a minority group in the United States and emphasized that they were not White. Moreover, these categories and identities are fluid, with individuals and groups moving in and out of them. The current study found that adopting an Arab label was sometimes not binary (yes, no) and that Arab ethnic identity changed over time and depending on context. This further aligns with previous literature that states that ethnic identity is not linear or certain and is contingent on dynamic interplays between the immigrants and the broader settings in which they live, drawing simultaneously from present-day and historical situations (Mensah & Williams, 2015; Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007). On a group level, Arabs ethno-racial categorization has changed over time, as “Syrians,” “Turks,” “Arabs,” or “West Asians,” and as White or non-White, in Canada (Asal, 2020). Across generations, Arabs have gone in and out of the White categorization. In Canadian history, Arabs were more comfortable with the White category as it meant they could immigrate to Canada during a time when Canadian immigration policies were restricting people from entering based on their ethnic and national backgrounds (Asal, 2020). However, once those policies were changed and Arabs were more established in Canada, there was a push towards being categorized as non-White to be able to organize politically and to fight for certain rights and recognitions (Asal, 2020).

On an individual level, this study found that ethnic identity association (or disassociation) changes over time. A common example is that of an Arab who grew up in an Arab country and was surrounded with those who were similar to him. He then moves to Canada and experiences a culture shock and becomes conflicted about his identity, perhaps rejecting his Arab ethnic identity to fit in better. Eventually, he realizes the value in having a strong ethnic identity and is maybe unable to truly assimilate and fit in, and thus redevelops his Arab ethnic identity. This example aligns with Phinney’s three stages of ethnic identity: unexamined ethnic identity, moratorium, and achieved ethnic identity (Phinney, 1993; Elfar, 2016). During the unexamined ethnic identity stage, individuals go
through either a diffusion state or a foreclosure state (Phinney, 1993; 2004; Elfar, 2016). In the diffusion state, people show little interest in their ethnicity and instead adopt the ethnic practices of the majority around them whereas in the foreclosure state, individuals fully embrace their ethnicity by simply adopting the practices of their family members, considering it representative of their ethnic group, without further exploration (Phinney, 1993; 2004; Elfar, 2016). In the moratorium stage, individuals experience an identity crisis that motivates them to explore their ethnic background. Through this exploration, they begin to form the foundations of their ethnic identity. Eventually, individuals reach the achieved ethnic identity stage when they have a solid sense of their ethnic identity. At this point, they can embrace a bicultural perspective, combining knowledge of their own ethnic identity with the dominant ethnicity of those around them (Phinney, 1993; 2004; Elfar 2016). Moreover, Rahal et al. (2022) found that Arab American ethnic identity varied by age, wherein young adults were lower in centrality and private regard than older adults. Ethnic centrality refers to the extent to which ethnicity is part of the individual’s self-concept, and private regard refers to the extent of the individual’s positivity towards their ethnic-racial group (Sellars et al., 1997; Rahal et al., 2022). The authors theorized that with age, Arab Americans develop a more central ethnic identity and become more focused on cultural values and family life which affirms their ethnic identity, or that younger Arabs are still exploring their identities and develop more positive feelings about their ethnic group after the exploration (Rahal et al., 2022). On the other hand, the authors suggested that the differences in age may be cohort differences, as the young adults’ ethnic identity may be influenced by growing up in the aftermath of 9/11 (Rahal et al., 2022). The current study cannot comment on the latter as almost the entire sample grew up in the aftermath of 9/11. However, there does seem to be a trend in the sample of identifying more with Arab ethnic identity as young Arabs in Canada age.

In addition, the current study found that a large proportion of young Arabs in Canada did not identify with the hyphenated labels, Arab-Canadian or Canadian-Arab, and did not consider themselves Canadian, despite the vast majority being permanent residents or citizens (25 of 30). Previous literature points out that the identification with one’s ethno-racial background and Canadian national identity depends not just on individual factors and ethnic background, but also on the Canadian host society as a
whole (Mensah & Williams, 2015). Black African immigrants and other non-Whites are constantly perceived as foreigners no matter how long they, or their families, have been in Canada (Mensah & Williams, 2015). Mensah & Williams (2015) examined how African immigrants in Canada, specifically Ghanaians and Somalis, balanced their ethno-racial and Canadian identities, and the factors that predicted whether they identified as "just Canadians," "Ghanaians/Somalis," or "Ghanaian-/Somali-Canadians." The authors found that those who find racism to be high in Canada, those who were born outside the country, and those who lived in Vancouver (compared to Toronto) tend to identify as mainly ethnic, relative to a hyphenated identity (Mensah & Williams, 2015). Thus, they argued that self-identification is a complex and dynamic process influenced by multiple factors that are often mutually reinforcing. Those who are concerned about immigrants’ disengagement in, or disloyalty to, their host societies should pay attention to the discrimination faced by racialized immigrants, as ethnic discrimination and intolerance undermine immigrants’ allegiance to host societies (Mensah & Williams, 2015). Phinney et al. (2001) also noted that the strength of ethnic identity among immigrants is highest when they highly value maintaining their heritage and when pluralism is embraced. On the other hand, the host country's national identity is strongest when immigrants feel accepted by the broader society (Phinney et al., 2001). Immigrants who hold positive attitudes toward both their ethnic identity and the national identity of the host country tend to adopt hyphenated labels that combine both (Phinney et al., 2001). For Arabs in Canada, it may be that discrimination and negative stereotypes reduces their willingness to adopt a Canadian identity while also causing them to disassociate from their Arab ethnic identity, and that reducing discrimination and prejudice will encourage the adoption of a hyphenated identity.

8.2 Hierarchies and Marginalization within Arabs in Canada

The current study found that several spoken and unspoken hierarchies exist within the Arab community in Canada, which privilege some but marginalize others. The analysis identified the groups that were often “invisible” when talking about people from Arab countries. Although the current study’s sample did not have much representation from these groups, participants did talk about ethnic groups in the Arab world who are
not Arab, such as the Amazigh in North Africa, Copts in Egypt, Kurds, Armenians in the Levant, and others. Those communities are important but often misunderstood and overlooked. Moreover, the findings pointed towards groups who face disadvantage within the Arab community as well as within the bigger Canadian society. These included women, sexual minorities, Black Arabs, and others. Newcomers had a more difficult time integrating in Canada than Arabs who were more established or whose family had been in Canada for a long time as they often had better access to resources and financial mobility. In addition, those who were not proficient in English or who spoke in a non-Canadian accent faced challenges with communication and finding employment opportunities, as well as discrimination and prejudice. There is a power imbalance for these individuals and groups as their experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression are being compounded. These experiences impact their Arab ethnic identity and their willingness to hold on to their Arab culture. The current study findings suggest that this was especially true for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Gay and queer Arabs face homophobia, ostracization, and othering from within the Arab community, and sometimes from the larger Canadian society. This leads them to distance themselves from their culture, reject their Arab ethnic identity and/or people of their ethnic group, and not engage in certain spaces or practices, because they choose not to or simply because they can’t or aren’t allowed to. The more a person immerses themselves in their ethnic culture, and places value in maintaining their heritage, the stronger their ethnic identity (Elfar, 2016; Al-Saadi, 2022). Thus, this needs to be changed and more awareness and education must be applied for the benefit of marginalized community members. It’s worth noting that some participants spoke about these things as existing in Arab society overall but did not agree with them personally and had a hard time accepting them and taking on certain beliefs or attitudes. There are initiatives happening all over Canada to create inclusive Arab spaces and safe spaces for marginalized Arabs, including Arab parties that feature LGBTQ+ performers, artists, and attendees and Muslim and Arab Pride events, as well as inclusive conversation circles, podcasts, media outlets and social media accounts.

The current study also found that Arabs in Canada, and elsewhere, are marginalized and discriminated against because of their skin color. Although participants often noted that Arabs can fall anywhere on the spectrum of skin color, from light to dark
white to black, some seemed to have a perception of what Arabs typically look like, or should look like. The image of the Arab was that of a “tan” skin tone, dark curly or wavy hair, dark eyebrows, and dark features, but not Black or African hair type and features. Thus, anyone who did not match that description felt othered and not Arab enough. Interestingly, some “White” Arabs also felt not Arab enough due to their pale skin. Nonetheless, the current study found that light-skinned or White-passing Arabs experienced White privilege in Canada and acknowledged that they match conventional beauty standards more and have more opportunities and less barriers within Canadian society. The othering and discrimination of Black and dark-skinned Arabs continues in Arab societies worldwide and in Canada, and anti-Black racism remains an issue that is often overlooked and/or denied (Arab Reform Initiative, 2020). Thus, anti-Black racism and colorism within Arabs remains understudied and very limited academic literature exists on the topic. Studies on other ethnic groups show that colorism has negative impacts on Black and Brown individuals’ ethnic identities (Quiros & Dawson, 2013). Quiros and Dawson (2013) explored the effects of colorism on the racial identity and the identification of Latinas in the United States. The authors found that for some, racial and ethnic identity merge while others distinguish between being a White Latina and a Black Latina (Quiros & Dawson, 2013). The authors suggest that racial identity remains fluid and complex for these women, both within Latino communities and in society at large, and that the way individuals are racially classified based on skin color and other physical attributes can lead to experiences of stigma or privilege (Quiros & Dawson, 2013). Dark-skinned Latinas face stigmatization from both larger society and other Latino/as, while those who do not identify as Black are afforded privilege. Furthermore, the paper highlights that even though light-skinned Latinas may experience privilege, they may not always claim Whiteness as their racial identity. Some Latinas prefer to identify with their ethnicity rather than with perceived race, challenging the notion of Whiteness as a universally recognized privilege (Quiros & Dawson, 2013). The discrepancy between self-identification and how others identify them raises questions about the complexities of racial privilege associated with Whiteness (Quiros & Dawson, 2013). Similarly, the current study found that Black Arabs were bullied and rejected and often perceived as not Arab. This led to them disassociate from Arab ethnic identity and struggle with it.
The marginalization based on skin color also ties to the hierarchy of Arab countries within the Arab community in Canada. Countries, and individuals from those countries, fall higher or lower on the hierarchy depending on the dialect(s) they speak, the way they look, their numbers in Canada, and other factors. The current study found that North Africans were placed lower on the hierarchy and othered because their dialects were different from those of the more “popular” Levantine (and Egyptian) dialects, popularized through media, movies, and TV shows. Spoken Arabic plays an important role for Arabs in Canada, given that the “unifying” Modern Standard Arabic is rarely used in Canada and not relevant to young Arabs in Canada. An alternative unified spoken unified Arabic dialect must thus be established that will allow for better communication across all members of the Arab world. Some have suggested that such a dialect or language exists and is beginning to gain popularity, lugha baida [translates to white language], which is meant to be a neutral digestible way of speaking for all (Sarde After Dinner, 2023). However, this was not mentioned in any of the interviews and no evidence of its use in Canada has been found. Another approach is to popularize the “less known” or “less used” dialects, the Moroccan dialect for example, and expose more people to them. Given that some participants mentioned dialect as a factor that weakens their ties to the community, perhaps these solutions can ensure that young Arabs in Canada have stronger Arab ethnic identity and do not feel distance or othering from their ethnic community.

Moreover, language in general is very important to the formation and maintenance of ethnic identity. Previous literature highlights the significance of heritage language in constructing ethnic identity, as it acts as a symbol of cultural heritage, fostering a sense of unity group members (Mu, 2015). Developing proficiency in the heritage language plays a crucial role in ethnic identity formation and preservation while the lack of heritage language proficiency contributes to a decline in ethnic identity due to language barriers causing conflicts within families and hindering effective communication with family members, peers, and communities (Mu, 2015). Mu (2015) conducted a meta-analysis to test the statistical correlation between ethnic identity and heritage language proficiency and found that there is a statistically significant small to medium positive correlation between ethnic identity and heritage language proficiency.
across different ethnic groups. Similarly, the current analysis found that Arabic ties the Arab identity and community together, and that Arabs are afraid of losing their identity and want to preserve the Arab ethnic identity through the language and by teaching the language to their children. Participants who did not speak the language or were not fluent in Arabic felt a disconnect from their ethnic identity and community. In Canada, the responsibility of teaching Arabic to new generations falls on parents to teach their children within the household. This presents a challenge as some parents are learning English and wanting to practice their English in the household as well. Some Arabic schools do exist in Canada where children can go to learn the Arabic language as well as some Arab culture. However, these schools are very few, not accessible, and not affordable. Therefore, it is necessary to create more accessible and affordable Arabic language schools to allow young Arabs growing up in Canada to gain heritage language proficiency and develop and maintain Arab ethnic identity.

The current study found that some participants spoke of Arab culture, traditions, and values as being inequitable towards women, privileging men and treating women as inferior. This was often in direct conflict with young Arabs’ beliefs and values and their other identities. Navigating gender roles, family dynamics, and expectations, Arabness within the Canadian context was a source of conflict for many young Arabs in Canada, and both male and female Arabs felt pressure to uphold certain gendered standards and familial and societal expectations. This weakened Arabs’ ethnic identity and made some young Arabs disassociate from their ethnic identity in favour of their other identities. On the other hand, Rahal et al. (2017) found that women generally had higher private regard and more negative public regard than men. Private regard refers to the individuals’ positivity towards their ethnic-racial group and their membership in that group whereas public regard refers to individuals’ perceptions of the attitudes of others towards their group (Sellers et al., 1997; Rahal et al., 1997). Although both women and men may view their Arab identity as central to who they are as individuals, differences in gender roles and expectations within the family may lead Arab American women to have stronger attitudes regarding their ethnic group, but feel more excluded or disrespected by non-Arabs, leading to lower public regard in comparison to Arab American men. In addition, the current study found that Arab Christians and other religious minorities were
somewhat invisible. Muslim and Arab are often used interchangeably and assumed to be the same thing, wherein all Arabs are perceived to be Muslim. This created conflict for non-Muslim young Arabs in Canada and led some to distance themselves from their Arab ethnic identity. Eid (2007) found that some Christian Arabs embrace the Arab label but expressed frustration at Canadians failure to acknowledge their religious plurality encompassed by the Arab community. Rahal et al. (2017) found that participants raised in Muslim households reported higher ethnic centrality and cultural practice than those raised in Christian households and the authors suggested that this may be related to Muslims’ status as a religious minority in the United States. Most literature on Arabs often examines the experiences of Muslim Arabs in Western societies (Bazzi, 2022; Britto, 2008), which is justified given that Islam is the dominant religion in the Arab world and that Muslims are not the dominant groups in the West and thus face discrimination and prejudice. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the experiences of Christian Arabs (and Arabs of other religious identities), as not all Christians practice their religion in the same way. The current findings suggest that “Eastern” Christianity and “Western” Christianity are different and those who grow up in “Eastern” churches do not relate to those who grew up in the West. Eid (2007) found that despite some hesitation, the Arab category turned out to be the most popular self-defining label among Christian respondents but that the meaning Arabs in Canada attached to their Arab identity is different depending on the subgroups to which they belong most. Future research should explore those differences further.

8.3 Navigating between the Arab and the Canadian

The current findings pointed towards the similarities within Arabs and the differences between Arabs and “Canadians.” It is also important within the intersectionality framework (Cole, 2009) to consider the similarities between groups and categories, rather than assume that labels such as Muslim and non-Muslim, men and women, heterosexual and gay, are entirely binary. Arabs share a love of family, food, and music. They value belonging to their families and community and helping others. Unfortunately, they are also sometimes similar in their experiences of facing stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination in Canada. Immigrants face challenges when adapting to
Canadian society, as they have to navigate conflicting expectations from their family, peers, religion, and the larger settlement society (Rasmi et al., 2017). Newcomer and immigrant Arabs face a culture shock when they move to Canada. Both immigrant Arabs and those who were born in Canada face conflicts trying to reconcile between their own ethnic culture and Canadian society. Current findings suggest that Arab and Canadian societies, values, and norms are different and that young Arabs in Canada find themselves stuck in the middle. Participants described the collectivistic and conservative nature of Arab societies versus the individualistic and liberal nature of Canadian society, and the importance of generosity, hospitality, reputation, and family honour for Arabs in Canada. These findings align with previous literature on Arabs in Canada and the United States (Al-Saadi, 2022; Elfar, 2016; Rasmi et al., 2017; and others).

These differences create issues with acculturation that then negatively impact participants’ ethnic identity. Young Arabs in Canada were othered by non-Arabs in Canada for being “too Arab,” having an Arab accent when speaking English, having a darker skin tone, and participating or not participating in certain practices. This is further exacerbated by Islamophobia and the stereotyping of Arabs as being terrorists, misogynistic, etc., whether they were Muslim or not. Previous literature reported that Arabs in North America experiences a significant increase in their acculturative stress levels and have had difficulties adapting psychologically and socially since 9/11 (Al-Saadi, 2022; Awad, 2010). Current findings also pointed towards the erasure of non-Muslim Arabs in Canada, as there is a lack of awareness and education on religious, ethnic, and racial minorities within Arabs. There needs to be a shift in the definition of what it means to be Canadian, away from White-European Anglo-Christian, to allow participants to integrate their own identities, Arab and other, with a Canadian identity. From the sample, we see that those identities are not integrated (Berry, 1997) as participants did not identify with a Canadian hyphenated identity and did not consider themselves Canadian. Healthier ethnic identification and ethnic identity formation are associated with better family relations, better integration, and better well-being overall (Phinney et al, 2001; Rasmi et al., 2017; Elfar, 2016). Experiences of othering and discrimination from within the Arab community or from the larger Canadian society makes their ethnic identity less strong and makes young Arabs want to disassociate.
Bazzi (2022) found that perceived religious discrimination has a negative impact on the ethnic-racial identity and religious identity of Muslim Arab American males and may be associated with lower levels of psychological well-being. Bazzi’s (2022) results also indicated that Arab Americans experienced conflict between their various identities (i.e., ethnic-racial, gender, religious) and struggled to find ways to integrate authentic aspects of themselves into American society overall. It is important for our society in Canada as a whole to tackle the factors that lead immigrants to have unhealthy relationships with their ethnic identities, change stereotypes, reduce discrimination, teach anti-racism, and make it more welcoming for Arabs in Canada, as well as marginalized individuals and groups within the Arab community. On the other hand, the current study also found that young Arabs in Canada are experiencing issues with their ethnic identity due to being othered or ostracized by members of the Arab community. This sense of exclusion or ostracization was because of their sexual orientation, language fluency, religion sometimes, or being “too whitewashed.” To foster stronger ethnic identity among Arabs, it is necessary to raise awareness about these experiences of exclusion and discrimination and their impact on Arabs in Canada. Both Arabs and non-Arabs must be educated about the ways that they may be causing damage without realizing and on anti-racism and anti-oppression starting at schools and religious institutions.
9 Conclusions

9.1 Summary

The literature on Arabs in Canada is limited. This qualitative study aimed to explore the meanings of Arab identity for youth in Canada and their intersectionalities. Findings highlighted the diversity of those who are from the Arab region, including the labels and identities they choose for themselves, the struggles they go through in the Canadian context, and the interactions between their Arab identity and other dimensions of their identities. By conducting this research, I am beginning to fill the gaps in our knowledge on Arab identity in Canada and the experience of being from the Arab world. The findings have implications for research in psychology as well as practical implications for policies and programs that impact diverse communities across Canada. Future research would benefit from further unraveling the factors that impact this population’s self-identification and comparing this group with other immigrant and racialized groups in Canada.

9.2 Contributions and Implications

The current study supported the findings of other literature on Arabs in Canada and the United States, (Awad et al, 2021; Al-Saadi, 2022; Elfar, 2016 and others), and added novel findings to the literature. This study allows us to better understand the identity and experiences of Arabs in Canada and to better understand the impact that sense of identity and experiences have on Arabs integration into Canadian society. It allows for a deeper understanding of the constructs of ethnicity and race, migration and immigration, identity, and intersectionality. In addition, the findings set the foundation for a program of research on Arab ethnic identity and the experiences of Arabs in Canada and open up a wide range of possibilities in terms of research on the Arab population, and for programming that is specific to Arab immigrants. It is important to understand the integration of Arabs in Canada and their ethnic identity formation, which impacts their wellbeing and outcomes (Phinney et al, 2001). Positive integration of Arabs benefits Canadian society and can better contribute to Canada economically, culturally, and socially.
I highlight the “invisible” groups under the umbrella of Arab, including religious, racial, and sexual minorities. For example, I had a good representation of Druze in the sample, and I was able to get their perspective, especially the fear of losing identity in Canada and the importance of continuity of identity. This study highlights who the minorities and marginalized communities are that are falling through the cracks when we use the umbrella term Arab. The findings problematize the perception and treatment of Arabs as homogenous and show how Arab ethnic identity is impacted by intersectional dimensions of identity, particularly the impact of discrimination and exclusion of marginalized Arabs, like LGBTQ+ Arabs, Black Arabs, North African Arabs, and others.

Moreover, results may be used to develop strategies that better the lives of the Arab population and other immigrant populations in Canada, to improve their experiences and reduce the barriers they face. Results can inform local, provincial, and federal policies and immigration policies, which should be considered through our intersectional lens, and programs and interventions should be tailored for certain sub-communities within Arabs in accordance with their unique needs. Although the sample is not representative, I am hoping that these findings can be transferred to other groups of Arabs in Canada and even other racialized and immigrant groups. This can also serve as a starting point for further research. The current study presented interesting findings on how race and racial and ethnic identity are defined for Arabs in Canada and highlighted the importance of considering who we are referring to when using certain labels and how useful or concrete our categories really are. In conclusion, this paper should lead us to consider the meanings of labels more deeply and to consider the people behind the labels, from a research perspective as well as an institutional perspective.

9.3 Limitations

This research study has several limitations that should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the sample used in the study was not representative of all Arabs in Canada. The sample was limited to participants from Ontario and to participants who spoke English and Arabic at home, but not French. The lack of Francophone Arab participants in the sample limits the comprehensive understanding of the intersection of language and Arab identity within the population. Also, the use of snowball and other convenient sampling
methods in obtaining the study sample may have introduced bias and only represented individuals comfortable with online technology and those with higher education levels (Awad et al., 2021). Although the researchers attempted to select diverse participants to take part in the study, the sample did not include individuals from all the 22 countries of the Arab world and was largely composed of cis-gendered heterosexual participants.

Conducting the study over Zoom may have hindered the amount of trust and rapport that was established between the researcher and the participants, especially if participants chose to turn off their video. Moreover, the presence of other individuals in the room during the interviews, such as parents, siblings, or roommates, could have influenced the participants' responses, particularly when discussing personal and familial topics (Daniel, 2022). Technological errors and connectivity issues further disrupted some interviews, adding additional challenges for the researcher to manage. Lastly, the researcher being Arab could have potentially influenced participants to withhold negative opinions to avoid offending the researcher. However, I tried to mitigate this by encouraging participants’ honest expression and reminding them that they did not need to worry about offending me or being politically correct.

9.4 Directions for Future Research

The contributions, implications, and limitations highlight opportunities for future research to address the concerns and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. First, similar studies should be conducted with different samples, particularly with Arabs of other age groups and from other parts of Canada. The age group chosen for this study was to reflect the young nature of the Arab population in Canada and to capture participants’ reflections during a time when ethnic identity formation is particularly important. Nonetheless, future researchers can benefit from interviewing older Arabs who have families of their own, and can represent the parent perspective, as well as Arab children and adolescents, who are at a sensitive time for all identity formation. Given that the largest numbers of Arabs in Canada reside in Montreal, future research should also focus on the identity of Arabs in Quebec and Arab francophones.
When it comes to the francophone part, I feel like my identity of being Algerian (is) really really heightened a lot. I feel really, really seen, and I feel like when it comes to that, I strongly more identified as Algerian . . . I think that's because of the cultures that are very prominent in certain areas, because Quebec has a good amount of people who are Algerian and a lot of people who are Moroccan . . . When it comes to the francophone part, it definitely makes me feel more Algerian. (Participant 14)

Moreover, I recommend conducting comparative studies between Arabs in Canada and Arabs in other countries, including the United States and Europe, as well as comparative studies between Arabs in Canada and other ethnic groups in Canada. There are many parallels to be drawn between Latinos and Arabs, including issues of race, which would make for an interesting comparison. A comparison with other groups that are often placed under umbrella labels, such as pan-Asian and pan-African groups, is also recommended.

Obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the factors and mechanisms behind the current findings is important. Future research may dig deeper into who chooses certain labels as opposed to others and why. Although we did not find a particular pattern in terms of country of origin or religion as to the labels with which those from Arab countries identify, future research may examine these factors and others. The lack of identification of this study’s sample with a hyphenated Canadian label is surprising and suggests further investigation into whether this phenomenon can be seen across Arabs in Canada and the reasons why. In addition, the othering and not feeling enough that some participants discussed should be studied further. The few participants in the sample who identified as gay and pansexual struggled with navigating their sexual orientation and their ethnic and religious identities. I recommend future research focus on the experiences and identities of sexual and gender minorities from Arab countries. In a future study, I am planning to explore Arabs’ experiences of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping in Canada, both from non-Arabs and other Arabs. This is an area that is in dire need of investigation.

Lastly, future research could benefit from using different methodologies and methods to examine topics related to Arab identity in Canada. Ethnic identity has been examined quantitatively and multiple scales have been developed to measure different
aspects of ethnic identity, with a few specifically measuring Arab and MENA identities (Rahal et al., 2022). I recommend using similar measures or developing new ones to study Arab identity in Canada. Moreover, I recommend conducting longitudinal research with Arab samples. Given the current study’s finding that Arab identity changes over time, it would be interesting to study the identity of individuals from Arab countries over an extended period. Overall, the findings of this study provide several contributions in their own right and suggest many areas for future research.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Approval from the Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board

Date: 18 August 2022
To: Prof. Victoria Enoe
Project ID: 120076

Study Title: Social Identity and Perceptions of Social Groups
Short Title: Social Identity and Perceptions of Social Groups
Application Type: NMEER Initial Application
Review Type: Designated
Full Board Reporting Date: 09/Sept/2022
Date Approval Issued: 18/Aug/2022 11:42
REB Approval Expiry Date: 18/Aug/2023

Dear Prof. Victoria Enoe,

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMEER) has reviewed and approved the WFEM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMEER approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMEER Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals and mandated training must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

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No documents from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCP2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NREB who are named as investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the NREB. The NREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the U.S. registration number IRB 00000341.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ms. Zoë Levi, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randall Graham, NREB Chair

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).*
Appendix B: Recruitment Flyers

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Project Title: Social Identity and Perceptions of Social Groups
Principal Investigator: Victoria Esses, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Western University
Co-Investigator: Rama Eloulabi, MSc Candidate, Department of Psychology, Western University

☑ Are you 18-30 years old?
☑ Are you living in Ontario?
☑ Do you speak English, Arabic, or French?
☑ Are you from, or is your background from: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, or Yemen?
☑ Are you willing to discuss your sense of identity, perceptions of social groups, and experiences in a Zoom interview that will take less than two hours of your time?

Then we invite YOU to participate in our study!

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and confidential. Participants will receive $30 gift card compensation for their participation in the interview.

In order to determine your eligibility, please fill out a quick questionnaire using one of the links below. If you are eligible to participate, the co-investigator will contact you through the contact information you provide.

Arabic: [LINK]
English: [LINK]
French: [LINK]

If you want to learn more, please contact the co-investigator Rama Eloulabi, at
Appendix C: Pre-screen Questionnaire

What is your gender? Are you…
1. A man
2. A woman
3. Non-binary
4. I prefer to identify as…, please specify: ________________________________

If you were selected for an interview, in what language would you prefer that the interview be conducted?
1. English
2. French
3. Arabic

What is your age? [IF NOT WITHIN INCLUSION CRITERIA, SKIP TO END OF SURVEY]
_____ years

Do you live in Ontario?
1. Yes
2. No [IF NO, SKIP TO END OF SURVEY]

In which city in Ontario do you live?
1. Barrie
2. Belleville
3. Brampton
4. Brant
5. Brantford
6. Brockville
7. Burlington
8. Cambridge
9. Clarence-Rockland
10. Cornwall
11. Dryden
12. Elliot Lake
13. Greater Sudbury
14. Guelph
15. Haldimand County
16. Hamilton
17. Kawartha Lakes
18. Kenora
19. Kingston
20. Kitchener
21. London
22. Markham
23. Mississauga
24. Niagara Falls
25. Norfolk County
26. North Bay
27. Orillia
28. Oshawa
29. Ottawa
30. Owen Sound
31. Pembroke
32. Peterborough
33. Pickering
34. Port Colborne
35. Prince Edward County
36. Quinte West
37. Sarnia
38. Sault Ste. Marie
39. St. Catharines
40. St. Thomas
41. Stratford
42. Thunder Bay
43. Timmins
44. Toronto
45. Vaughan
46. Waterloo
47. Welland
48. Windsor
49. Woodstock
50. Other, please specify: ___________________

Which of the following best describes your ethnicity? (You can choose more than one)
[ALLOW MULTIPLE ANSWERS]
1. White
2. South Asian
3. Chinese
4. Black
5. Filipino
6. Latin American
7. Arab
8. Southeast Asian
9. West Asian
10. Korean
11. Japanese
12. Indigenous
13. Other racialized group, please specify: ______________
Which of the following best describes your country/countries of origin or background? 
(You can choose more than one) [ALLOW MULTIPLE ANSWERS]

1. Algeria
2. Bahrain
3. Comoros
4. Djibouti
5. Egypt
6. Iraq
7. Jordan
8. Kuwait
9. Lebanon
10. Libya
11. Mauritania
12. Morocco
13. Oman
14. Palestine
15. Qatar
16. Saudi Arabia
17. Somalia
18. Sudan
19. Syria
20. Tunisia
21. United Arab Emirates
22. Yemen
23. Canada
24. Other, please specify: ______________

What is your religion?

1. Christian
2. Jewish
3. Muslim
4. Buddhist
5. Hindu
6. Sikh
7. No religion (atheist or agnostic)
8. Other, please specify: ____________

Please provide your preferred name, and the email address at which you would like to be contacted if chosen to participate in the study. Please note that your contact information will only be used to contact you regarding your participation in the study and regarding your potential compensation.

If an email address is not available, please provide a Canadian phone number.

___________________________________________
Appendix D: Letter of Information and Consent Form

Project Title: Social Identity and Perceptions of Social Groups
Principal Investigator: Victoria Esses, Ph.D.
Co-Investigator: Rama Eloulabi, MSc Candidate

LETTER OF INFORMATION

1. Invitation to Participate
Youth who reside in Ontario and who are from, or whose background is from, Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, or Yemen are invited to participate in this research study.

2. Purpose of the Letter
The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information in order to allow you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this research.

3. Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to examine social identity, attitudes and perceptions towards social groups.

4. Inclusion Criteria
In order to participate you must be between 18 and 30 years of age, reside in Ontario, Canada, and consider your country of origin or your background to be from one or more of these countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

5. Study Procedures
An interview will be conducted online via Zoom. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer questions about your social identity, your experiences, and perceptions of social groups during the interview. You will also be asked about experiences of discrimination. The interview will be video-recorded and used for research purposes only. After the interview portion, you will be asked to verbally fill out a short questionnaire about yourself via Zoom. The study should take less than 2 hours of your time.

For the Zoom session, please try to find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed and use earphones if you can. It’s a good idea to test out the system a few minutes before the session to make sure the connection and sound are working. It is recommended that you use your home computer or personal device, and not a shared or work device to ensure privacy.
6. Possible Risks and Harms
   The possible risks to you include experiencing some negative emotions when describing any experiences of discrimination. At the end of the interview, we will provide you with a list of resources for you to consider should you feel any negative emotions. Moreover, videoconferencing technology has some privacy and security risks. It is possible that information could be intercepted by unauthorized people (hacked) or otherwise shared by accident. This risk can’t be completely eliminated. We want to make you aware of this.

7. Possible Benefits
   You may not directly benefit from participating in this research study, but information gathered may provide benefits to society, which includes a greater understanding of intergroup behaviours and attitudes.

8. Compensation
   You will receive a $30 electronic gift card to your choice of store (Walmart, Tim Hortons, or Amazon) for participating in the interview. The e-gift card will be shared with you via the email or phone number that you have provided.

9. Voluntary Participation
   Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. Should you decide that you do not want to have your data included, you have the right to request its withdrawal up until the end of the interview. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on you or your academic standing or the services you receive. You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study.

10. Confidentiality
    In order to protect your privacy, your name and contact information will not be included in any reports, publications, or presentations that may come from this study. Your name will not be attached in any way to your interview and its recording, or the questionnaire responses. You will be given a unique ID number to identify you in the study records, which will be kept on a master list, accessible to the researchers only. Only the researchers from this study will have access to your recording, and all data will be stored in encrypted files on a password-protected computer in a locked office. Video recordings will be immediately destroyed after the interview and only the audio recordings will be kept for transcription and analysis.

    If you verbally consent to participate in the interview, we may potentially use de-identified direct quotes from your interview with your consent. Your identity, however, will be kept completely confidential, and the information you provide will be anonymized. It is important to note that a record of your participation must remain with the study, and as such, the researchers may not be able to destroy your signed letter of information and consent, or
your name on the master list. However, any data may be withdrawn upon your request up until the end of the interview.

Your virtual interview is conducted through a secure online platform called Zoom (https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/). Western’s Zoom server is in Canada, compliant with Canadian Data Protection regulations, including the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) and, locally, the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). In addition, your survey responses are collected through a secure online survey platform called Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/). Qualtrics uses encryption technology and restricted access authorizations to protect all data collected. In addition, Western’s Qualtrics server is in Ireland, where privacy standards are maintained under the European Union safe harbour framework. The data will then be exported from Qualtrics and securely stored on Western University’s server. The data retention period is 7 years. In accordance with Western University policy, your data including your recording and your questionnaire responses will be kept for seven years in encrypted files on a password-protected computer, and then destroyed. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of this research.

11. Contacts for Further Information
If you have any further questions or would like more information regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Rama Eloulabi or Dr. Victoria Esses.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics:
Canada: (519) 661-3036
Long-Distance Toll-Free: 1 (844) 720-9816
Email: ethics@uwo.ca

12. Publication
If the results of this study are published, it will be reported as anonymous aggregates and your name will not be used. Additionally, journals may require that anonymized data be accessible to other researchers wishing to evaluate the study. Neither the publishing journal nor any other researcher will have access to personally identifying information. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact Rama Eloulabi or Dr. Victoria Esses.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.
Research Consent Form to be Completed Verbally Before the Interview

We will be asking you to verbally provide your consent to participate in this study before the interview. The information below will be read to you and we will ask for your verbal consent.

Project Title: Social Identity and Perceptions of Social Groups
Principal Investigator: Victoria Esses, Ph.D.
Co-Investigator: Rama Eloulabi, MSc Candidate

Have you read the Letter of Information, had the nature of the study explained to you and do you agree to participate in this study?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Have all questions been answered to your satisfaction?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research?

☐ YES ☐ NO

__________________________
Date

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant. I have answered all questions.

__________________________
Name of researcher

__________________________
Signature of researcher

__________________________
Date
### Appendix E: Interview Guide (for Arab-identifying Participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Interview Questions</th>
<th>Probes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warm Up</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Can you start by telling me a bit about your yourself? | • Were you born in Canada? How long have you lived in Canada?  
• Where did you live before coming to Canada? Where were you born? Where else have you lived?  
• Have you always lived in [city] in Canada? Or did you first live somewhere else in Canada? If so, where? |
| **Identity/Identities**       |        |
| If somebody asked who you are, what would you say? | How do you identify yourself?  
Do you identify yourself based on skin color? Where you’re from? Where your parents are from? The language(s) you speak? Religion? Your gender? Other factors? Please explain. |
| What does this identity/these identities mean to you? | Why do you identify with ______?  
How strongly do you identify with____?  
How does this identity manifest in your life?  
If multiple, do you feel that these identities are distinct from one another? In what way?  
Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts? |
| Do you identify as Arab? [IF RESPOND WITH YES, MAYBE, OR SOMETIMES, USE ARAB-IDENTIFYING VERSION. IF RESPOND WITH NO, USE NON-ARAB IDENTIFYING VERSION.] | Why do you identify as Arab?  
How strongly do you identify with Arabs?  
How does this identity play out in your life? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does identifying as Arab make you feel?</th>
<th>Does identifying as Arab lead to any negative or positive emotions? Why does it make you feel this way?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you identify as Arab-Canadian or Canadian-Arab?</td>
<td>As Arab-Canadian or Canadian-Arab? As neither or both or something in between? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does living in Canada influence your identity?</td>
<td>How do you think the Canadian context impacts your identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>What race/skin color do you identify with?</td>
<td>Does your race or skin color influence your Arab identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your race/skin color influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td>Are these identities distinct? In what way?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What gender do you identify with?</td>
<td>Does your gender influence your Arab identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your gender influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td>Are these identities distinct? In what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sexual orientation do you identify with?</td>
<td>Does your sexual orientation influence your Arab identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your sexual orientation influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td>Are these identities distinct? In what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What religion do you identify with?</td>
<td>To what extent would you say that you are a religious person?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your religion influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td>Does your religion influence your Arab identity?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are these identities distinct? In what way?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you identify with the same country or countries of origin as your parents and/or</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>What language/languages do you speak? Do you speak Arabic?</td>
<td>Does your parents’/grandparents’ country or countries of origin influence your Arab identity?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does your country of origin influence your Arab identity?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are these identities distinct? In what way?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your immigrant status in Canada?</td>
<td>Were you born in Canada? Did you come as a refugee, international student, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your immigrant status influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td>Does your immigrant status influence your Arab identity?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are these identities distinct? In what way?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking of your friends that you feel the closest to, what do you have</td>
<td>Is it based on race/skin color, age, religion, gender, country of origin, language, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>in common with them? How does their/your identities influence your</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendship?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of your close friends are Arab? How many of your close friends</td>
<td>How do you think that influences your friendships?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are from the same country of origin?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is it important to you that your partner, now or in the future, has the same identity/identities as you?</td>
<td>Is it important to you to have an Arab partner? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think other people see you as Arab?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arabs in Canada</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Generally, what do you think of when you think of Arabs in Canada?</td>
<td>How do you perceive Arabs in Canada?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think Arabs look like?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think is Arabs’ skin color?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you think Arabs act?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What kinds of jobs do you think Arabs have?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What kind of education do you think Arabs get?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What religion do you think Arabs belong to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think so? Or how did you come to think so?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think Arabs belong in Canada?</td>
<td>Do you think Canadian values and Arab values are distinct? Do you think they are in conflict with one another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In your opinion, what do people in Canada think of Arabs?</strong></td>
<td>How do people in Canada think perceive Arabs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do they think Arabs look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do they think is Arabs’ skin color?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How do they think Arabs act?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What kinds of jobs do they think Arabs have?</td>
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<td>What kind of education do they think Arabs get?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What religion do they think Arabs belong to?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why do they think so? Or how did they come to think so?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>In your opinion, do people in Canada think Arabs belong in Canada?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do people in Canada think Canadian values and Arab values are distinct?</td>
<td>Do people in Canada think Canadian values and Arab values are distinct? Do they think they are in conflict with one another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there are divisions within Arabs?</td>
<td>Do you think there are divisions within the Arab group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On what basis are those divisions?</td>
<td>Based on religion, skin color, gender, country of origin, language, dialect, etc. What are those differences between or within Arabs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think some Arabs are more Arab than others?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What factors make some people more Arab than others?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Discrimination In Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think other Arabs experience discrimination in Canada?</td>
<td>On what basis do they experience discrimination? Religion, skin color, gender, nationality, etc. From who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever witnessed Arabs experiencing discrimination in Canada or have you ever experienced discrimination in Canada yourself because you are Arab? Please explain in as much detail as possible.</td>
<td>On what basis was this discrimination? Who was the perpetrator? [Give examples of overt and covert discrimination if needed.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do Arabs discriminate against each other based on their differences? Skin color,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think some Arabs experience discrimination from other Arabs in Canada?</td>
<td>dialect/accent, religion, gender, nationality, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever witnessed or experienced an Arab discriminating against another Arab in Canada?</td>
<td>On what basis was this discrimination? Who was the perpetrator? [Give examples of overt and covert discrimination if needed.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Further Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything we have not asked you about that you feel is important to share about your identity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything we have not asked you about that you would like to share about Arabs in Canada?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix F: Interview Guide (for non-Arab-identifying Participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Interview Questions</th>
<th>Probes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warm Up</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Can you start by telling me a bit about your yourself? | • Were you born in Canada? How long have you lived in Canada?  
• Where did you live before coming to Canada? Where were you born? Where else have you lived?  
• Have you always lived in [city] in Canada? Or did you first live somewhere else in Canada? If so, where? |
| **Identity/Identities**       |        |
| If somebody asked who you are, what would you say? | How do you identify yourself?  
Do you identify yourself based on skin color? Where you’re from? Where your parents are from? The language(s) you speak? Religion? Your gender? Other factors? Please explain. |
| What does this identity/these identities mean to you? | Why do you identify with ______?  
How strongly do you identify with____?  
How does this identity manifest in your life?  
If multiple, do you feel that these identities are distinct from one another? In what way?  
Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts? |
| Do you identify as Arab? [IF RESPOND WITH YES, MAYBE, OR SOMETIMES, USE ARAB-IDENTIFYING VERSION. IF RESPOND WITH NO, USE NON-ARAB IDENTIFYING VERSION.] | Why don’t you identify as Arab?  
How does this identity play out in your life, if at all? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a rejection from Arabs or the Arab community influenced this identity?</td>
<td>Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does not identifying as Arab make you feel?</td>
<td>Does not identifying as Arab lead to any negative or positive emotions? Why does it make you feel this way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does living in Canada influence your identity?</td>
<td>How do you think the Canadian context impacts your identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What race/skin color do you identify with?</td>
<td>Is your race/skin color important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your race/skin color influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What gender do you identify with?</td>
<td>Is your gender identity important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your gender influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sexual orientation do you identify with?</td>
<td>Is your sexual orientation important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your sexual orientation influence your identity, if at all?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What religion do you identify with?</td>
<td>To what extent would you say that you are a religious person?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your religion influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td>Does your religion influence your identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you identify with the same country or countries of origin as your parents and/or grandparents?</td>
<td>Does your parents’/grandparents’ country or countries of origin influence your identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does this country or countries of origin influence your identity, if at all?</td>
<td>Does your country of origin influence your identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What language/languages do you speak?</td>
<td>Do you speak Arabic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your immigrant status in Canada?</td>
<td>How does your immigrant status influence your identity, if at all?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking of your friends that you feel the closest to, what do you have in common with them? How does their/your identities influence your friendship?</td>
<td>Are these identities ever in conflict with each other? How do you resolve these conflicts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of your close friends are Arab?</td>
<td>Is your identity different from that of your parent/parents? In what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of your close friends are from the same country of origin?</td>
<td>Does language influence your identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is language important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Were you born in Canada? Did you come as a refugee, international student, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is your immigrant status important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is it based on race/skin color, age, religion, gender, country of origin, language, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you think that influences your friendships?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you think that influences your friendships?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you think that influences your friendships?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you think that influences your friendships?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it important to you that your partner, now or in the future, has the same identity/identities as you?</td>
<td>Is it important to you to have a partner from the same background? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think other people see you as Arab?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arabs in Canada</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think so? Or how did you come to think so?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think Arabs belong in Canada?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think Canadian values and Arab values are distinct? Do you think they are in conflict with one another?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, what do people in Canada think of Arabs?</td>
<td>How do people in Canada think perceive Arabs? What do they think Arabs look like? What do they think is Arabs’ skin color? How do they think Arabs act? What kinds of jobs do they think Arabs have? What kind of education do they think Arabs get? What religion do they think Arabs belong to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do they think so? Or how did they come to think so?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, do people in Canada think Arabs belong in Canada?</td>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do people in Canada think Canadian values and Arab values are distinct?</td>
<td>Do they think they are in conflict with one another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there are divisions within Arabs?</td>
<td>Do you think there are subgroups within the Arab group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On what basis are those divisions?</td>
<td>Why are Arabs divided?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there differences between Arabs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on religion, skin color, gender, country of origin, language, dialect, etc. What are those differences between or within Arabs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discrimination In Canada</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think Arabs experience discrimination in Canada?</td>
<td>On what basis do they experience discrimination? Religion, skin color, gender, nationality, etc. From who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever witnessed Arabs experiencing discrimination in Canada?</td>
<td>On what basis was this discrimination? Who was the perpetrator? [Give examples of overt and covert discrimination if needed.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please explain in as much detail as possible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think some Arabs experience discrimination from other Arabs in Canada?</td>
<td>Do Arabs discriminate against each other based on their differences? Skin color, dialect/accident, religion, gender, nationality, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever witnessed an Arab discriminating against another Arab in Canada?</td>
<td>On what basis was this discrimination? Who was the perpetrator? [Give examples of overt and covert discrimination if needed.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything we have not asked you about that you feel is important to share about your identity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything we have not asked you about that you would like to share about Arabs in Canada?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Sociodemographic Questionnaire

What is your age? __________ years

What is your gender? Are you…
   1. A man
   2. A woman
   3. Non-binary
   4. I prefer to identify as…, please specify:
      ____________________________________________

Which city in Ontario do you live in?
   1. Barrie
   2. Belleville
   3. Brampton
   4. Brant
   5. Brantford
   6. Brockville
   7. Burlington
   8. Cambridge
   9. Clarence-Rockland
  10. Cornwall
  11. Dryden
  12. Elliot Lake
  13. Greater Sudbury
  14. Guelph
  15. Haldimand County
  16. Hamilton
  17. Kawartha Lakes
  18. Kenora
  19. Kingston
  20. Kitchener
  21. London
  22. Markham
  23. Mississauga
  24. Niagara Falls
  25. Norfolk County
  26. North Bay
  27. Orillia
  28. Oshawa
  29. Ottawa
  30. Owen Sound
  31. Pembroke
  32. Peterborough
  33. Pickering
  34. Port Colborne
35. Prince Edward County
36. Quinte West
37. Sarnia
38. Sault Ste. Marie
39. St. Catharines
40. St. Thomas
41. Stratford
42. Thunder Bay
43. Timmins
44. Toronto
45. Vaughan
46. Waterloo
47. Welland
48. Windsor
49. Woodstock
50. Other, please specify: ___________________

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
1. Did not complete elementary school
2. Elementary school
3. Secondary school (high school)
4. College / vocational training
5. University undergraduate degree (B.A., B.Sc.)
6. University graduate degree (Master’s or Ph.D.)
7. Professional degree (e.g., Medicine, Law, Engineering)
8. Other, please specify: ___________________

In your current situation, would you say most people would categorize a household like yours as:
1. Lower income
2. Lower middle income
3. Middle income
4. Upper-middle income
5. Upper income
6. Don’t know/prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes your ethnicity? (You can choose more than one)
1. White
2. South Asian
3. Chinese
4. Black
5. Filipino
6. Latin American
7. Arab
8. Southeast Asian
9. West Asian
If you were describing how you look to someone, what would you say?
_______________________________________________________________________

Which of the following best describes your country/countries of origin or background?
(You can choose more than one)
1. Algeria
2. Bahrain
3. Comoros
4. Djibouti
5. Egypt
6. Iraq
7. Jordan
8. Kuwait
9. Lebanon
10. Libya
11. Mauritania
12. Morocco
13. Oman
14. Palestine
15. Qatar
16. Saudi Arabia
17. Somalia
18. Sudan
19. Syria
20. Tunisia
21. United Arab Emirates
22. Yemen
23. Canada
24. Other, please specify:______________

Were your parents born in Canada?
1. Yes, two parents born in Canada
2. Yes, one parent born in Canada
3. No, no parents born in Canada

Were you born in Canada?
1. Yes [SKIP NEXT QUESTION]
2. No

[IF NOT BORN IN CANADA]: What is your country of birth? _________________
How long have you lived in Canada? (No matter what your immigration status was when you arrived; please specify number of years in numerical format.)

Years: ______

What is your current immigrant status in Canada?
1. Permanent Resident /Citizen
   a. Entered through economic class
   b. Entered through family class
   c. Entered as a refugee
   d. Entered as a student
   e. Entered as a dependent
2. Student
3. Temporary Worker
4. Refugee Claimant /Protected Person
5. Other, please specify:__________
6. Don’t know/Prefer not to answer

What is your current employment status? Are you… (You can choose more than one answer)
1. Employed full-time (30 hours a week or more)
2. Employed part-time (Less than 30 hours a week)
3. Self-employed or own your own business
4. Unemployed, looking for work
5. Unemployed, not looking for work
6. Retired
7. Student
8. Homemaker
9. Other, Please specify:________________________

What language or languages do you speak most often at home?
1. English
2. French
3. Arabic
4. Other, Please specify:_______________________

I would describe myself as:
1. Heterosexual
2. Gay or lesbian
3. Bisexual
4. Queer
5. Uncertain or questioning
6. I prefer to identify as…, please specify:________________________
7. I choose not to answer

What is your religion, if any?
1. Christian
2. Jewish
3. Muslim
4. Buddhist
5. Hindu
6. Sikh
7. No religion (atheist or agnostic)
8. Other, please specify: ____________

What is your current marital status?
1. Single, never married
2. Married
3. Living common-law
4. Separated
5. Widowed
6. Divorced

Do you have any children?
1. No, I do not have any children.
2. Yes, I have 1 child.
3. Yes, I have 2 children.
4. Yes, I have 3 children.
5. Yes, I have 4 children.
6. Yes, I have 5 or more children.
Appendix H: Debriefing Form

Project Title: Social Identity and Perceptions of Social Groups
Principal Investigator: Victoria Esses, Ph.D.
Co-Investigator: Rama Eloulabi, MSc Candidate

DEBRIEFING FORM

Thank you for your participation in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of Arabs and non-Arabs in Canada as well as their identity/identities. We are interested in exploring how different identities intersect and what factors influence these identities in Canada. This was carried out by collecting some sociodemographic information using a survey and by asking participants about their social identities, their perceptions and stereotypes of social groups, and their experiences of discrimination.

If the results of this study are published, it will be reported as anonymous aggregates or de-identified direct quotes from your interview, and your name will not be used. Additionally, journals may require that anonymized data be accessible to other researchers wishing to evaluate the study. Neither the publishing journal nor any other researcher will have access to personally identifying information. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact Rama Eloulabi or Dr. Victoria Esses.

Thank you,
Victoria Esses, Department of Psychology, Western University
Rama Eloulabi, Department of Psychology, Western University

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics:
Canada: (519) 661-3036
Long-Distance Toll-Free: 1 (844) 720-9816
Email: ethics@uwo.ca
Appendix I: List of Resources

South West Local Health Integration Network
Phone: 800-811-5146
http://www.southwestlhin.on.ca

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services Toronto
Phone: 416-324-8677
www.accessalliance.ca

Arab Community Centre of Toronto (ACCT)
Phone: 416-231-7746
www.acctonline.ca

Good2Talk Helpline
Phone: 866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868
https://good2talk.ca

ConnexOntario
Phone: 866-531-2600
www.connexontario.ca

BounceBack
Phone: 866-345-0224
https://bouncebackontario.ca/
## Appendix J: Table of Participants' Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sexual orientation</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Gay</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Black &amp; Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>I choose not to answer</td>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Woman</td>
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<td>Christian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Christian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Druze</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>South Asian, Black, Arab &amp; Mixed</td>
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<td>Christian</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Woman</td>
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<td>Druze</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Christian</td>
<td>Middle Eastern, North African &amp; Mediterranean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Muslim &amp; Druze</td>
<td>Arab &amp; Sephardic Jewish</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Black &amp; African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab &amp; West Asian</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Arab</td>
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(continued next page)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID number</th>
<th>Country of origin or background</th>
<th>Years in Canada</th>
<th>Immigration status in Canada</th>
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</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>PR/ Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PR/ Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
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<td>PR/ Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Syria</td>
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<td>PR/ Citizen (Entered as a refugee)</td>
</tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
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<td>PR/ Citizen</td>
</tr>
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<td>PR/ Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Lebanon &amp; Canada</td>
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<td>30</td>
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PR= Permanent Resident
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name:</strong></th>
<th>Rama Eloulabi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-secondary Education and Degrees:</strong></td>
<td>York University Toronto, Ontario, Canada 2015-2018 B.A. Western University London, Ontario, Canada 2021-2023 M.Sc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Honours and Awards:</strong></td>
<td>York University Continuing Student Scholarship 2016 Ontario Graduate Scholarship 2021-2022 2022 CPA Social and Personality Best Student Poster Award June 2022 Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Master’s Program 2022-2023 Ontario Graduate Scholarship 2023-2024</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Related Work Experience:</strong></td>
<td>Peer Research Associate The YSMENA Program (Youth Sexual Health and HIV/STI Prevention in Middle Eastern and North African Communities) 2021 Contract Researcher Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) 2022 Graduate Student Assistant Pathways to Prosperity Partnership 2021-2023 Graduate Student Assistant Centre for Migration and Ethnic Relations, Western University 2022-2023</td>
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Selected Publications and Reports:


