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ETHNIC IDENTITY AMONG MARONITE LEBANESE IN THE UNITED STATES

by

CHARLES KHACHAN

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the University of the Incarnate Word  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

May 2015

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2015

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To all the people that I may have forgotten and who walked with me along the way with an unconditional support and encouragement to accomplish this dream I am deeply grateful and thankful.

Charles Khachan

DEDICATION

To my beloved family

to my Congregation, the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries

to the Maronite Church in the United States

I dedicate my academic accomplishment.

## ETHNIC IDENTITY AMONG MARONITE LEBANESE IN THE UNITED STATES

Charles Khachan, PhD

University of the Incarnate Word, 2015

Immigration is defined as the process of moving across countries and has several effects on sending and receiving countries. Several waves of immigrants came from Lebanon to the United States starting in the late 1800s. They were expected to assimilate into the new society but ethnic faith based communities assisted them in also maintaining that their ethnic identity. The purpose of this mixed methodology study is to explore the role of the church in preserving the ethnic identity among the Maronite Lebanese immigrants in the United States.

The mixed methodology study answered 3 major questions. Quantitative data were collected from youth between the ages of 12 and 23 years old and adults 24 and older from Maronite parishes in the United States who answered an adaptation of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992).

Qualitative data were collected by interviewing 6 Maronite clergy serving in the United States. The participants included 2 Lebanese born immigrants, 2 Americans of Lebanese descent, and 2 Americans of European descent.

The quantitative results in this study showed that the majority of Maronite Lebanese in the United States have achieved and understood their ethnic identity. Most of them demonstrated their identity, had positive feelings towards their ethnic group, and were well assimilated into the

American society. Ethnic behavior and affirmation were significant predictors of ethnic achievement among the participants. However, assimilation did not predict ethnic achievement.

Participants in the qualitative study considered that the church has a great influence on immigrants and plays a significant role in preserving their ethnic and religious identities.

This study offered a snapshot of the Maronite church in the United States. The Maronite Church in the United States continues to move into the future while striving to assist Lebanese immigrants to assimilate into the U.S. society and achieve and understand their ethnic identity. The Church is called to be an inviting and welcoming church, flourishing and unique, and rooted in Lebanon. The creation of educational and outreach programs would help the church in her efforts to preserve the ethnic identity of her faithful.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: A STUDY OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AMONG U.S. MARONITE LEBANESE .....	1
Context of the Study .....	2
Importance of religion.....	2
Lebanese immigration to the United States .....	4
Maronite Church in the United States.....	4
Problem Statement .....	5
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions.....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Immigration.....	7
Ethnic identity.....	7
Significance of the Study .....	8
Methodology .....	8
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	9
Dimensions of Migration .....	9
Economics.....	9
Politics.....	10
Society.....	12
Culture.....	13
Religion.....	16
Ethnic Identity.....	17

## Table of Contents—Continued

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Self-identification .....	18
Ethnic behaviors.....	19
Affirmation and belonging.....	19
Ethnic identity achievement.....	20
Lebanese in the United States .....	21
First wave.....	22
Second wave .....	26
Third wave .....	26
The Maronite Church.....	27
Identity .....	27
Immigration of Maronites .....	28
Maronite Church in the United States.....	29
Challenges of the Maronites in the United States.....	31
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY .....	33
Research Questions.....	33
Research Design.....	33
Quantitative approach .....	35
Qualitative approach.....	37
Protection of human subjects .....	40

## Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND SUMMARY .....	42
Quantitative Process.....	42
Response rate .....	42
Demographics .....	43
Descriptive and inferential analysis .....	44
Qualitative Process.....	47
Personal profile of each participant .....	47
Interview questions .....	50
Research Questions.....	50
Research question 1 .....	50
Research question 2 .....	63
Research question 3 .....	66
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	69
Summary of Quantitative Findings.....	69
Summary of Qualitative Findings.....	70
Discussion.....	70
Implications.....	73
Limitations and Recommendations.....	74
Conclusion .....	75
REFERENCES .....	76

## Table of Contents—Continued

## APPENDICES

Appendix A Permission to Use Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) .....	84
Appendix B Permission to Use Map of Greater Syria .....	85
Appendix C Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM).....	86
Appendix D Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval .....	88
Appendix E Letters to Obtain Permission to Access Parishes.....	91
Appendix F Letters to Obtain Permission to Access Parishes.....	93
Appendix G Letters to Obtain Permission to Local Parish.....	95
Appendix H Parental Consent Form .....	96
Appendix I Minor Assent Form .....	98

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Principal Component Analysis for Validity and Reliability of the Instrument .....	46
2. Mann-Whitney Test for Difference Between Youth and Adult Participants.....	47
3. Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Ethnic Achievement.....	52
4. Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Ethnic Behavior .....	55
5. Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Ethnic Affirmation.....	58
6. Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Assimilation .....	60
7. Regression Analysis Summary for Behavior, Affirmation, Assimilation Predicting Achievement .....	63

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Map of Greater Syria during the Ottoman rule .....	22
2. Frequency of age level among youth participants .....	43
3. Frequency of age level among adult participants .....	44
4. Chart of participants' ethnic distribution .....	51
5. Box-plot of participants' ethnic achievement .....	53
6. Histogram of participants' ethnic achievement .....	53
7. Box-plot of participants' ethnic behavior .....	56
8. Histogram of participants' ethnic behavior.....	56
9. Box-plot of participants' ethnic affirmation .....	58
10. Box-plot of the difference between youth and adult in ethnic affirmation.....	59
11. Histogram of participants' ethnic affirmation.....	59
12. Box-plot of participants' assimilation.....	61
13. Histogram of participants' assimilation .....	61
14. Histogram of residuals .....	64

## **Chapter I: A Study of Ethnic Identity Among U.S. Maronite Lebanese**

In the globalized society of today, the world is witnessing increased openness in economics, trade, investment, and culture and a faster flow of goods between nations. As a part of globalization, people are immigrating and settling in different countries. Bhugra and Becker (2005) define immigration as the process of moving from one country or area and settling in another. Immigration across nations has economic, political, social, cultural, and religious effects. As immigrants settle and integrate into their new countries, they contribute to the development of these societies but at the same time often maintain ties with their countries of origin.

Hirschman (2004) considers the United States a historically religious nation characterized by the freedom of religion as stated in its constitution. The history of the United States is associated with immigrants settled in the new land as a refuge from religious persecution. The early colonists fled religious intolerance in search of a land where they were free to practice their religious beliefs and traditions. They created immigrant churches and temples that served as a bridge to connect the new world to the old as well as a place to assist and promote the immigrants' incorporation into their new society. Religious congregations served also as a place to assist in the positive construction of immigrants' ethnic identity. Foner and Alba (2008) suggest that religion and ethnic identity are intertwined in the American society. Ethnic religious communities in the United States sponsor events celebrating national and cultural heritage, celebrate home country holidays, hold ethnic history, language, and culture classes for descendants of immigrants.

## **Context of the Study**

Immigration changes more than just the location of the individual. Family structures and roles change for the people left behind in the home countries, especially women and children (Katseli, Lucas, & Xenogiani, 2006). Host countries experience a change in demographic and racial composition during the immigration process, particularly as the number of immigrants marrying locals increases (Bean, Cushing, Haynes, & Van Hook, 1997). Sending countries and host countries also experience new cultural values requiring immigrants and locals to adapt to new cultural rules and practices as they become engaged in the changing social and cultural environment (Bhugra & Becker, 2005).

**Importance of religion.** Levitt (2003) considered religion a global system that operates transnationally and is used by individuals in their global lives. Religion influences immigrants' economic and political activity in the new country (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007). Religion plays an important role in shaping modern society. It affects and is affected by migration. Immigrants practice their old religious traditions in new parts of the world (Ebaugh, 2003). The study of religion and migration has focused mainly on the role of religion in the settlement process and the use of religion by immigrants to integrate into the new society (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003).

Smith (1978) described a strong relationship between religion and migration. Immigrants bring with them their religious traditions and beliefs and many ethnic and religious traditions are established and developed in the host countries. Immigrants regroup into large settlements based on their common faith rather than location. They use churches, synagogues, and other places of worship to promote education and explain and preserve their religious and ethnic identities. They have founded these religious institutions as elements of continuity between their home countries and the new countries as well as agents in their adaptation process. Therefore, religious



institutions have become centers of ethnic settlement, the most effective sources of the conservation of ethnic customs and group identity, and network centers for immigrants seeking opportunities for jobs and housing (Bankston & Zhou, 2000; Mullins, 1987).

According to Agrawal (2008), religion is an important factor in the self-identification of immigrants in their relationship and unity with their ethnic group. As a result, immigrants congregate in faith-based communities and become dependent on religion to preserve their identity as well as to help them integrate into the new society. In the same way, while immigrants are adapting to the new culture, religion provides a space where they can express their ethnic differences. Immigrants regroup themselves based on their religious affiliation more than on their language or nationality. However, religious identity and ethnic identity are interrelated; one cannot replace the other completely (Fenggang & Ebaugh, 2001).

Mullins (1987) considers that as immigrant churches develop they experience a shift in their composition and change from ethnic to multiethnic communities. This phenomenon is known as moving from being ethnic to becoming “de-ethnicized” (p. 327). The development of immigrant churches requires an organizational adaptation to the circumstances. Ethnic churches develop in three stages:

- The church is established to meet the needs of immigrants. The church is monolingual; services are conducted in the language of the home country of the immigrants.
- The church becomes bilingual using the native language of the immigrants as well as the language of the host country. The cultural assimilation of immigrants takes place at this stage.

- The church is monolingual again but uses only the language of the host country. The larger participation of the immigrants in the non-ethnic organizations takes place at this stage. The immigrant generations begin to disappear since their needs are met in the organizations of the host society.

Through these stages, children of immigrants are the ones who are the most affected by the changes that occur. Children of immigrants often feel a stronger sense of attachment to the host country than to their countries of origin. However, immigrants and their descendants continue to view religious institutions as the places where they can preserve and keep their cultural, ethnic, and religious identities (Levitt, 2001).

**Lebanese immigration to the United States.** Like other countries, the United States relied on the flow of immigrants to populate the new land. Immigration to the United States began in 1492 when Christopher Columbus inaugurated the European exploration and settlement of the new world (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 2009). Since then millions of immigrants from all over the world have settled within U.S. borders and have contributed to making the United States what it is today. They came to North America, otherwise called “The New World,” to live “new” lives, work hard, and make a living in their new country. Immigration to the United States has taken place in different phases; each phase has drawn immigrants from different parts of the world. In general, each group of immigrants tended to cluster in particular neighborhoods and cities, shaping the nature and economy of the new destination (Diner, 2008).

**Maronite Church in the United States.** Maronites are currently considered the majority of the Lebanese immigrants in the United States. The Maronite Church is an Antiochian Church that took its name from a saint called Maron who lived in the fourth and early fifth centuries. In their beginnings they settled mostly in Syria and Lebanon.

One of the challenges that faced Maronites in United States was to preserve their culture and heritage as they merged into the American society. A small number of priests and missionaries headed to the United States in the beginning of the 20th century to assist Maronites in establishing their own churches and parishes. Maronite churches in the United States were scattered across the country. The long distances made the interaction between laity and clergy sometimes difficult if not nonexistent. When unable to find a Maronite church, Lebanese immigrants often joined churches from different ecclesiastical traditions and many Maronites joined local churches where clergy did not know the history and the culture of the Maronite and Eastern Churches (Labaki, 1993). In addition, the absence of Maronite parochial schools made the task of maintaining the religious heritage and culture of those immigrants more difficult.

### **Problem Statement**

The Maronite Patriarchal Synod held in Lebanon between 2003 and 2006 and the Special Assembly of Bishops for the Middle East held in the Vatican in 2010 dedicated a whole chapter of the synod documents to the discussion of the issue of immigration. Both synods emphasized the importance of understanding the issues and problems immigrants face in the countries of migration, especially the preservation of their identity and culture. The Maronite Patriarchal Synod emphasized the need for research to get a better understanding of the challenges facing the Maronite Church in the world, in particular that of preserving her particular identity in the surrounding environment. The synods acknowledged the role of the church in assisting immigrants integrating into new societies and the need to preserve and transfer to the children of those immigrants their heritage and culture.

## **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of the church in preserving the ethnic identity among the Maronite Lebanese immigrants in the United States. Immigrants were expected to assimilate in the new society but the acceptance of multiculturalism in the United States allowed them to celebrate their cultural traditions and ethnic identity. Religion assisted them in maintaining that identity in ethnic faith based communities, through language, culture, and traditions (Kurien, 2012).

These are the questions to be considered in this study:

- 1- How do Maronites in the United States identify themselves?
  - a. How well have they explored and understood their ethnic identity?
  - b. How well have they demonstrated their ethnic identity?
  - c. How well have they developed positive attitudes toward their ethnic group?
  - d. How well have they incorporated into the U.S. society?
- 2- What is the role of ethnic events and practices, people's attitudes toward the ethnic group, and assimilation into the American society in helping Maronite Lebanese in the United States achieve their ethnic identity?
- 3- What is the role of the Maronite Church in safeguarding the distinctiveness and continuity of the identity of Lebanese immigrants?
  - a. How does the Maronite Church respond to the ethnic identity challenges of its faithful?

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study documents and describes the aspects of immigration, the effect of immigration on countries of origin and the new destinations, and the evolving ethnic identity of immigrants.

**Immigration.** Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) describe five essential dimensions of immigration: economics, politics, society, culture, and religion. These dimensions impact the sending country as well as the host country and bring changes to both the home and new countries. Immigrants support the economies of their home countries by sending money to their families and investing in businesses. They support the economies of the host countries by their market participation. Immigrants often try to influence issues in their countries of origin while becoming involved in local politics of the host countries by either running for public office or voting during elections.

**Ethnic identity.** Ethnic Identity as defined by Voicu (2013) is considered an important aspect of the individual's cultural identity or the way individuals identify themselves in relation to their cultural environment and membership in a particular group.

Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, and Vedder (2001) define ethnic identity as a person's feeling of belonging and attachment to a particular ethnic group as well as the larger society. It is the sense of self-identification that the individual develops in order to understand their own ethnicity. This process varies over time and between individuals (Phinney, 1996). Individuals achieve a sense of ethnic identity after a process of exploration leading to decisions in major areas of life (Phinney, 1992). Family and society assist individuals in the development of their ethnic identity and their desire to retain that identity. Ethnic behaviors and practices help the individuals to determine a sense of their identity. At the same time the acceptance and openness

to diversity in the host society can contribute in a stronger sense of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992; Phinney et al., 2001).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study addresses a gap in the literature on the relationship between religion and migration. It explores the case of the Lebanese in the United States and the establishment of the Maronite Church. It provides a snapshot of the current situation of the Maronites in the United States and could serve as a foundation for future research on the expansion and changes of the Maronite Church in the world. The relationship between religion and migration is important for all ethnic groups in the United States. This study hopes to offer insights in the construction of ethnic and religious identities among immigrants. In addition, the study hopes to serve as a reference to inform policy makers in the church and governments about the issues facing immigrants in their search and construction of their ethnic and religious identities.

### **Methodology**

This study used the explanatory sequential mixed method design. The quantitative data was collected by surveying Maronite youth in the United States using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) developed by Phinney (1992). Permission was granted to use the instrument (See Appendix A). A total of 177 youths answered and returned the surveys. In addition to the youths, 27 adults from different Maronite parishes in the United States participated in the study. After the analysis of the quantitative data, qualitative data was collected by interviewing six clergy members of the Maronite parishes in the United States.

## Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This chapter will explore the dimensions of migration and their effect on sending and host countries using Levitt and Jaworsky's (2007) five dimensions of migration—economics, politics, society, culture, and religion—as well as the evolution of ethnic identity of immigrants. In addition, the chapter will give a historic overview of immigration from Lebanon to the United States and the history of the Maronite Church, particularly in the United States.

### Dimensions of Migration

Lee (1966) considered immigration as the universal shifting of population. Immigrants usually choose to move to countries considered the centers of commerce and industry. Several factors relating to the countries of origin and destination countries are taken into consideration during the decision process.

Migrants and their descendants settle in a certain country and keep ties at the same time with their country of origin. They participate in activities that extend across borders while they become part of the places where they settle. This participation has its effect on the countries of origin as well as on the host countries.

**Economics.** Immigration has an economic impact on the host countries as well as on the countries of origin. Immigrants contribute to the economy of their home countries by sending money to their families and relatives, funding small businesses, and supporting social service projects (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). There is an increase in the flow of resources between countries through the exchange of money and services. In addition, immigrants may transfer money to religious organizations to hire staff members and develop programs. This exchange may be through the financial support of international humanitarian aid, such as donating money to tsunami victims or hunger relief programs (Wuthnow & Offutt, 2008).

Borjas (1994) observed that immigrants also contribute to the economy of the host countries. This contribution is measured in the United States, for example, by the immigrants' labor market performance. Immigrants who are willing to start a new life in a foreign country are highly motivated and often willing to work harder and longer hours than natives. New and better economic opportunities remain a key reason why people leave their countries and move to a foreign country, regardless of the high price that the move represents in emotional and material ways (Kong, Yoon, & Yu, 2010).

**Politics.** Many people move to new countries for political reasons. Many immigrants flee their countries seeking the basic rights of freedom and security. Betts (2010) identified this type of migration as survival migration and defined such immigrants as “persons outside their country of origin because of an existential threat to which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution” (p. 362).

Despite being away from their homeland, immigrants often try to continue to influence the politics of their countries of origin. Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003) described the concept of homeland politics as when immigrants get involved in the local and foreign policies of their home countries, opposing or supporting certain issues. Homeland politics is composed of three subsets: *emigrant politics*, *diaspora politics*, and *translocal politics*.

Emigrant politics refers to the active participation of immigrants in the political life of their countries of origin in spite of being residents of another country. In this case, immigrants may ask for certain benefits in their countries of origin, such as absentee voting rights or the right to run for political office.



Diaspora politics occurs when immigrants are banned from participating in the politics of their homeland and have no political influence on the politics in their homeland. Political activity is then limited to the host countries.

Translocal politics refers to the efforts of immigrants to influence host countries politics involving their countries of origin. Immigrants who become naturalized citizens may become active and influential forces in local and international politics. The new citizens might play an important role in the politics of the host countries by participating in elections as either voters or candidates using their experiences from home in new areas (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003) defines the political activism of immigrants as “various forms of direct cross-border participation in the politics of their country of origin by both migrants and refugees, as well as their indirect participation via the political institutions of the host country” (p. 762). Immigrants can play an important role in the politics of their countries of origin by lobbying the authorities of the host countries to influence certain issues in their home countries (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

In addition to influencing the policies of the sending countries, immigrants may also influence the policies of the host countries. Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003) defines this aspect as immigrant politics, which involves the efforts of immigrants to improve their political, social, or economic situation in the host country. In some cases the sending countries’ governments intervene on behalf of their nationals. In recent years, immigrants have faced discrimination, in particular persons of certain religious or ethnic backgrounds, which affected their involvement in the local politics. These discriminatory acts may be considered a threat to civil liberties and might influence immigration policies and change homeland security policies (Berry, 2001).

**Society.** In addition to the economic and political impact of immigration, Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) suggested that immigration has its impact on society and causes a substantial change in structures, roles, and family relationships. Families of immigrants often experience a change in gender roles, power position, and status. The decision to select who migrates from a certain household impacts the ones who stay behind, especially if they are women (Katseli et al., 2006). When an adult male is not present in the house, the women left behind may struggle as they become the heads of their households, particularly in traditionally patriarchal societies where this role for women is limited.

Katseli et al. (2006) suggest that children are the most affected by immigration in both beneficial and detrimental ways. Through the transfer of money to their families in developing countries, immigrants decrease the need for child labor and increase their children's educational opportunities. Immigrants may contribute and improve health conditions in their homeland as they gain a better knowledge of health practices in foreign countries. However, children growing up in families with immigrants look at their parents as their role models and therefore often consider migration as their goal. In addition, these children may be confronted with the problem of family breakdown caused by their parents' living in separate countries.

There is also an impact on immigrants themselves. Immigrants may have differing attitudes toward the host societies. Many immigrants assume that the policies of the countries favorable to immigration reflect the attitudes of their citizens toward immigrants, which may not always be true. Immigrants must compete among each other and with locals to gain social status in the new societies. Immigrants who come from countries that are economically weak are able to enjoy the increased social benefits and services of the host countries, such as education and healthcare (Bean et al., 1997; Berry, 2001).

Family members living across borders might become the norm for social life. In some cases, immigrants reactivate these connections with their homelands. Many go back to their home countries in search of a spouse or to teach their children their parental culture and values. In the case of an international marriage, many individuals tend to lose their connection with their homeland (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

The host countries are also affected by immigration. Due to immigration, countries may experience a substantial change in their ethnic and racial composition. Immigrants contribute to significant population growth of some host countries. The increase in interracial and interethnic marriages often leads to more tolerance, despite the tensions in the labor market caused by cheap foreign labor (Bean et al., 1997).

**Culture.** Culture is defined as the way a group of people view themselves through a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that are shared among the members of that group. Immigration has an effect on the individual's and nation's cultures. Culture becomes part of the personal and social identities and changes when the person is in contact with other cultures through migration and acculturation (Berry, 2001; Bhugra & Becker, 2005).

Cultures are not concrete or material and immigrants cannot be labeled according to a single culture to which they belong. Immigrants usually hold on to their culture, with all history and ceremony, in their new destinations. Immigration presents new situations and involves change for the intact culture of both immigrants and locals. This change helps cultures in surviving and is experienced through the construction and production of new concepts (Scheffler, 2007).

Berry (2001) distinguished four strategies immigrants use in their daily interactions, individuals may (a) choose integration into the new society and interact daily with locals while

holding on to their original culture; (b) choose assimilation and pursue daily contact with the new culture and not make an effort to preserve their original culture; (c) choose separation and reject the two cultures by preserving their own and avoiding the new culture; (d) choose marginalization with little interest in either their original or local cultures.

***Integration.*** Cheong, Edwards, Goulborne, and Solomos (2007) observed that the growing number of immigrants presents a challenge to policy concerning immigrant integration and management of ethnic diversity. Li (2003) defines integration as the process by which immigrants become totally engaged and dynamic members in all aspects of life in the host society. By this definition, in a successful integration immigrants must abandon their native language and adopt the language of the host society as well as move outside their ethnic enclaves into the mainstream society. However, as immigrants integrate into the new society, most find it necessary to make changes in their lifestyles while maintaining their cultural differences.

Bohning (1991) offers three components of integration policies that might aid immigrants integrating into the new society: non-discrimination, maintenance of cultural identity, and demarginalization. The basis of the concept of integration is non-discrimination or the equality of immigrants and locals in the economic and social rights. The maintenance of cultural identity is the ability of immigrants to maintain and practice their language and religion of origin, even if it might not be practiced in the host society. The third component is of a practical nature and described as demarginalization. This happens when immigrants are not assumed to be a disadvantaged population.

***Acculturation.*** When immigrants move to a new country they lose contact with familiar values, attitudes, and social structures. In order to adapt to the new society, they need to learn new cultural rules and values to become engaged in a new social and cultural environment

(Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) labeled this process as *acculturation* and define it as the “phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149). Acculturation, whether intended or forced, may result in the assimilation into the cultural values and beliefs of the host society (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Berry (2001) notes that acculturation may also involve locals who learn about the culture of immigrants and, in some cases, try to adapt to these new behavior patterns.

During the acculturation process, both cultures will experience change in attitudes and values; however, one culture will usually dominate when the two cultural groups interact. It is important to note that the acculturation process is slow and cultural attitudes are usually resistant to change.

***Assimilation.*** Teske and Nelson (1974) considered assimilation and acculturation as two distinct processes. They explain assimilation as “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups; and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (p. 359). When immigrants experience discrimination or prejudice they become more resistant to assimilation (Berry, 2001). Bhugra and Becker (2005) indicated that during the assimilation process cultural differences disappear as immigrants adjust to a new value system in the host culture.

Gordon (1964) defines assimilation as the process in which two distinct groups with two different cultures become one group with a common new culture with new values, memories, ideas, and attitudes. The first generation immigrants who are less exposed to the mainstream

society differ in their degree of assimilation from their children and grandchildren. Gordon presents seven types of assimilation processes:

- During cultural assimilation immigrants change their cultural patterns to the host society.
- During structural assimilation immigrants enter into the structure of the host society and become engaged members of cliques and organizations of that society.
- Marital assimilation happens through intermarriages between immigrants and other groups.
- During identificational assimilation immigrants develop a sense of identity linked to the host society.
- Prejudice and stereotyping disappear during the attitude receptional assimilation.
- Immigrants do not experience prejudice or discrimination with behavior receptional assimilation.
- Value and power conflict dissolve with civic assimilation.

**Religion.** Like language, customs, values, and beliefs, religion contributes in shaping the individual's cultural identity even if religious rules are not followed by the individual. Values, traditions, holidays, and celebrations often reflect the religious beliefs of individuals and groups.

Religion is an important element in, and often the basic reason for, the development of a community. Immigrants seek religious institutions for help to integrate into the new society (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). These institutions constitute a safety net for the immigrant—spiritually, culturally, and psychologically. Many immigrants choose one city over another because of the presence of religious connections in that place.

Dupre (2005) considered religion important in many levels of community life. Religion may be an individual issue upon which the value and belief system of the person is based. It can affect many areas of daily life, such as work time and conditions, health care, and education. The beliefs that immigrants acquired in their countries of origin affect the way they practice religion in the new location. Immigrants may also import religious practices to their new countries, as well as to the religious communities in their home countries (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003).

While some governments do not put emphasis on religion, in many countries religion is dominant and affects the legal system of the country. Immigrants who come from such systems are especially challenged when integrating into a new system that separates religious and state matters.

### **Ethnic Identity**

According to Nagel (1994) ethnic identification undergoes ongoing development and is constantly redefined. There are several elements such as language, religion, culture, ancestry, and location that play a role in the construction of ethnic identity. The individuals' conception of their ethnicity varies depending on internal as well as external elements. For certain individuals, ethnic identification is defined based on their labeling of themselves vis-à-vis their own ethnic group. For some what others think about them defines their self-identification. Ethnic choices tend to become useless and meaningless in a society that lacks appreciation of ethnic differences and diversity. In this case, individuals put an emphasis on the validation of others for their choices. Individuals limit themselves to certain defined ethnic categories by society and policies.

Phinney (1996) explains that ethnic identity is developed in three stages. The initial stage is typically at an early age of childhood or adolescence. At this stage ethnicity is not relevant and the individuals tend to accept the values of their environment. The second stage is essential to the

process of ethnic identity formation and might continue over time. The individuals start the exploration process and become more interested in knowing about their ethnic group. In the third and final stage, individuals evaluate their knowledge and develop a sense of security about belonging to their group.

In the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), Phinney (1992) presents four components of ethnic identity: self-identification, ethnic behaviors, affirmation and belonging, and ethnic identity achievement.

**Self-identification.** Individuals use labels to identify themselves based on the view of others toward them. This labeling is considered fundamental in the process of identifying with the group (Phinney, 1992). Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) consider self-identification as the basic element of group identity. Individuals identify themselves as members of a certain social group or in relation to that group. Self-identification is important to understanding the group identity.

Verkuyten and Kwa (1996) define ethnic identification as the choice individuals make between two identities. In multicultural societies immigrants redefine themselves and are redefined by others. Immigrants' self-identification is influenced by social factors such as discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice. They may become more self-conscious and tend to identify with their ethnic group or reject it and identify with the majority. Immigrants' cultural background is another important dimension of self-identification. If immigrants come from a collective society, they tend to identify more with their own group rather than the majority. Verkuyten and Kwa (1996) noted that ethnic self-identification is closely related to ethnic involvement. Individuals' views of themselves differ between those who participate in ethnic



group activities or tend to interact only with the individuals from the same ethnic group and those who are most often in social contact with individuals from other groups.

**Ethnic behaviors.** A key element of ethnic identity is behavioral involvement. Individuals engage in activities that indicate their identity and relation to their group. These activities are specific to the group and hold a significant and symbolic meaning for that group. Ethnic behaviors are grounded in the belief system of the ethnic group (Yip & Fuligni, 2002). Many individuals may promote their ethnic identity through the use of the ethnic language, apparel, ethnic friendships, the participation in social and cultural events, or even their use of their resources to support their ethnic group or organizations (Ashmore et al., 2004). Phinney (1992) defines ethnic behaviors as the activities that express the individual's identity such as the social interaction with other members of the group and the participation in cultural activities. The significance of ethnic behaviors for individuals, especially adolescents, might differ depending on their sense of ethnic belonging (Yip & Fuligni, 2002).

**Affirmation and belonging.** Ashmore et al. (2004) consider that belonging is a key aspect of ethnic identity. Individuals need to belong to a group. Ethnic affirmation is the process in which individuals develop positive attitudes, feelings, and strong attachment to their group (Ghavami, Fingerhut, Peplau, Grant, & Wittig, 2011).

Kim, Suyemoto, and Turner (2010) considered the sense of belonging to an ethnic group as a psychological influence on ethnic identity. People who have a strong sense of belonging to a group experience and value a personal involvement with the group. Several dimensions of ethnic belonging were reported: a strong connection with the group members, a strong attachment to the group, a sense of shared fate with the group, and a focus on the similarities with the same ethnic group and the differences from other ethnic groups.

**Ethnic identity achievement.** Ghavami et al. (2011) define ethnic achievement as “a cognitive process that refers to exploring an identity and developing an understanding of the meaning of that identity in one’s own life” (p. 80). Individuals who become aware of their ethnicity begin to reflect on what it means to belong to that group. As a result, they may appreciate the group and belonging to it.

According to Erikson (1968) identity is formed based on many series of conflicts. Individuals become more aware of their identity at the adolescence stage where the conflict is between the identity and role confusion. At this stage adolescents try to bring a sense of self on which they will build their identity, and achievement is critical. Individuals with an achieved identity have committed to an occupation and ideology after experiencing an identity crisis. They made their decisions and choices after evaluating their options and beliefs (Marcia, 1966).

We consider in this study that ethnic behaviors are both internal and external elements; self-identification is an external element; affirmation and belonging and ethnic identity achievement are internal elements.

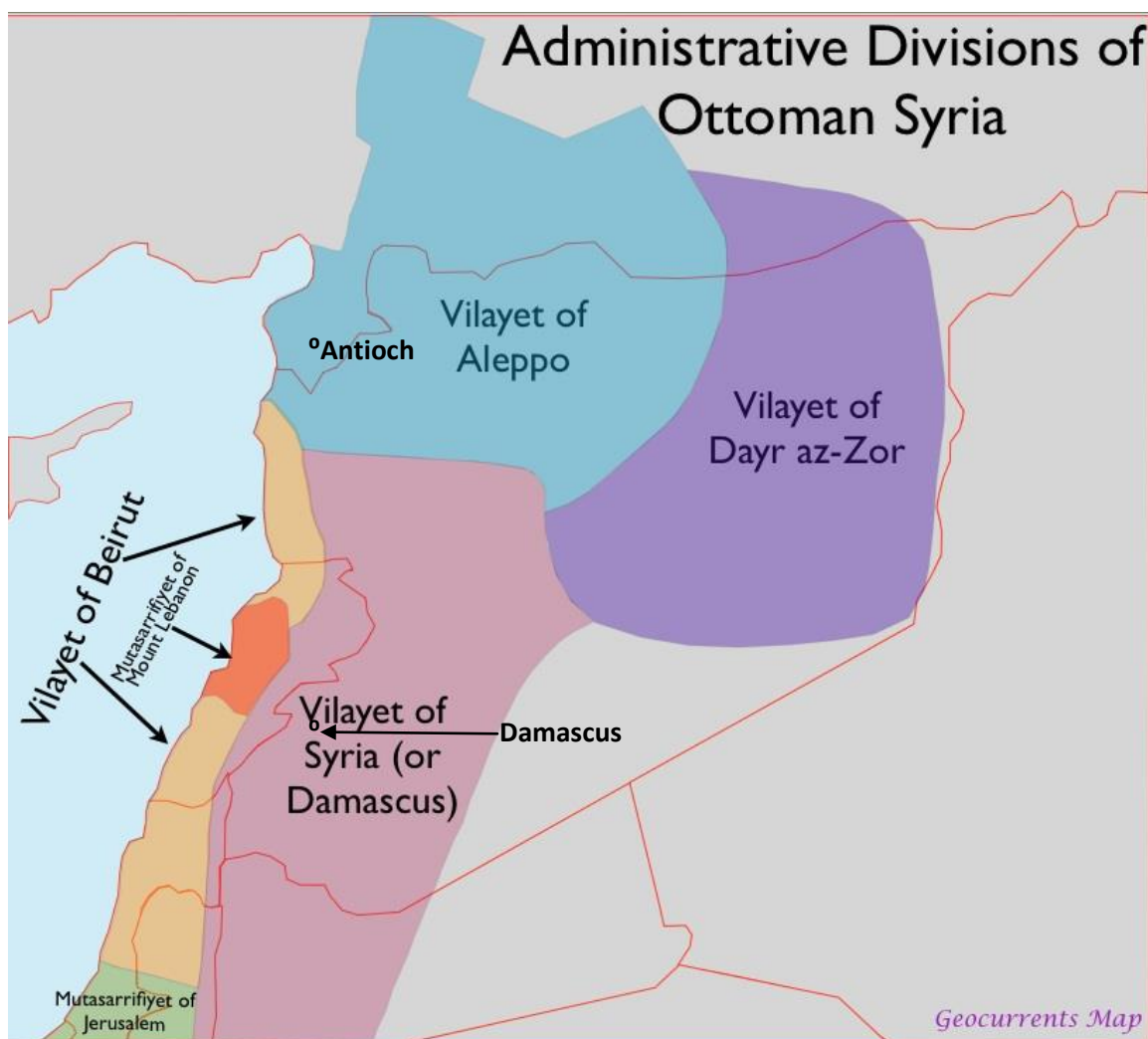
Like many other ethnic groups, Lebanese immigrants travelled to the United States for different reasons. They were in search of better economic and social opportunities, as well as escape from political and religious oppression. While assimilating into the American society, they strived to preserve their culture and ethnic identities. Lebanese immigrants integrated into their new environment and became part of their new country while remaining attached to their country of origin.

## **Lebanese in the United States**

American missionaries brought dreams of happy times and offered Syrians an attractive image of a better world in the United States in the early 19th century. Their positive contributions included the establishment of schools, the introduction of medical assistance, and the introduction of the Arabic printing presses. Some testimonies describe these missionaries as an inspiration (Orfalea, 2006).

In 1854, Antonius Bishillany, a Maronite Lebanese who worked as an interpreter and a tour guide in the Holy Land, was the first Lebanese recorded to arrive to the United States (Orfalea, 2006). He was followed by a few individuals over the next decades. Thirty years later many started to immigrate from Lebanon in larger groups and constituted a wave of immigrants.

Religious diversity in Lebanon was an important cause of immigration especially in the 1860s when a conflict between the Maronite Catholics and the Druze (Muslims) of Mount Lebanon reached as far as Damascus. More than 20,000 Christians were killed as well as many Druze. Churches, monasteries, and schools were burned and destroyed (Orfalea, 2006). This kind of destruction caused many people to flee, first to Egypt, and then to the United States. Many survivors describe how they left Lebanon to seek a better life for their families (Totah, 2001). Immigrants who wanted to avoid the sectarian and religious conflict in Mount Lebanon were also motivated by the promise of religious freedom in the United States, freedom from Ottomans persecution of Christians (Marvasti & McKinney, 2004).



*Figure 1.* Map of Greater Syria during the Ottoman rule between 1856 and 1918. The vilayet or mutasarrifiyet was a major administrative district or province with its own governor. Ottoman Syria included present day Syria, present day Lebanon, present day Palestine, part of present day Turkey and Jordan. The border lines of present day Lebanon and Syria are overlaid. From “Greater Syria and the challenge to Syrian nationalism,” by M.W. Lewis, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.geocurrents.info/geopolitics/greater-syria-and-the-challenge-to-syrian-nationalism#ixzz3S1zH6lhc>. Copyright (2011) by M.W. Lewis. Reprinted with permission (See Appendix B).

**First wave.** The first wave of immigrants from the Lebanon to the United States began in the 1880s. Until World War I, Lebanon was under the control of the Ottoman Empire and all who lived there were considered Turkish. This situation created confusion about the nationality

of early immigrants with most of them being self-identified as Syrians (Marvasti, & McKinney, 2004). Syria at that time consisted of present - day Syria along with present - day Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon (called Mount Lebanon) (Gualtieri, 2004).

People from Mount Lebanon constituted the majority of the first wave of Syrian immigrants arriving in the United States. In her 1993 book, *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience*, Alixa Naff cites a letter dated April 30, 1889, that was sent from Beirut to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris. The author of this letter indicated that Lebanese immigrants had become a very important problem in passenger traffic aboard French ships and expressed concern over the difficulties created by Lebanese migration. The writer asserted immigration rules were broken, especially because the sheer number of immigrants on ship often violated sanitation standards. Ottoman authorities opposed the flow of immigration and requested that the French Consul-General debark Ottoman subjects from French ships in Beirut (Naff, 1993).

The majority of individuals in the first wave of immigrants were Christians, primarily young men who intended to travel, earn some money, then go back home. However, once their personal economic situations stabilized, many were joined by their families. Between 1899 and 1914, women were reported to constitute 32% of immigrants and many arrived in the United States as wives or fiancées of men who had arrived earlier (Benson, 2004; Gualtieri, 2004).

The idea of sudden wealth and prestige attracted many early immigrants. The United States was seen as the place to make money. Indirect recruitment played a major role in immigration. Indirect recruitment took place when returning immigrants told their relatives success stories of how prosperity was achieved and described the many opportunities to make money in the United States. These stories were repeated in Arabic periodicals that published

articles and stories about American society and the success of Syrians in the new world (Naff, 1993).

A famine in 1914 added to the already difficult living conditions of many Lebanese and caused many to flee from suffering. Immigrants' stories of horror describe how some people died on the streets, others were murdered for a piece of bread, and others were just murdered for no reason (Orfalea, 2006; Naff, 1993). The Ottoman rulers of Greater Syria increased taxes on their subjects. All men were forced to join the military service with the Ottomans; however, many resisted and revolted against the Ottoman ruler. The Ottomans' reaction to this situation was harsh and people were often arrested unjustly. Restrictions were put on the press, many writers fined, others expelled or imprisoned. On May 6, 1916, the Turkish government hung 14 Christian and Muslim journalists in Beirut and seven in Damascus. As a result many citizens participated in open rebellions. General citizens and journalists were terrified by the events and some decided to flee to the United States.

***Travel restrictions.*** Early immigrants faced serious problems in their travel. One major challenge was the restrictions that the Ottomans put on all the roads leading to ports, which meant that many had to go to Egypt and use its ports to escape to the United States. The Ottomans then put restrictions on travel to Egypt and required a guarantor who had to remain in the country to ensure the return of Ottoman subjects to their countries. When the law was violated, the guarantor had to pay a large sum of money to the government (Naff, 1993).

Many immigrants departing to the United States were misrouted by agents and sent to Argentina, South Africa, Sierra Leone, or other countries. Some families were separated upon arrival at Ellis Island and in some cases family members were deported or denied entry in the

United States, usually due to disease, while the rest of the family remained in the United States (Naff, 1993).

***Restrictions to immigration.*** The application of immigration laws by the U.S. government affected many early Lebanese immigrants. These laws banned some groups from entering the country and limited the number of immigrants from other countries. Between 1875 and 1924 there was tremendous pressure to reduce the number of immigrants entering the United States. In 1875, Congress passed a law banning prostitutes and alien convicts from entering the country. This law was followed by another banning people who were likely to become public charges. In 1884, legislation eliminated contract laborers and restricted some ethnic groups (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 2009).

The National Origins Act of 1921 restricted the number of immigrants who were allowed to enter the United States and assigned quotas based on national origin. The law restricted the annual number of immigrants from any country to 3% of the number of people from that country who were living in the United States during the 1910 census. In 1924, the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act further restricted the annual number of immigrants from any country to 2% of the number of those living in the United States from that country during the 1890 census (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 2009).

Early Lebanese immigrants were, like many other nationalities, affected by the National Origins Act of 1921 and the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. Only 100 Syrians were allowed to enter the country per year. The number of women immigrating began to exceed the number of men in this period, especially if they were the wives of naturalized men and entered as non-quota immigrants (Gualtieri, 2004). The flow of immigrants began slowly but steadily increased; and by 1925 nearly every household in Mount Lebanon knew one or more of its community

members who had immigrated into the United States or other countries on the American continent (Tannous, 1943).

**Second wave.** The second wave of Lebanese immigrants started after World War II. In addition to Christians, the number of Muslim immigrants increased. This second wave of immigrants consisted of many professionals with high levels of education motivated by better professional and educational opportunities (Marvasti & McKinney, 2004).

In 1965, the Hart-Celler Act replaced the 1924 quotas with preference categories based on family relationships and job skills, giving particular preference to potential immigrants with relatives in the United States and with occupations considered critical by the U.S. Department of Labor (Diner, 2008). Since then Middle Easterners have been one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in America. Records show that in 2001 the United States Department of State received 1.5 million applications for the visa lottery program from the Middle East. This program awards 50,000 green cards selected randomly. The majority of Lebanese immigrants settled in California, Virginia, Texas, Michigan, and New York (Camarota, 2002).

**Third wave.** The civil war in Lebanon and the Arab-Israeli conflict were essential factors in the Lebanese migration of the 1970s. Exact numbers are difficult to pinpoint because many immigrants were Palestinians who were refugees in Lebanon. They immigrated to the United States with Lebanese passports. As civil war, fighting, terror, and political oppression escalated, economic activity dropped dramatically. Many people were displaced due to the destruction of their homes and businesses (Labaki, 1992; Naff, 1992). A great number of immigrants returned to Lebanon between 1982 and 1983 thinking that the war was over. However, the situation deteriorated in 1983 leading to larger scale of population displacement, internally and externally, and to an increase in the number of immigrants. The economic crisis continued to beset the



country and the high rate of unemployment brought the immigration level back to what it was in 1975 (Labaki, 1992).

Tabar (2010) notes that no official census has been conducted in Lebanon since its independence in 1943, which has contributed to a lack of information regarding the number of immigrants leaving the country. In a 2013 report titled *The Lebanese Demographic Reality* completed by the Lebanese Information Center, an estimated number of immigrants after 1990 is given based on records of the General Security Directorate (customs) and the number of departures and arrivals from Beirut International Airport. The political instability in Lebanon that resulted in civil strife and the assassinations of several key political figures since 2005 as well as the ongoing conflict with Israel and the war of July of 2006 has led many to leave the country. Due to these political and economic factors, Lebanon has not been able to slow the high immigration flux of people seeking better opportunities. At present it is estimated that the number of Lebanese immigrants and their descendants constitute more than twice the number of Lebanese residing in Lebanon (Tabar, 2010).

### **The Maronite Church**

The history of the Maronite Church is rooted in the Middle East. The Church has its origins in modern day Syria and was followed by immigration to Lebanon. Throughout their history, Maronites have immigrated to other parts of the world.

**Identity.** The Maronite Patriarchal Synod held between 2003 and 2006 in Lebanon defines the Maronite Church as an Antiochene Syriac Church with a special liturgical heritage, in full union with the Holy See and the pope, and embodied in her Lebanese and Eastern environment, and the Countries of Expansion. The origins of the Maronite Church date back to the 4th and 5th centuries to a monk by the name of Maron who lived on the mountains of

Cyrrhus in northern Syria and was followed by several men and women who adopted his lifestyle of living in the open air (Daou, 1984). Early Maronites settled heavily in Syria, especially in the valley of the Orontes and Apamea where they built their monastery and called it “The House of Maron,” as well as in Antioch and Edessa in modern day Turkey. Missionary activities led many Maronites monks to arrive in Lebanon. These monks settled in Lebanon and evangelized the region turning pagan temples into churches (Tayah, 1987).

**Immigration of Maronites.** The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD that defined the dual nature of Christ as both human and divine led to a split in the church between the Chalcedonians—Western Church, Byzantine, Melkites, and Maronites—who accepted the teachings of the council and the Non-Chalcedonians known as Monophysites. This split resulted in persecutions; 350 monks were killed and the monastery on the Orontes River was burnt. Many Maronites fled to Lebanon escaping the persecutions. The conflict between the Arabs and the Byzantine as well as the Islamic conquest of the area led many Maronites to immigrate to Lebanon as well. The major resettlement of Maronites took place in the Lebanese mountains and valleys where they took refuge and practiced their religion freely (Harb, 2001).

After the Crusades the Maronites found their way towards the islands of the Mediterranean and toward the end of the 13th century they founded their largest settlement in the Northeastern part of the island of Cyprus (Tayah, 1987). In the middle of the 16th century, Pope Gregory XIII sent a delegation to Lebanon to choose young men to study the catholic doctrine in Rome. In 1584 the Maronite School of Rome was founded. Many Maronite clergy travelled from Lebanon to study in Rome (Harb, 2001; Tabar, 2010). Maronites immigrated also to the surrounding Arab and Middle Eastern countries, especially Syria and Palestine. Maronites who immigrated to Egypt played a significant role in the social and political life of the Egyptian

society. Many Maronite priests and monks immigrated to Egypt in the beginning of the 18th century to serve the Maronite community there (Maronite Patriarchal Synod, 2008).

Maronites were part of the immigration waves of the Lebanese immigration that started at the end of the 19th century. Their destination was South and North America, Australia, and South Africa. They settled in major cities where they established their own businesses and social clubs before the church could send clergy to serve them. Toward the middle of the 20th century, Maronites immigrated to Europe seeking work and educational opportunities (Maronite Patriarchal Synod, 2008).

**Maronite Church in the United States.** The majority of Maronite immigrants to the United States came in waves from Lebanon. Their situation in the United States was different from those in other parts of the world where they immigrated. As soon as they settled they sent letters asking for priests to serve them (Labaki, 1993). The church sent many clerics and missionaries in the beginnings of the 20th century to establish churches and parishes and serve the needs of the faithful supporting them and safeguarding their ethnic, religious, and cultural identities. Maronite churches were under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic bishops (Maronite Patriarchal Synod, 2008). Fr. Peter Korkomaz established the first Maronite mission in 1890 and in 1924 the number of Maronite churches reached 37 (Labaki, 1993).

Maronites started their own churches wherever they landed in the United States, a sign of their attachment to their ethnic and religious identities. However, this was not an easy task. Churches were established usually when the number of immigrants reached 50 families or more. Most communities were served by priests who were relatives to someone in the community or from their hometown. Community leaders as well as ethnic clubs and organizations played an important role in establishing these churches by hosting dinners, bake sales, raffles, and many

other activities. Once the funds were available, a house was purchased and remodeled as a church. In many cases, the building would serve as a church, rectory, and a guest house. After a while, Maronites built their own new churches and named them after the patron saint of their home village or that of a major donor (Labaki, 1993).

In 1961 the dedication of the Maronite seminary in Washington, DC, from which several American born Maronite priests graduated was a step forward in the progress of the Maronite Church in the United States. Students who joined the seminary were offered special courses in Maronite history, spirituality, and traditions, as well as classes in Syriac and Arabic languages (Tayah, 1987; Labaki, 1993). In 1963 a group of dedicated Maronites gathered in Washington, DC, and founded the National Apostolate of Maronites, known as NAM, an organization whose goal is to unite the Maronites in the United States and keep their heritage, tradition, and culture alive (Saade, 2012). In 1965 Maronites from around the nation participated in the dedication of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, OH, modeled after the original shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa, Lebanon. It was a place of pilgrimage where they could visit and pray.

By the 1960s most Maronites were on their way to assimilation in the American Church. The need for a single authority and spiritual direction was urgent. In 1966 the first Maronite exarchate (apostolic vicariate) in the United States was established by Pope Paul VI and it became an eparchy (diocese) in 1971 under the name of the Eparchy of Saint Maron. The first Bishop to be appointed was Bishop Francis M. Zayek who established his see in Detroit, MI, and then moved to Brooklyn, NY, in 1977 (Labaki, 1993). In 1994 Pope John-Paul II established a second eparchy for the Maronite in the United States, that of Our Lady of Lebanon. Bishop John Chedid was the first bishop and he established his see in Los Angeles, CA, (Saade, 2012). The

Maronite Church is an independent Eastern Catholic church that is in communion with the Roman Church. According to the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, the establishment of an eparchy and the appointment of eparchial bishops outside of the patriarchal territory is a right reserved to the pope. A patriarchal territory is defined by the area where the patriarch, head of the patriarchal church, has jurisdiction, in the case of the Maronite Church, the patriarchal territory is Lebanon and the Middle East (Faris, 1992).

**Challenges of the Maronites in the United States.** The various challenges and trials faced by the Maronites in the United States are many. The early Maronite immigrants faced numerous difficult circumstances yet still managed to successfully assimilate into American society. This assimilation has had both positive and negative consequences. Many Maronites became estranged from their culture. Today many efforts are being constructed to reconnect these descendants of the early immigrants with their motherland Lebanon and their Maronite Church. The main challenge faced by the Maronites in the United States is that of losing their ethnic and religious identity.

Once a great uniting force, the use of the Arabic language presents an important issue. Like many other ethnic groups who came to the United States seeking freedom from oppression, Maronites originally preserved their language as part of their cultural identity. The Arabic language was used at homes, in liturgical celebrations, and at social gatherings. However, the use of the language in the Maronite Church is rapidly decreasing with each succeeding generation and this decline in its use is due to the simple changes in demographics (Maronite Patriarchal Synod, 2008). As in the vast majority of emigrant communities the Arabic language is lost. Labaki (1993) considers that the survival of the Maronite Church in the United States must be

found in the uniqueness and distinctiveness of its heritage which needs to be preserved and shared.

Maronites are faced with the challenge of safeguarding and transferring their identity, culture, and heritage for their children. The absence of Maronite parochial schools in the United States makes that task all the more difficult. Many Maronites were absorbed into churches from other denominations, especially Roman Catholic, in order to provide a Catholic education to their children. Schools expose children more to other cultures and peer pressure makes them tend to pick up customs from their peers. The Maronite Church in the United States published a series of catechetical books called the *Faith of the Mountain* series to educate our youth from a decidedly Maronite perspective. Most churches organize social and cultural events that are intended to keep their tradition alive (Labaki, 1993; Maronite Patriarchal Synod, 2008, Saade, 2012).

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of the church in preserving the ethnic identity among the Maronite Lebanese immigrants in the United States. The study answered three major questions using a survey and several interviews.

#### **Research Questions**

These are the questions considered in this study:

- 1- How do Maronites in the United States identify themselves?
  - a. How well have they explored and understood their ethnic identity?
  - b. How well have they demonstrated their ethnic identity?
  - c. How well have they developed positive attitudes toward their ethnic group?
  - d. How well have they incorporated into the U.S. society?
- 2- What is the role of ethnic events and practices, people's attitudes toward the ethnic group, and assimilation into the American society in helping Maronite Lebanese in the United State achieve their ethnic identity?
- 3- What is the role of the Maronite Church in safeguarding the distinctiveness and continuity of the identity of Lebanese immigrants?
  - a. How does the Maronite Church respond to the ethnic identity challenges of its faithful?

#### **Research Design**

The nature and uniqueness of the research questions require a method that would provide a complete picture of the research problem. A simple method design using only quantitative or qualitative data collection method is not sufficient to answer the research questions. Used

together in one design, these two methods supplement each other and allow a more vigorous analysis of the data collected (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

According to Creswell (2003) a mixed method is designed to provide enough data for thorough analysis: “A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem” (p. 510). According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) a mixed methods research design provides more opportunity for the researcher to answer the research question, stronger interpretations of the research questions, and a greater diversity of observations in exploring the research problem than a single method research design and is the most appropriate method for this research.

Creswell (2003) presents several types of mixed method designs. The explanatory sequential design was used for this study. An explanatory sequential research design is a two-phase model where quantitative collection and analysis followed by qualitative collection and analysis. In the first phase of the study, the quantitative data was collected and analyzed. In the second phase the qualitative data was collected and analyzed to help explain the results of the quantitative data.

Ivankova et al. (2006) explain that the quantitative data provide a general understanding of the research problem and the qualitative data refine and explain the quantitative results by an in-depth explanation of the participants’ views. The strength of the explanatory sequential design is in being straightforward in collecting quantitative data and providing more detailed examination of the results of that data. However, it is limited to being a lengthy design and the practicality of resources to collect and analyze both types of data.



An explanatory sequential research design requires two different sampling methods and data collection strategy: a strategy for the quantitative approach and a strategy for the qualitative approach.

**Quantitative approach.** The population of this research was the members of the Maronite Church in the United States. The quantitative data collection took place in the first phase of the research.

*Participants and sampling strategies.* Non-probability sampling techniques were used in the quantitative phase of the study because participants were conveniently available and had desired characteristics. Specifically, the convenience sampling method was used. In convenience sampling participants are selected who are accessible and available to answer research questions (Creswell, 2003; Kemper, Stingfield, & Teddlie, 2003). Two groups, youths and adults, were participants, both representing the demographics of the Maronite Church in the United States. Youths represent the future of the Church, while adults represent the founders and current Church population. In keeping with the purpose of the study, all participants were from the United States.

The quantitative data was collected from youth between the ages of 12 and 23 from Maronite parishes. Surveys were sent to each of the 82 Maronite parishes in the United States to be filled by five youths chosen by the local pastor. In addition, criterion sample of 24 adult laity were chosen by four local pastors to fill out the surveys. The adult participants were two Lebanese, two Americans of Lebanese descent, and two of non-Lebanese descent.

*Data collection strategy.* The survey research design method was used to collect quantitative data, specifically an adaptation of MEIM developed by Phinney (1992) (see Appendix C). Surveys allow researchers to explore the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or

characteristics of the participants in a study (Creswell, 2003). The MEIM survey measured the four ethnic identity components identified by Phinney (1992): self-identification, ethnic behaviors, affirmation and belonging, and ethnic achievement. Assimilation was measured as well because it is an important issue for immigrants. The first question of the survey was an open ended question about self-identification of the participants. Questions 21, 22, and 23 of the survey were used to determine the participants' ethnic heritage and their parent's ethnicity and were answered using multiple choice answers. The participants answered questions 1-20 of the survey on a Likert Scale ranging from 1: *strongly disagree* to 4: *strongly agree*. The survey was used to answer questions 1 and 2 in the research questions.

Creswell (2003) addresses the issue of evaluating a research instrument and testing its validity and reliability. Validity means that the scores obtained are meaningful allowing conclusions to be drawn from the population. Reliability means that the scores from an instrument are consistent when the same instrument is administered several times. The MEIM was used in several studies and has shown reliability, with alphas above .80. These studies concluded that MEIM is a reliable and a valid measure with ethnically diverse groups and allows the study of ethnic identity as a general phenomenon (Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003; Worrell, 2000).

***Quantitative data analysis.*** The quantitative data analysis process consists of descriptive and inferential statistical data analysis through description of trends and interpretation of findings to draw conclusions to answer the research questions. Data analysis in quantitative research relies heavily on numbers in reporting the results. Descriptive statistics were used in interpreting and reporting the results of the data collected to provide an understanding of the responses of the participants. Percentages and distributions analysis with graphic illustrations of histograms, bar

charts, and box plots were presented to provide an overview of the quantitative data. A multiple linear regression described the ability of ethnic behavior, ethnic affirmation, and assimilation to predict ethnic achievement. Mann-Whitney was used to determine if there was a measurable difference between adult and youth participants on MEIM scores.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22 for Windows was used to generate the statistical results and figures.

**Qualitative approach.** Following the quantitative data collection and analysis, the qualitative data collection took place.

***Participants and sampling strategies.*** In the qualitative approach the purposeful sampling method was used. Purposeful sampling helps in the understanding of the research question by intentionally selecting participants who can best explain the question and provide detailed useful information (Creswell, 2003; Kemper et al., 2003).

The qualitative data was collected from the pastors of the parishes from which the adult laity were selected. The selection criteria were based on the place of birth of the priests: two were Lebanese born immigrants and two were Americans of Lebanese descent. After the analysis of the quantitative data, it was found necessary to interview two other clergy of European descent to reflect the diversity in the Maronite Church in the United States.

***Data collection strategy.*** After the analysis of the quantitative data collected, a series of open-ended questions were developed for the interviews. The interview questions were the following:

- Based on the results from the surveys, we found that the stronger ethnic identity, the more likely people are to accept others and to be assimilated in the society.

What kind of structure do you have in your church to assist people in discovering their ethnic identity?

- Lebanese immigrants come with a Lebanese identity. Does their identity change when they come here?
- Do you think that ethnic practices and cultural events help Lebanese Maronites develop their ethnic identity in the United States?
- Do these events help to stabilize their identity or impede their assimilation into the US society?
- The results from the study show that the Maronite Church in the United States is ethnically diverse. What are the benefits and/or challenges this presents for you? For your parish? Do you see changes in the identity and the role of the church as diversity increases?
- Based on your observation and experience what kind of challenges, in terms of ethnic identity, do immigrants face? How do you respond to these challenges?
- The ethnic diversity in the Maronite Church is reflected in the Maronite clergy in the United States? What benefits and/or challenges does this present?
- What strategies of social networking do you provide to the Lebanese community?
- What strategies do you use to bring together the different generations of immigrants?
- Do we need to safeguard our distinctiveness and continuity of the identity? How do you see the role of the Maronite Church in safeguarding the distinctiveness and continuity of the identity of Lebanese immigrants?

- How do you foresee the future of the Maronite ethnic Church and what does it depend on?

One-on-one interviews allowed asking questions and recording answers with each participant separately (Creswell, 2003). The interviews were used to answer questions 1, 2, and 3 in the research questions.

***Role of the researcher.*** I am Maronite Catholic priest who was born in Lebanon and belongs to the Congregation of Maronite Lebanese Missionaries, a religious order of priests whose mission is to assist and serve Maronites wherever they are established. After finishing my studies in Lebanon, I was ordained priest and served as an administrator of a middle school in South Lebanon. In 2003 I immigrated to the United States to be among the clergy sent by the church to serve the needs of the Maronites in the United States. Since then, I have served in three parishes where I have experienced the challenges of the Maronite Church in this country. This experience provided me with an outlook on the role of the church in safeguarding the ethnic and religious identity of immigrants. During the research, I served as the coordinator of *Project Roots* and on the religious support committee of the *Christian Lebanese Foundation in the World*, a joint effort between the Maronite Church in the United States and the *Maronite Foundation in the World* intended to preserve the pride of Lebanese immigrants in their Lebanese heritage. The goal of *Project Roots* is to assist all Americans of Lebanese descent to connect with their roots and register in Lebanon their vital life events such as births and marriages and to obtain Lebanese citizenship.

During the qualitative data collection I played the role of the interviewer. I was totally engaged in the data collection and was the primary data collection agent in this phase of the study. I was personally involved in the collecting and analyzing the qualitative data. Each of the

clergy participating in the interviews was personally known to me before the study. During the research, I was aware of my biases and assumptions regarding the role of the church in safeguarding the ethnic and religious identity of immigrants. To avoid these biases it was important for me not make any assumptions during the interview, transcription, and analysis processes. I did not ask leading questions during the interviews and I gave the interviewee the time to answer the questions without interruptions. I used also the member checking method that is taking the interview back to the participants and asking them about the accuracy of the transcription and gave them the chance to add any other information they might have missed during the interview. The interviews were transcribed verbatim.

***Qualitative data analysis.*** Qualitative data analysis consists of developing a general theme about the central phenomenon by organizing, transcribing, and analyzing the data collected (Creswell, 2003). The qualitative research design used was basic interpretive. The findings were evaluated based on the situation or theme that captured the major themes of the research. To answer the research questions, the descriptive method was used to build a portrait of the participants. To analyze the data the themes that emerged during the interviews were marked. The focus of the qualitative data analysis was the experiences of the participants to explain their perception of the role that the Maronite Church plays in safeguarding the distinctiveness and continuity of the ethnic and religious identity of Lebanese immigrants.

**Protection of Human Subjects.** Educational research presents ethical considerations due to the nature of the research dealing with human subjects. The protection of the rights and privacy of the participants and the research site and the reporting of the results honestly is an important ethical issue to be observed during research (Creswell, 2003). The protection of human subjects followed the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of

the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. IRB approval (see Appendix D) was required before any data was collected.

To ensure protection of the human subjects participating in the research, several strategies were used during the research process. The purpose of the study was communicated and the permission to get access to the participants and collect data were obtained before starting the research process (See Appendices E, F, G). For the youth participants a parental consent form (See Appendix H) and a minor assent form (See Appendix I) were sent with the survey. During the quantitative data collection the anonymity of the participants was protected. Numbers were assigned to participants to keep their identity private and the data remained confidential. Participants were allowed to terminate their participation in the study at any time without being bound by any legal or ethical obligation.

During the qualitative data collection the interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participants and handwritten notes were taken as well. A separate tape was numbered and labeled for each of the six participants in this phase without reference to their real identity. All records were stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home and will be destroyed after 5 years. Permission was granted by two of the interviewees to include identifying information in their descriptions.

These measures were taken into consideration during the entire research, especially during data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

## Chapter IV: Results and Summary

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of the church in preserving the ethnic identity among the Maronite Lebanese immigrants in the United States. The study answered three major questions using an adaptation of the MEIM (Phinney, 1992) and six open ended question interviews. This chapter presents a report of the results of the quantitative and qualitative data, data analysis, and a summary.

### Quantitative Process

Using an adaptation of the MEIM survey (Phinney, 1992), quantitative data were collected, which answered questions 1 and 2 of the research questions. This section reports the findings in the quantitative data: response rate, demographics, and descriptive analysis.

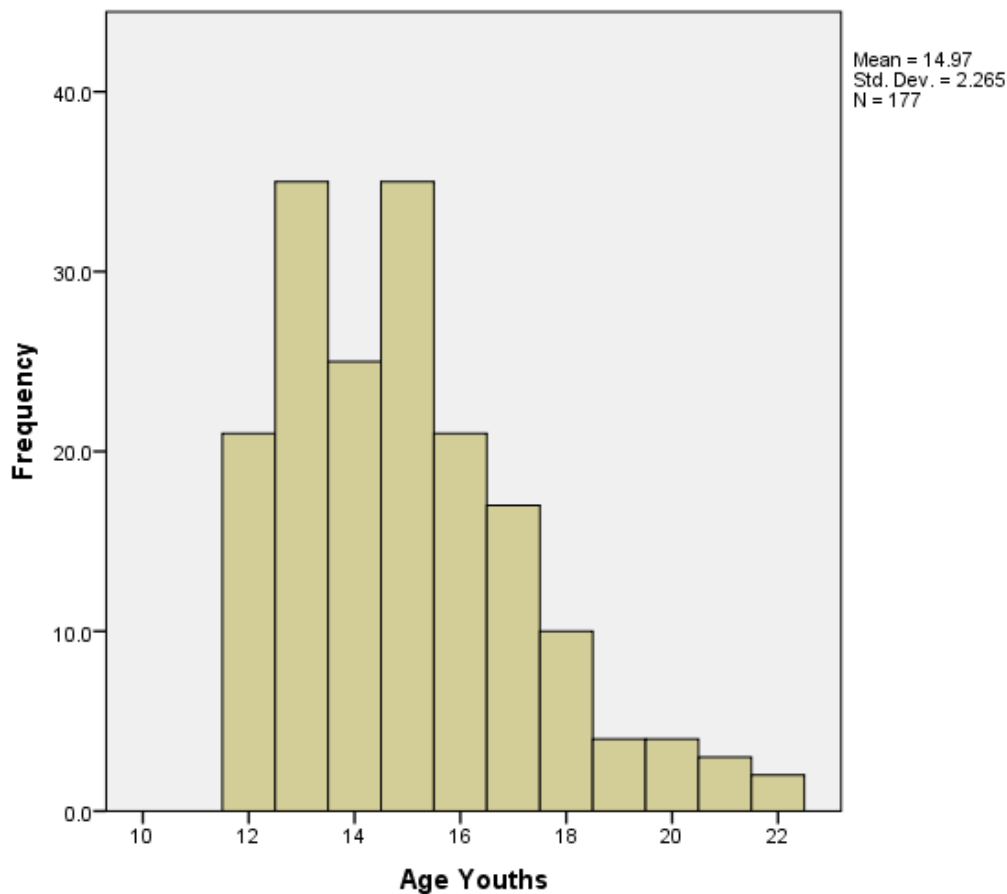
**Response rate.** A total of 434 surveys were sent in July 2014 to Maronite parishes in the United States: 24 surveys to be completed by adults of 24 years of age and older and 410 by youths between the ages of 12 and 23. Traditionally, many Lebanese immigrants go back to Lebanon in the summer time, between June and August, to visit their families. Therefore, the data collection process took a little longer and resulted in a response rate lower than expected.

The 24 adult surveys were completed and returned. Of the 410 youth surveys, 180 were returned completed, three of which were completed by participants over the age of 23 and were included with the adult surveys. In addition, two surveys that were filled out by a 9 and an 11 year old were excluded from the study. After data entry was completed and data analysis commenced, five additional youth surveys and one adult survey were returned. These five surveys were not included, however, so the final study count included 204 surveys: 27 completed by adults and 177 completed by youths.



**Demographics.** Age level was measured by this instrument. Participants were divided into two groups: youth and adults.

Figures 2 and 3 indicate the age level of youth and adult participants. Most of the youth respondents were between the ages of 13 and 15. The adult respondents had a mean of 45 years and mode of 27 years old.



*Figure 2.* Frequency of age level among youth participants.

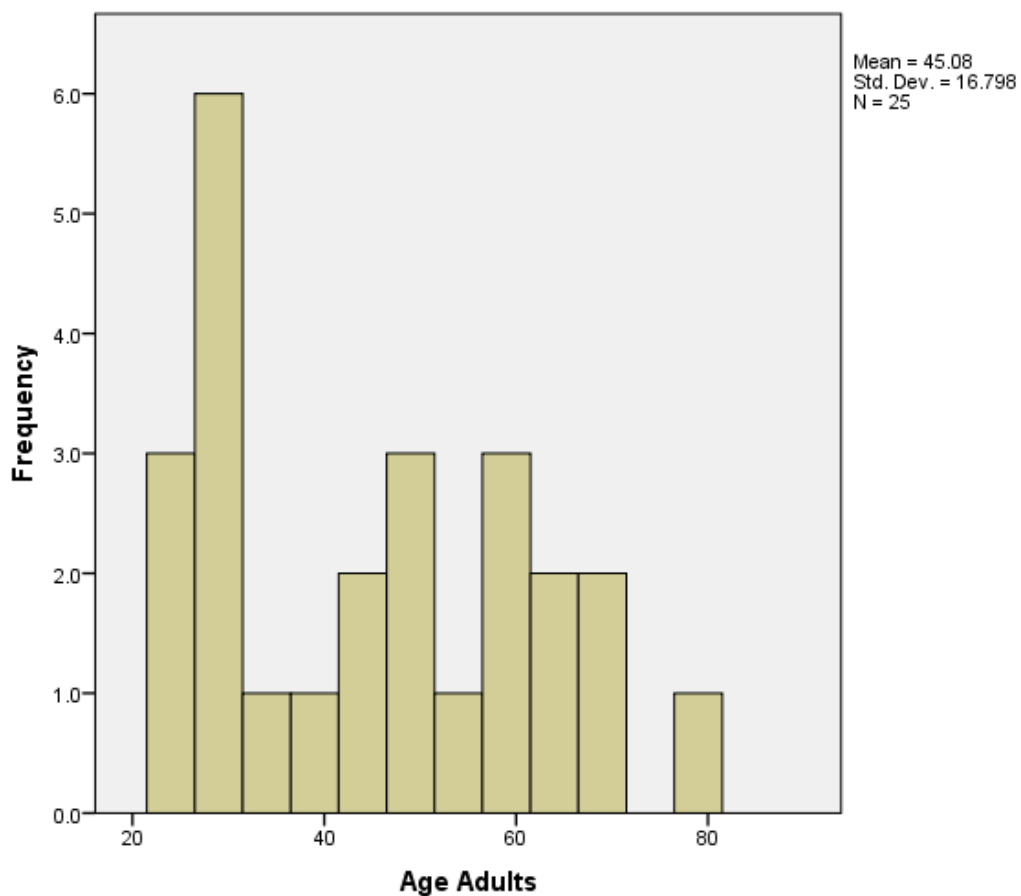


Figure 3. Frequency of age level among adult participants.

**Descriptive and inferential analysis.** In this study, the sample size of 204 cases was sufficient to conduct principle component analysis (PCA). PCA is a statistical method used to establish the components that exist within the data and how a particular variable might contribute to the component in question (Field, 2009). PCA determined if the proposed components exist. This can be considered good evidence of construct validity when the components do exist.

An adaptation of Phinney's research instrument MEIM to measure ethnic identity was used. Four components were determined in the study: ethnic achievement, ethnic behavior, ethnic affirmation, and assimilation. Self-identification was not included and was considered as an open-ended question.

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), a value of 0.6 and above is required for good factorability when the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) is utilized. Field (2009) considers that “values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb” (p. 647). For the data in this study, the KMO value ranges between 0.69 and 0.76 for three components, achievement, affirmation, and assimilation and the Bartlett's test is significant ( $p = .000$ ), therefore, the factor analysis was appropriate for these data. However, the KMO value is significantly low for ethnic behavior at 0.50 and the Bartlett's test is significant ( $p = .000$ ). This variable has only two questions and that explains the low KMO score.

In PCA, to assess the statistical significance of a factor loading is possible. According to Field (2009) researchers take loading of an absolute value more than .3 to be important. The significance of a factor loading will depend on the sample size; for  $N = 200$  it should be greater than 0.364. By deleting question 8 reverse-coded (8R) the percentage of variance and Cronbach alpha improved. Question 8R was: “I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life.” Item 8R was excluded from the analysis. Table 1 gives evidence of validity of the MEIM for this sample.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient method was conducted to measure internal consistency within factors as shown Table 1. Field (2009) indicates that a score that is between .7 and .8 is an acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha. Any significantly lower value indicates an unreliable scale. In this study, the ethnic behavior variable shows a low score of  $\alpha = .51$  which indicates a weak reliability. However, the variable has only two questions and that explains the low alpha score. Assimilation factored into two components with Eigenvalue over one to explain 54% of the variation. The second component contained the negatively worded items which had been

reverse-coded. Achievement, affirmation, and assimilation show acceptable alpha scores between .65 and .74 which indicates internal consistency within these factors. The factor analysis and alpha results indicated that it is reasonable to use sums or means to measure the four components. Mean scores of three to four will indicate stronger mean. Scores of one to two will indicate weak means.

Table 1  
*Principal Component Analysis for Validity and Reliability of the Instrument*

Factor	KMO	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Item	Factor Loading	Alpha
Achievement	.79	2.66	44.41	1	.60	.73
				3	.37	
				5	.35	
				10R	.31	
				12	.44	
				13	.57	
Behavior	.50	1.35	68.89	2	.67	.51
				16	.67	
Affirmation	.76	2.50	50.09	6	.27	.74
				11	.49	
				14	.56	
				18	.51	
				20	.64	
Assimilation	.69	2.38	37.30	4	.44	.65
				9	.77	
				17	.64	
				19	.78	
		1.02	54.32	7R	.69	
				15R	.82	

A Mann-Whitney test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between adult and youth participants on MEIM scores. The Mann-Whitney test is a non-parametric test used to examine the differences that may exist between two independent groups of participants (Field, 2009). The results of the test indicated that ethnic affirmation was significantly different between youth participants ( $Mdn = 15$ ) and adult participants ( $Mdn = 45$ ),

$U = 1938.5$ ,  $p = .02$  ( $< .05$ ),  $r = .15$ . Ethnic achievement ( $p = .11$ ), ethnic behavior ( $p = .15$ ), and assimilation ( $p = .74$ ) were not significantly different between the youth and adult participants.

Table 2 represents the results of the Mann-Whitney test for the difference between youth and adult participants.

Table 2

*Mann-Whitney Test for Difference Between Youth and Adult Participants*

Variable	Mann-Whitney $U$	$z$	$p$
Achievement	1938.5	-1.59	.11
Behavior	1996.5	-1.42	.15
Affirmation	1769.5	-2.24	.02
Assimilation	2298	-.32	.74

### Qualitative Process

The qualitative data was collected using the interview method. After the analysis of the quantitative data, six members of clergy who currently serve the Maronite Church in the United States were interviewed. The selection criterion was based on the place of the birth of the interviewee: two clergy were born in Lebanon, two were American born but of Lebanese descent, and two were American born of non-Lebanese parents and who joined the Maronite Church. The qualitative data collected answered all three of the research questions.

**Personal profile of each participant.** The information about each participant will include their age, place of birth, parents' place of birth and ethnicity, rank, years of service in the Maronite Church, and the number of parishes they served.

**Clergy 1.** The first participant was a priest serving in the Maronite Church in the United States for over 30 years. He was born in the United States of Lebanese parents. His father was born in Lebanon and his mother in the United States. During his years of priesthood he served two parishes. At the time of the study, he was serving a medium size parish in the southern part

of the United States. His parish was founded in early 1900s by Lebanese immigrants. Through the years, the parish witnessed waves of immigrants from Lebanon. Many non-Lebanese became members of the parish especially because of mixed marriages.

**Clergy 2.** The second participant was a 60 year old ordained priest serving the Maronite Church in the United States for 34 years. He was born in Lebanon and both of his parents are Lebanese. He has served six parishes in the United States and during the time of the study he was the pastor of a large parish. This parish was founded in 1893 in the Northeast of the United States. The parish is very diverse with, Lebanese, non-Lebanese Middle Easterners, Americans, and people living in the neighborhood of the church.

**Clergy 3.** The third participant was a 64 year old ordained priest serving the Maronite Church in the United States for 38 years. He was born in the United States and is of Lebanese descent. His father was Lebanese and his mother of Irish, German, and English descent. Both of his parents were born in the United States. During his service as a priest, he has served as a Vicar General for the Maronite Eparchy on the east coast of the United States, Vice President for the Pontifical Mission to Palestine, and Director and Deputy Secretary General of Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), an agency of the Holy See whose mission is to support the churches and peoples of the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India, and Eastern Europe. He has served in three parishes and during the time of the study he was the pastor of a small parish. The parish was founded in 1910 by Lebanese immigrants. The majority of the parishioners are American born of Lebanese extraction. Marriages between those of Lebanese background and other ethnic groups is quite common.

**Clergy 4.** The fourth participant was a 67 year old pastor who is an American born in Texas. His father was of English descent from a long line of Texas ranchers. His mother of

Lebanese parents was born in Texas like his father. The priest has served over 40 years in three parishes. During the time of this study he was serving a thriving parish in a Texas city. The parish, which he founded in 1983, is one of the most diverse with a wide variety of multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultured people with differing professions and economic status from over 27 different countries of origin.

*Clergy 5.* The fifth participant was a 42 year old priest who was born in Lebanon. He was ordained in 1998 and in 2001 he immigrated to the United States to serve in the Maronite Church. During the time of the study he was serving in a large parish on the West Coast of the United States. In 1923 a group of immigrants founded the parish. The parish still has a majority of Lebanese immigrants who recently immigrated to the United States as well as parishioners from different ethnic backgrounds.

*Clergy 6.* The sixth participant was a 69 year old Roman Catholic deacon who has been an ordained deacon for 31 years. At the time of the study he had been assisting at a medium size Maronite parish for 5 years in a southern U.S. city. He was born in the United States of a father of German descent and a mother of Czech descent. Both of his parents were born in the United States. The Maronite parish he was serving during the time of the study was founded in 1925 by Lebanese immigrants. The parish is ethnically diverse with many new Lebanese immigrants, Middle Easterners, Americans, and Hispanics joining the parish in the last 20 years.

**Interview questions.** The interviews consisted of several open-ended questions designed to support or further explain the quantitative data findings. The following themes emerged in the interviews: faith and spirituality of the Maronite Church, pride and reconnecting with ethnic heritage, challenges of immigrants: in assimilation, in ethnic identification, in ethnic diversity, and creation of bonds between people and openness to others.

## Research Questions

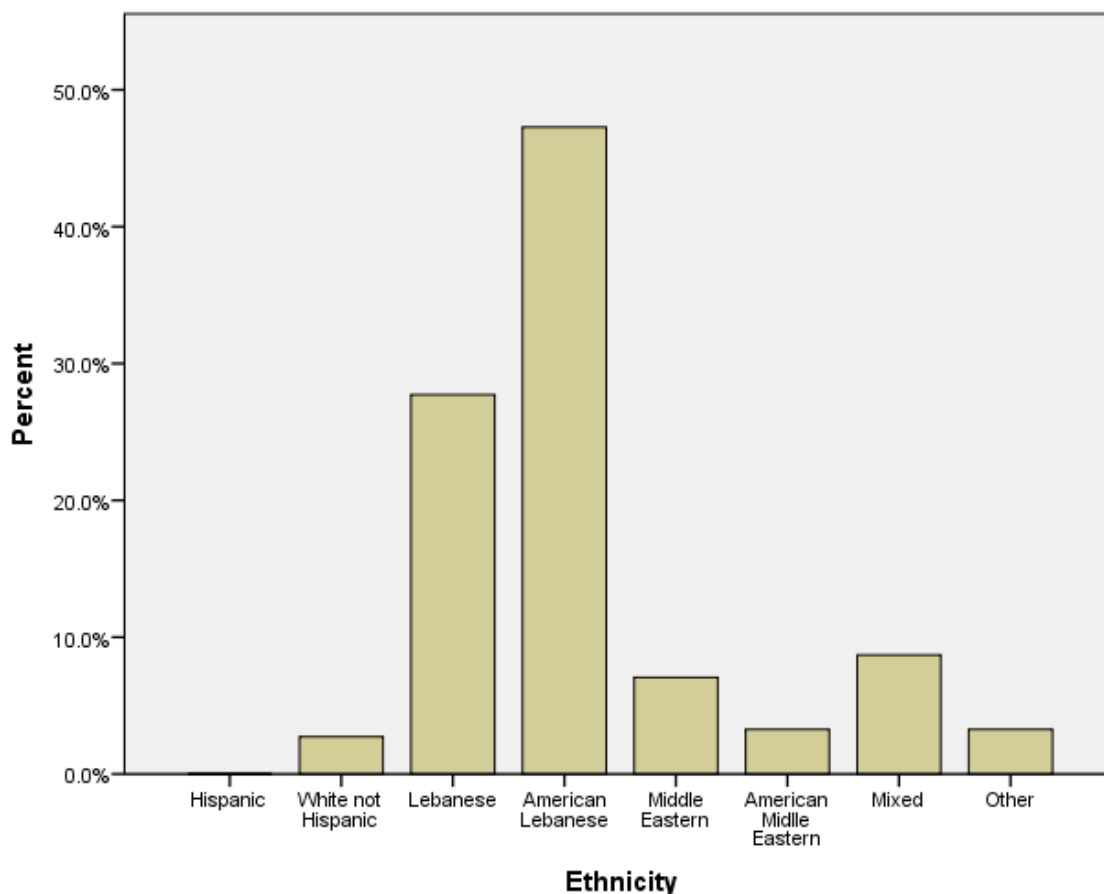
This section provides the quantitative and qualitative answers for the questions that are considered in this study.

**Research question 1.** How do Maronites in the United States identify themselves?

“Ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct related to an individual's orientation toward his or her ethnic group” (Costigan, Koryzma, Hua, & Chance, 2010, p. 264). According to Noels, Leavitt, and Clément (2010) ethnic identity has different definitions. . A common element in these definitions is the experiences and feelings that an individual has concerning the belonging to the ethnic group. These experiences contribute in the ethnic self-definition and in the case of immigrants the choice to belong to their ethnic group of origin or to any other relevant group, especially of the host society.

Figure 4 indicates the distributions of participants according to their ethnicities. About 47% of the participants identified themselves as Lebanese and about 27% identified themselves as American Lebanese.





*Figure 4.* Chart of participants' ethnic distribution.

Immigrants' challenges in ethnic diversity in the Maronite Church in the United States was an emerging theme in the interviews. The six clergy who were interviewed agreed that the Maronite Church in the United States was established as an ethnic church and became ethnically diverse. These strong ethnic origins are important and according to Clergy 3 the flow of immigrants refresh the churches with people and new ideas. Clergy 5 noted that the Maronite Church tends to have a Lebanese character. However, Clergy 2 noted the great diversity in the Maronite Church. More non-Lebanese Middle Easterners, African-Americans, Orientals, and many other ethnicities are joining the church because of the Maronite spirituality and tradition.

Agreeing with Clergy 2, Clergy 1 and 4 noted that this diversity allows the Maronite Church to draw on strong qualities from the different ethnic groups. The three of them agree that the church has to have an open door for everyone and that is its unique chance to expand and grow.

**Research question 1a.** How well have Maronites explored and understood their ethnic identity?

Ethnic achievement is defined as the labeling individuals use to define themselves and the extent to which they developed a sense of exploration and understanding of their own ethnicity. This conscious exploration is the starting point of the establishment of that sense of identity and what it means to be a member of their ethnic group (Costigan et al. 2010).

Table 3 and Figure 5 represent descriptive analysis of ethnic achievement. The 204 participants had a mean score of 3.14 (SD = 0.46). Scores of 2.83, 3.16, and 3.59 represented the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles, respectively. The results indicate that the majority of the participants understood their ethnic identity. About two-thirds scored higher in ethnic achievement. Figure 6 shows that this data is approximately normally distributed.

Table 3  
*Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Ethnic Achievement*

Factor	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Achievement	3.16	3.14	.46	2.00	4.00

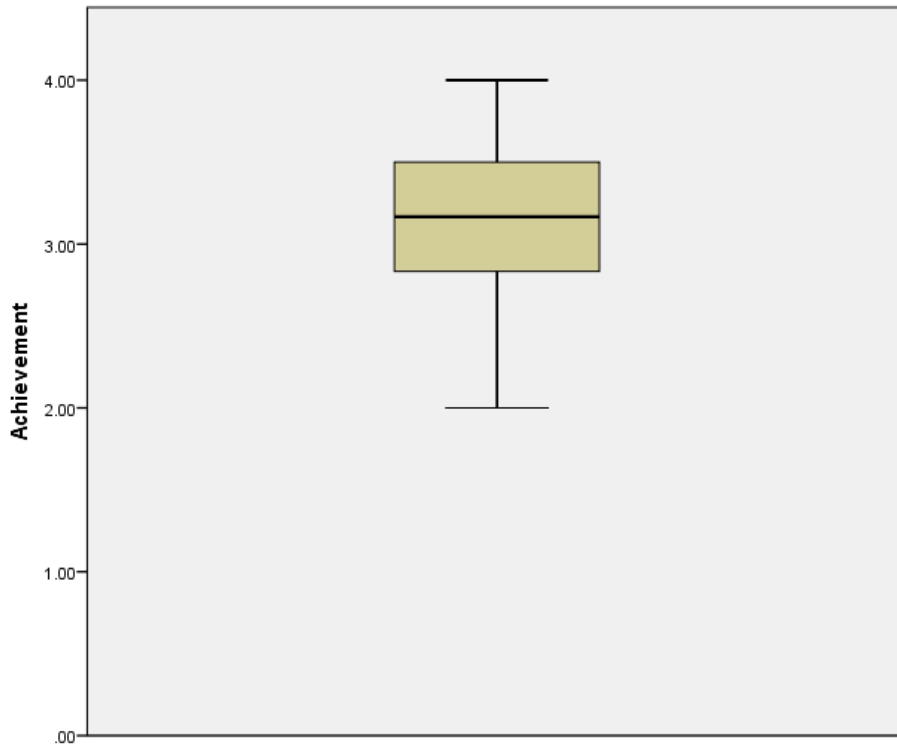


Figure 5. Box-plot of participants' ethnic achievement.

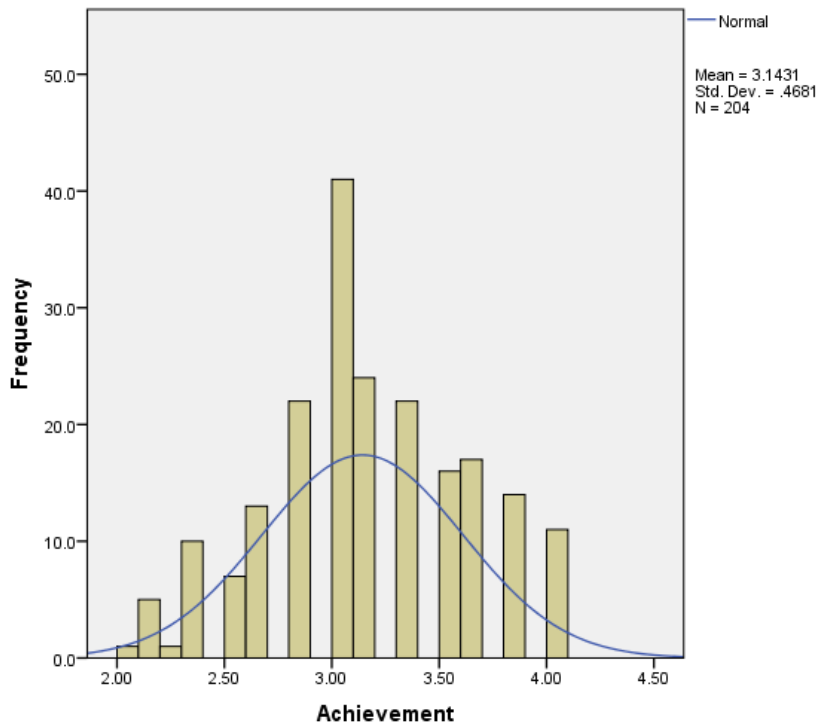


Figure 6. Histogram of participants' ethnic achievement.

The challenge in ethnic identification was another theme that emerged during the interviews. Most of the interviewed clergy agreed that Lebanese immigrants understand who they are in terms of their ethnic identity. Clergy 1 considered that Lebanese immigrants stay attached to their Lebanese identity and hold on to what ensures their happiness and their faith. Clergy 2 considered that many immigrants come to the United States determined not to give up their Lebanese identity and they show that with their attachment to their homeland. The theory of the Melting Pot has not taken effect and that is because the identity is still preserved and the ethnic lines in it are still strong and visible. People are quite expressive and vocal when it comes to their ethnicity. Clergy 3 that many immigrants go to the degree that they want to replicate Lebanon and what it means to be Lebanese. According to Clergy 6 Lebanese immigrants seem not to have lost their Lebanese identity and are ethnically established; they understand themselves and they know who they are. He said that people have no difficulty relating with others because they are assured of who they are.

Clergy 4 considered that there is a lot of lost ethnic identity in the United States and people are in search of who they were. Lebanese immigrants are using the religious aspect to tie to their roots and find themselves in it. Their understanding of their identity is broadened and they appreciate it more.

Clergy 5 distinguished two struggles immigrants face. The Americans of Lebanese descent who are rooted in the American society struggle to find their identity and have a nostalgia that is inspired by family memories and traditions. The new immigrants struggle to protect their Lebanese identity and show that especially by trying to keep their native language as the language of communication and prayer.

**Research question 1b.** How well have Maronites demonstrated their ethnic identity?

Ethnic behavior is the expression of ethnic identity through the individuals' participation in the cultural practices and activities of their ethnic group. Ethnic activities may become a source of support for the ethnic identity. These ethnic and cultural activities are centered on ethnic organizations, language, food, cultural traditions and customs, religion, holidays, and many other ethnic and cultural practices (Saylor & Aries 1999).

Table 4 and Figure 7 represent descriptive analysis of ethnic behavior. The 204 participants had a mean score of 3.36 (SD = 0.60). Scores of 3.00, 3.50, and 4.00 represented the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles, respectively. The results indicate that most participants demonstrated their ethnic identity, with 75% reporting participating in ethnic behaviors. Figure 8 shows that this data is skewed to the left.

Table 4

*Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Ethnic Behavior*

Factor	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Behavior	3.50	3.36	.60	1.50	4.00

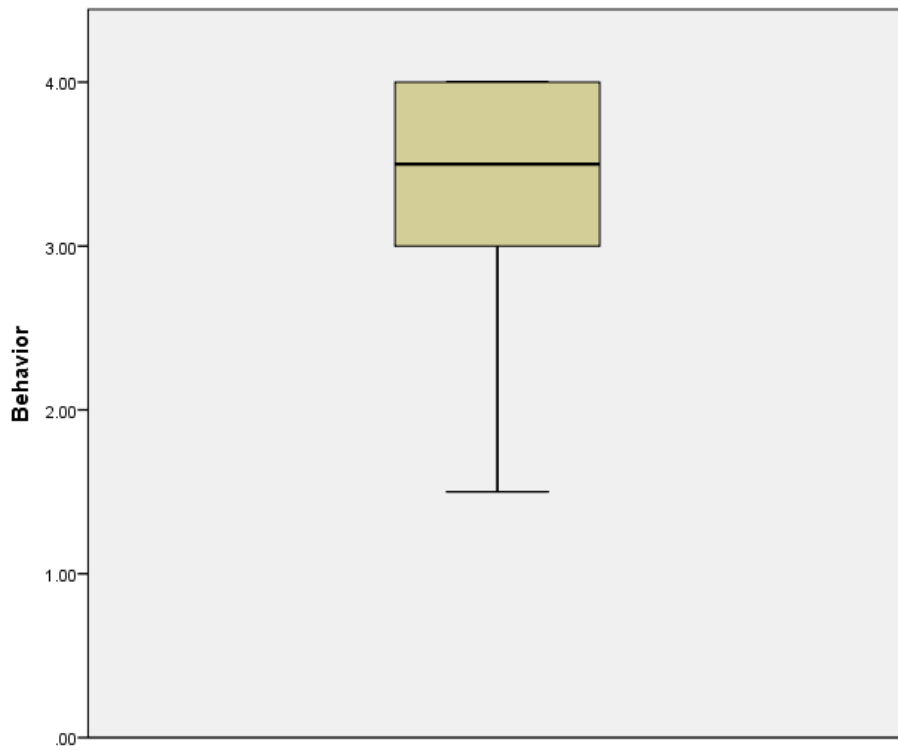


Figure 7. Box-plot of participants' ethnic behavior.

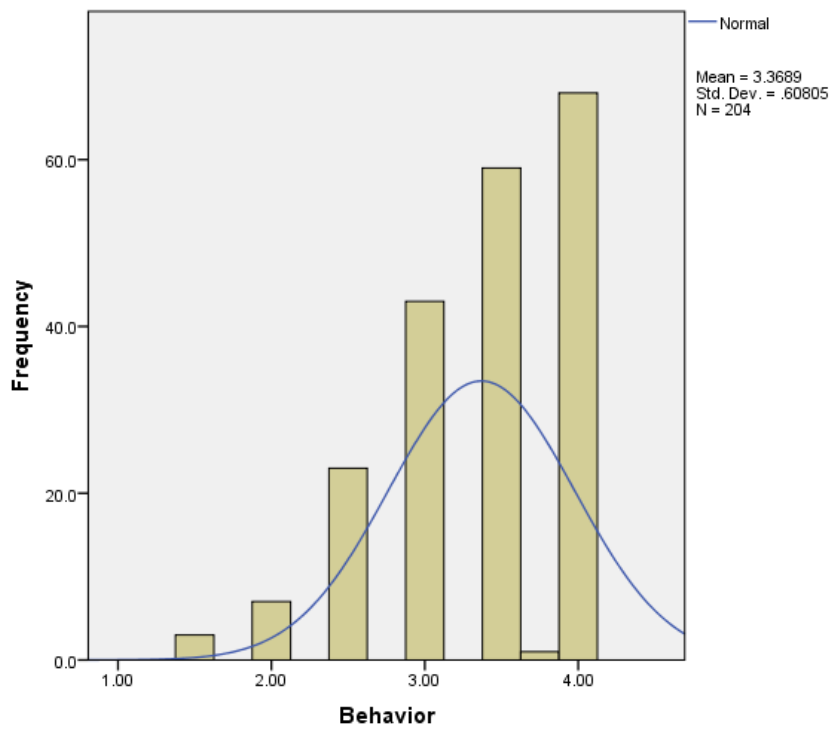


Figure 8. Histogram of participants' ethnic behavior.

In ethnic behaviors immigrants reconnect with their roots while preserving their cultural heritage. Clergy 2 considered that immigrants who have been in the United States 40 or 50 years are still preserving their cultural traits and they express their ethnicity with music, dancing, and food. Clergy 3 considered that the church has two functions: the spiritual and the social, ethnic, and cultural. Immigrants express their identity not only in the food or the language or the cultural events but also in the sentimental bonds they create with each other and with new immigrants when they help them settle. Clergy 5 considered the church as the place of cultural and ethnic survival of immigrants. They express their identity by maintaining a strong sense of family and community with a special focus on the youth, teaching them the Arabic language and Lebanese culture as links to connect to their history and spirituality. Clergy 6 considered that immigrants are trying to get back in touch with their roots through cultural events they hold on a regular basis.

***Research question 1c.*** How well have Maronites developed positive attitudes toward their ethnic group?

Ethnic identity affirmation refers to positive attitudes and feelings individuals developed regarding their ethnic background. Ethnic affirmation may be crucial to individuals because it provides them with a sense of belonging and a connection to the ethnic group. In addition, affirmation provides individuals with a sense of security within their own ethnic group, especially in times when they need to be relying on their ethnic group's support (Umaña-Taylor, Updegraff, & Gonzales-Backen, 2011).

Table 5 and Figure 9 represent descriptive analysis of ethnic affirmation. The 204 participants had a mean score of 3.60 (SD = 0.40). Scores of 3.25, 3.75, and 4.00 represented the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles, respectively. The results indicate that most participants

developed positive attitudes toward the ethnic group. More than 80% held positive feelings about their ethnic background. Figure 10 shows that more adult participants were ethnically affirmed than youth participants. Figure 11 shows that this data is skewed to the left.

Table 5  
*Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Ethnic Affirmation*

Factor	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Affirmation	3.75	3.60	.40	2.25	4.00

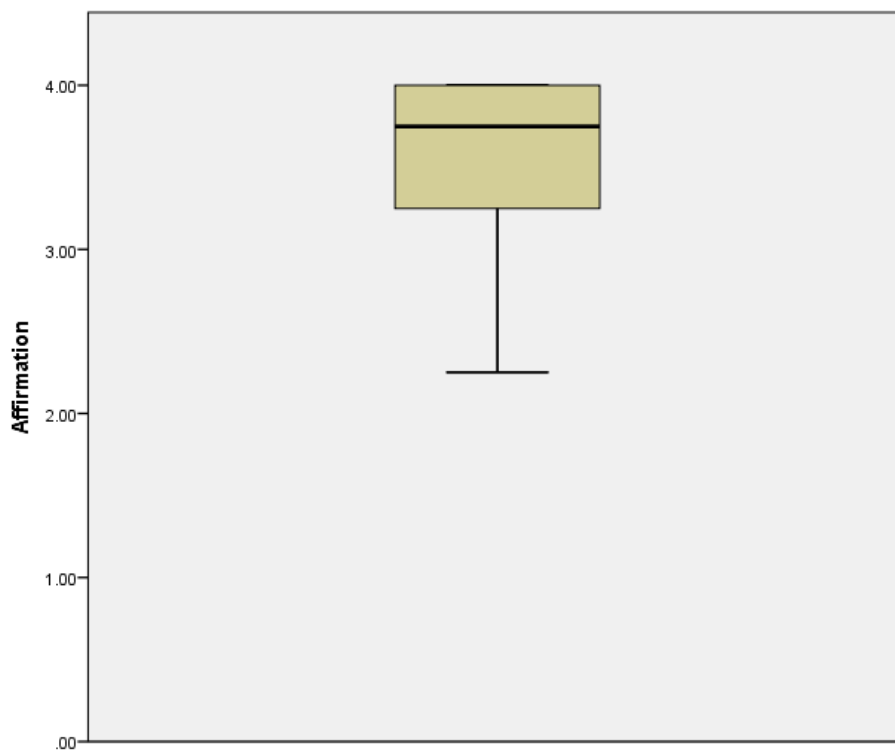


Figure 9. Box-plot of participants' ethnic affirmation.



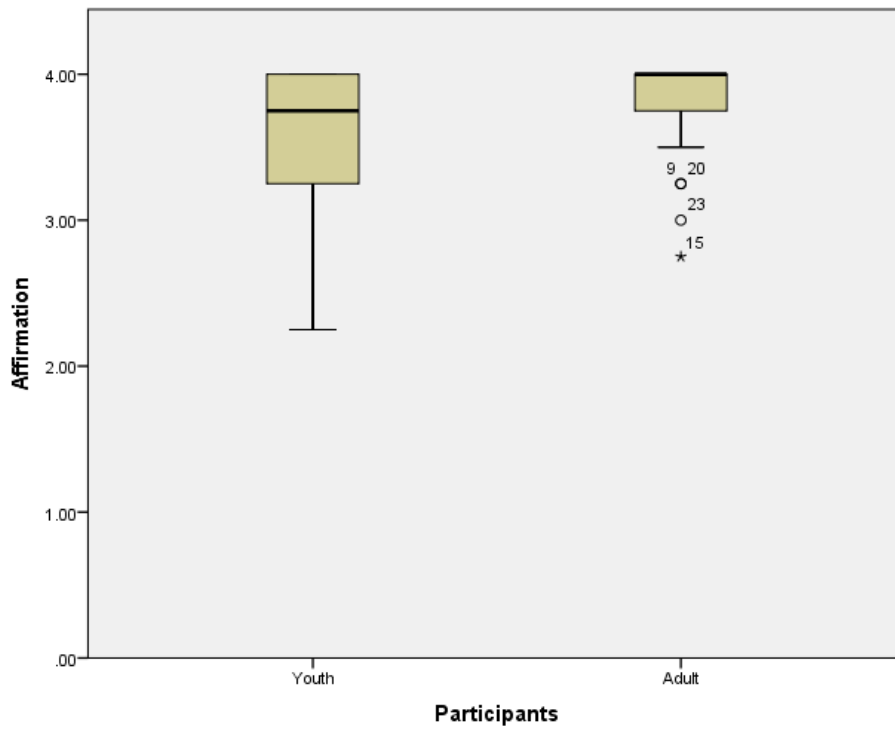


Figure 10. Box-plot of the difference between youth and adult in ethnic affirmation.

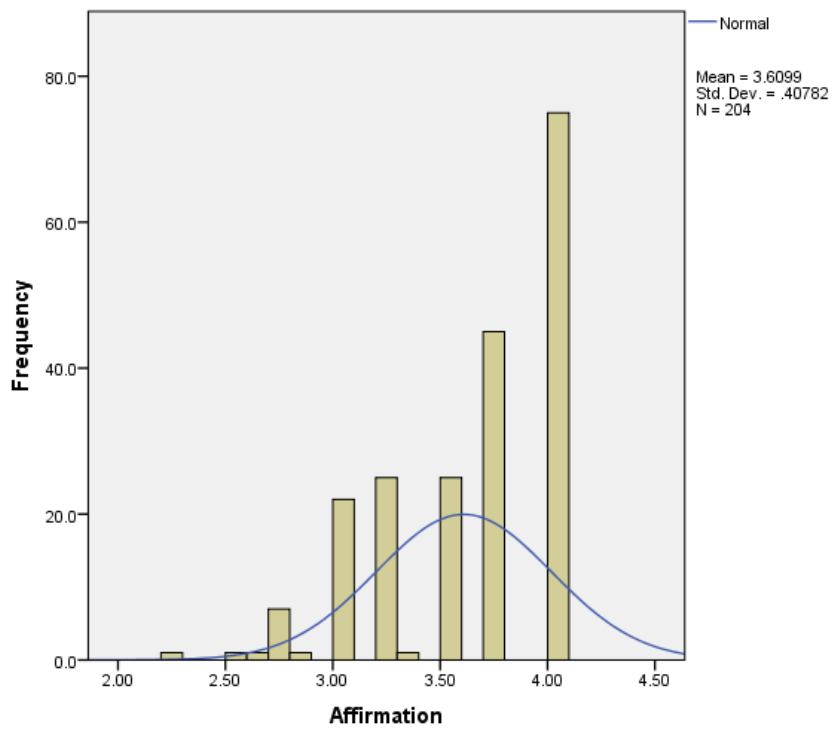


Figure 11. Histogram of participants' ethnic affirmation.

Based on the observations of the clergy who were interviewed, Lebanese immigrants express a great pride with their Lebanese identity and ethnic heritage. They express their pride by introducing people to the Lebanese culture. For example, Clergy 1 told of his experience with children bringing their classmates or friends to introduce them to their culture and spirituality. Clergy 4 noted the immigrants' appreciation of their identity. Clergy 6 noted that immigrants treasure their Lebanese identity and they are proud of their heritage. This pride is expressed in the efforts of many immigrants to get people to claim their Lebanese citizenship and connect with their Lebanese roots.

**Research question 1d.** How well have Maronites incorporated into the U.S. society?

Yinger's definition of assimilation (as cited in Floyd & Gramann, 1993) is a process in which members of different cultures or ethnicities meet. During the assimilation process one group could become similar to another group by adapting their cultural characteristics. In addition, one group may adopt the culture of another group and become totally absorbed by that group (Brubaker, 2001).

Table 6 and Figure 12 represent descriptive analysis of assimilation. The 204 participants had a mean score of 3.44 (SD = 0.44). Scores of 3.16, 3.50, and 3.83 represented the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles, respectively. The results indicate that most participants are well incorporated into the U.S. society. More than 80% were well assimilated in the U.S. culture. Figure 13 shows that this data is skewed to the left.

Table 6  
*Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Assimilation*

Factor	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Assimilation	3.50	3.44	.44	1.67	4.00

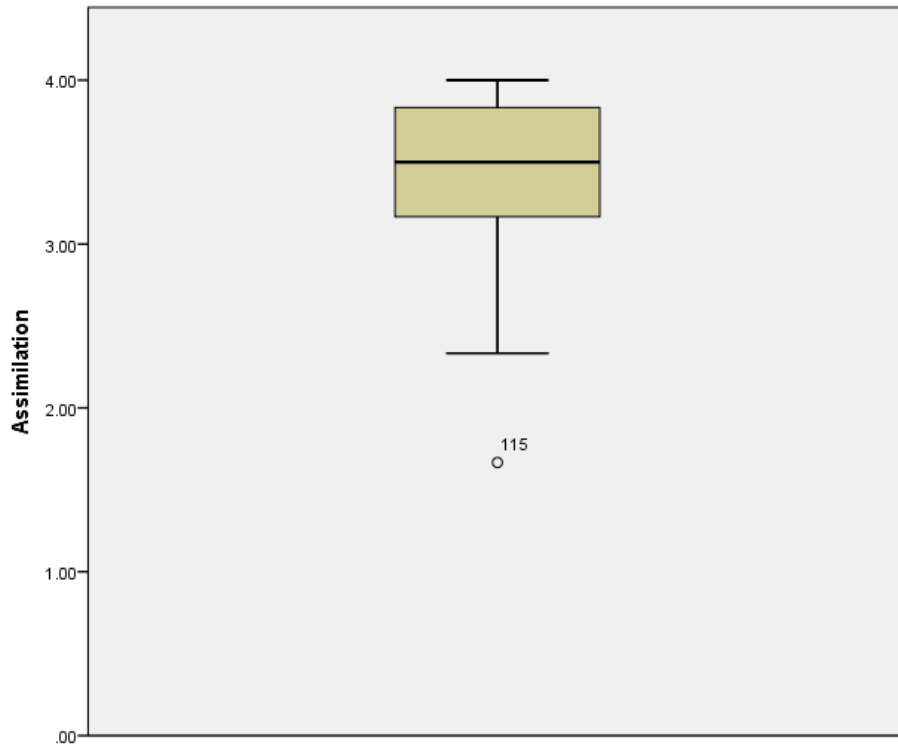


Figure 12. Box-plot of participants' assimilation.

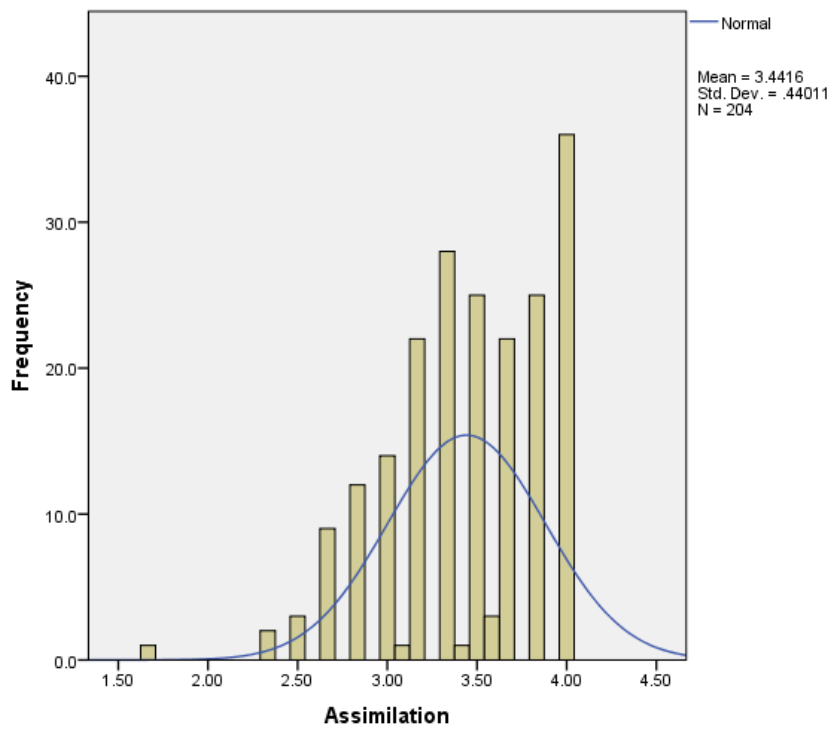


Figure 13. Histogram of participants' assimilation.

Another theme that emerged during the interviews was the challenges in assimilation. For some immigrants assimilation is a challenge, but for others it is not. Clergy 3 considered that assimilation is not a challenge for Lebanese immigrants because Lebanese do that naturally. He considers that there is a group of those immigrants who want to become totally American and another group who still want to be Lebanese and replicate Lebanon in the United States. Clergy 1 considered that immigrants have to live where they are and by assimilation they express their identity. However Clergy 1 considered that many immigrants came from Lebanon thinking that things should be like Lebanon in everything that they do in the United States. According to Clergy 2, Lebanese immigrants have assimilated but still preserve their Lebanese identity. Many immigrants live and adopt the American culture but still tend to their Lebanese culture which is not totally erased out of their lives. They do not melt completely into it, they accept it, interact within it, they appreciate it. Clergy 5 considered Lebanese immigrants rooted in the Lebanese culture but their identity begins to be influenced and shaped by the values of the American society when they come in touch with that society. Clergy 6 observed that people are assimilating into the American culture while keeping in mind the culture that they learned from their parents.

The results indicate that the Maronites in the United States are ethnically established. Most of the respondents were ethnically achieved, participated in ethnic behaviors, developed positive feelings towards their ethnic group, and are well assimilated into the U.S. society.

**Research question 2.** What is the role of ethnic events and practices, people's attitudes toward the ethnic group, and assimilation into the American society in helping Lebanese Maronites in the United States achieve their ethnic identity?

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict achievement (dependent variable) based on behavior, affirmation, and assimilation (independent variables). A significant regression equation was found ( $F(3,200) = 54.84, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .45.

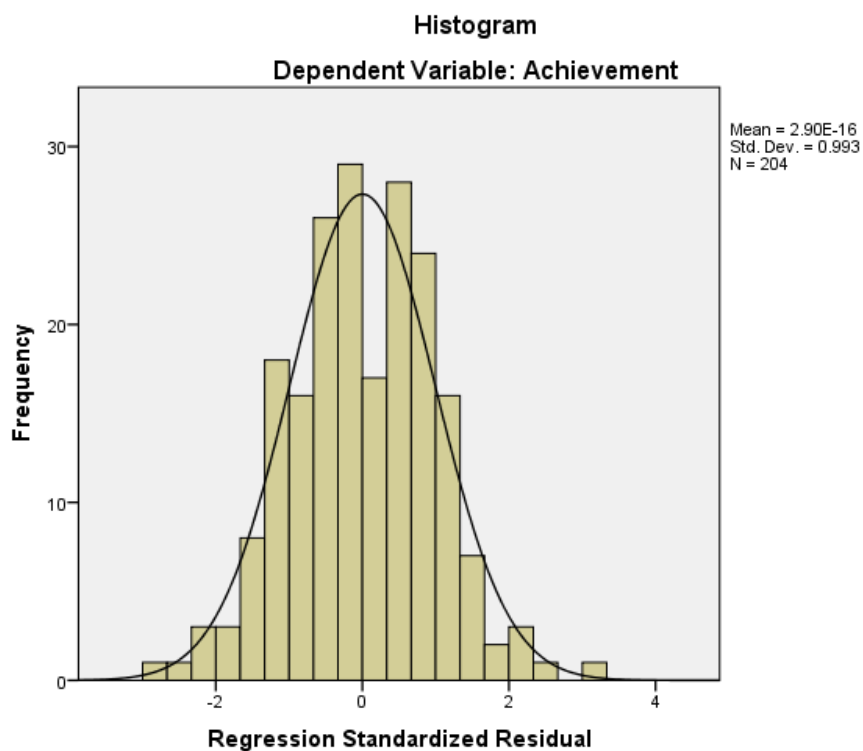
Table 7 describes the regression analysis summary for the independent variables, and prediction of the dependent variable. With  $p = .432$  ( $p > .001$ ) assimilation did not contribute significantly in predicting achievement. Behavior and affirmation predicted achievement at about the same levels with beta coefficients of .40 and .39, respectively. The adjusted  $R^2$  indicates that the two predictors explain 44% of variation in achievement.

Table 7

*Regression Analysis Summary for Behavior, Affirmation, Assimilation Predicting Achievement*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Achievement	.29	.26		1.11	.267
Behavior	.31	.04	.40	7.13	.000
Affirmation	.45	.06	.39	6.95	.000
Assimilation	.04	.05	.04	.78	.432

Figure 14 indicates that the residuals are approximately normally distributed around the mean. This indicates that the normality of variables assumption was met and that there is linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.



*Figure 14.* Histogram of residuals.

Many elements assist immigrants in the process of achieving their ethnic identity. Cultural events and practices are one element that helps create a bond between the generations of immigrants. Clergy 2 considered that these types of events allow much ethnic interaction within the same parish. Agreeing with him Clergy 1 added that these events are ways of calling new people and helping them learn from and about each other. Clergy 5 noted that all these practices build and develop bonds and bring families and individuals together giving them a warm sense of unity.

Clergy 1, 2, 5, and 6 agreed that ethnic events and cultural practices are good ways to help people discover and develop their ethnic identity. Clergy 2 considered that events like these boost the ethnicity of the people and make immigrants feel at home and relate better to who they

are. Such events make them be more aware of their identity and proud of that identity, said Clergy 1.

Clergy 3 and 4 considered that these events are important, but help the person to create an identity that may be a false identity. Most cultural events are either food fairs or food festivals with the goal of raising funds. Clergy 3 said that “ethnic and cultural events may also create a false view of Lebanon and Lebanese people, who are sophisticated and complex as anybody else.” Clergy 4 noted that there is a need to go deeper than food and dance when thinking about ethnic identity; culture is only one part the person’s identity. Clergy 1 noted that festivals and cultural gatherings are events that happen once or twice a year; what is more important is how immigrants live their lives in the United States.

Another element is the ethnic affirmation and the feeling people develop toward their ethnic group. Clergy 4 considered that the pride people take in their own ethnic identity is an important element that does not depreciate their understanding of their ethnic identity; it just reinforces that identity and faith. Clergy 4’s pride in his roots and heritage helped answer many questions regarding his ethnicity and why things are done in one way or the other. It helped also him understand himself and who he was and be comfortable with his culture and the culture he lives in.

Assimilation is another element that may play a role in the ethnic identity achievement process of immigrants. Clergy 2 considered that an individual with a strong ethnic identity would appreciate the American culture. However, if a person has assimilated into the new society that does not mean that he is completely out of existence. Based on his experience, Clergy 2 noted that many Americans of Lebanese descent have assimilated but still preserve their ethnicity as Lebanese. Many recent immigrants have become more tolerant and understanding of the

American culture. They have accepted the American way of life, they have accepted the language, they do everything like all Americans, but they still adhere to their Lebanese heritage and identity. They have a bi-cultural or multicultural identity. Clergy 3 considered that some immigrants try to separate their ethnic identity from their faith in order not to lose the faith once assimilated into the American society. He observed that once assimilated many walk away from the church.

**Research question 3.** What is the role of the Maronite Church in safeguarding the distinctiveness and continuity of the identity of Lebanese immigrants?

Jaspal (2013) defines distinctiveness as the uniqueness of the individual or the ethnic group that makes them different from others and continuity as the feeling of survival of that individual or ethnic group over a period of time. Individuals and groups tend to defend these two principles and if these principles are not accomplished, they may lose ethnic identity.

All the clergy who participated in the study noted the importance of safeguarding the distinctiveness and continuity of the identity of Lebanese immigrants by showing it to people. The participants noted the importance of creating bonds between people and the openness to others. Clergy 2 considered that the role of the church is important and crucial by continuing to use the Arabic language, to live, enjoy, and share the Lebanese culture, and by helping younger generations pick up and enjoy the traditions of their ancestors. This is important in order to help the Lebanese survive and thrive in the United States and to add a flare to the fabric of the American society and embellish its colorful mosaic. Clergy 2 described the best way to safeguard the distinctiveness of the Maronite tradition and the Lebanese identity is by keeping both languages, Arabic and English, for all liturgical and religious services.



Clergy 4 said that ethnic identity is not like a museum piece but a living tradition that will be preserved as individuals are living it and growing deeper into it. He considers that the church needs to examine the traditions more deeply. Clergy 5 noted that the distinctiveness of the identity is necessary for the continuity of that identity. According to him, many Maronite clergy believe that the Maronite Liturgy is the center of this distinctiveness, in addition to the culture such as music, food, dance, and language. He said that the Maronite Church must educate herself and her people about Maronite history, Divine Liturgy, and spirituality to maintain her uniqueness.

Clergy 6 noted the importance of maintaining ties with the roots of the Maronite tradition that goes back to Lebanon and bringing in as much Arabic as the community is comfortable in using. He considered that people who do not isolate themselves from others are able to celebrate and maintain their identity.

***Research question 3a.*** How does the Maronite Church respond to the ethnic identity challenges of its faithful?

The clergy who participated in the study identified several challenges that immigrants face in terms of their ethnic identity: getting assimilated into the American society, new immigrants finding a job or a home, language, geographic distribution of the faithful, and the bias against Arabs in the United States.

Faith and spirituality of the Maronite Church was an important theme that was repeated in the interviews. The participants considered that the church has the greatest influence and is definitely one of the greatest vehicles in helping people discover their identity. Clergy 1 considered that the church needs to be welcoming to immigrants and needs to have its doors open to everyone. Clergy 3 indicated that the church's goal is to take care of immigrants and to

make them part of society, not to build a ghetto. Clergy 2 said that immigrants need to educate themselves about what is expected of them in the new country. The church is considered to have a sacred and personal dimension to immigrants. The different church activities, such as religious education, spirituality, pastoral activities, various types of prayers, and church gatherings, play a big role in their lives. For immigrants the church is considered their home and their revered and respected authority. Clergy 5 noted the importance of language. In his parish they use both languages in the Liturgy because a large number of the parishioners were born overseas. A program to teach kids the Arabic language was created to keep them connected to their roots and history.

Clergy 4 noted the importance of being a welcoming church. He considered that many immigrants lost their identities to become successful Americans and the church needs to accept people and allow them to be themselves while adapting to their new country. He suggested that each parish should create a system or a protocol to contact people, learn what their needs are, and create ministries to meet those needs.

## **Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations**

This mixed methodology study that contains both quantitative and qualitative research is designed to get a better understanding of a research problem using a diversity of observations. The purpose of this study was specifically designed to explore the role of the church in preserving the ethnic identity among the Maronite Lebanese immigrants in the United States. Maronite Lebanese immigrants face several challenges when they want to preserve their ethnic and religious identities. The church, which draws them to the practice of religion, becomes the location where immigrants seek assistance and guidance as they navigate the process of immigration and assimilation into a new culture while maintaining and preserving their identity from their country of origin. This study addressed three major questions. A survey was designed and interview questions were created to find the answer to this study's questions. Special attention was placed on designing research questions that specifically asked participants to consider how Maronites identify themselves in the United States and how to they determine their ethnic identity. The data gathered from this research was also used to investigate the role of the Maronite Church in the life of immigrants. How much could they preserve their identity from their country of origin and how could they adapt and create a new identity in their new country?

### **Summary of Quantitative Findings**

The quantitative results of this study demonstrate that the majority of the participants achieved and understand their ethnic identity. Most of the participants expressed their identity, had positive feelings towards their ethnic group, and were well assimilated into the American society. More adult participants developed positive feelings and attitudes toward their ethnic background than youth participants. Ethnic behaviors and affirmation were found as significant predictors of ethnic achievement and furthermore appear to play a role in aiding immigrants to

an understanding of their ethnic identity. Assimilation was not a significant predictor of achievement and had no role in assisting immigrants to develop a better understanding of their ethnic identity.

### **Summary of Qualitative Findings**

The qualitative results in this study present the experiences of the clergy participants and their perceptions of the role of the Maronite Church in safeguarding the distinctiveness and continuity of the ethnic and religious identities of Lebanese immigrants in the United States. All participants considered that the church, as a place of worship that contains elements of churches/liturgies similar to those in Lebanon, influence immigrants and play a significant role in their lives in the United States.

### **Discussion**

Phinney (1993) studied the process of ethnic identity formation and developed a three-stage model of ethnic identity development. The first stage is unexamined ethnic identity characterized by the lack and disinterest in the exploration of own ethnicity. Individuals from minority groups tend to accept the dominant culture and may develop negative views towards their own group. The second stage is the ethnic identity search or moratorium and is considered a time of experimentation where individuals learn about their ethnic group through friends and family, literature, and by attending cultural events. The third stage is the ethnic identity achievement and is “characterized by a clear, confident sense of one’s own ethnicity” (Phinney, 1993, p. 71). The outcome of this stage is that individuals internalize their ethnicity and develop a sense of security and a positive orientation toward the mainstream culture. In the quantitative results of this study we find that the majority of participants have high scores in ethnic achievement and can be categorized as having achieved their ethnic identity. Results of the study

show high scores in the other components of ethnic identity: behavior, affirmation, and assimilation. Most survey participants are then considered to be at the third stage of ethnic identity development.

According to Phinney (1992), several elements contribute in the development of ethnic identity. Ethnic behaviors and cultural practices assist in the determination of a sense of ethnic identity. The positive feelings that one develops towards one's own group and the openness to the dominant culture and the host society help in the development of a better understanding of ethnic identity. The results of the linear regression calculated in the study show that ethnic behaviors and the positive attitude of the participants were significant predictors of ethnic identity achievement and therefore contributed to the development of the participants' ethnic identity. However, the study shows that assimilation expressed in the openness of the individual to the dominant culture of the host society was not a predictor of ethnic identity achievement and therefore did not affect the development process of the participants' ethnic identity.

The study indicates that the church plays an important role in the life of immigrants. The first wave of Maronite Lebanese immigrants landed in the United States in the late 1800s and immigration continues today. Immigrants who settled in different parts of the United States have faced many challenges but persevere in preserving their faith and traditions. Generally, Lebanese-Americans adapt well to the American society, tend to be successful in their businesses, and are active and engaged citizens of society. The second and third generations of immigrants eventually face several identity challenges. The younger generations lose contact with their parents' native language and tend to not associate with the country and society of their parent's origins. The absence of Maronite churches and clergy to provide immigrants with

spiritual services and tend to their needs also presented a challenge. Many sought local churches from the different denominations.

Immigrants used religion to live their heritage and connect to their ethnic identity. Although the doctrine of the Maronite Church and the Roman Catholic Church are not different, their liturgical traditions, rituals, and language are different. Immigrants who joined churches of other traditions faced the challenge of losing their ethnic identity. It was not until the early part of the 20th century that Maronite Churches started to be organized in the United States (Labaki, 1993). The qualitative findings show that the church created programs designed to assist immigrants in reconnecting with their roots and discovering their identity. These programs include schools to teach immigrants' children Arabic, ethnic events, cultural festivals, guest speakers from Lebanon, and efforts to encourage immigrants claim their Lebanese citizenship. Such programs have an impact on helping immigrants to discover their identity. The quantitative results show that immigrants who participate in these kinds of events are more likely to understand their ethnic identity.

Mullins (1987) indicated that immigrant churches shift from ethnic to multiethnic. There are three stages in the life of ethnic churches: monolingual, using the language of the country of origin, bilingual, using the language of both the country of origin and the host country, and monolingual again, using the language of the host country. The church that is established to serve the needs of immigrants becomes a place where immigrants' assimilation begins. The demographic and ethnic distribution of the participants in the study indicates an ethnic diversity in the Maronite Church in the United States. Participants in the qualitative study indicated that the Maronite Church is diverse in ethnic origins of parishioners and that the new flows of immigrants keep refreshing the church. The interviews indicate that many of the churches that

were founded in the early part of the 20th century have moved to the third stage of the life cycle of ethnic churches. The interviews show also that there are many newly established Maronite churches that are still at the first stage.

### **Implications**

This study offered a snapshot of the Maronite church in the United States. The church has in place many programs to assist immigrants in preserving their ethnic identity; however, more could be done. In 2012, Bishop Robert Shaheen established the Maronite Heritage Institute in St. Louis, MO. The institute includes a museum and a library that preserves important documents, manuscripts, and publications of the Maronites in the United States. The work of this institute needs to be promoted to include educational programs and seminars to assist people in understanding their heritage and background. These educational programs could include online courses about Maronite spirituality, music, history, culture, Arabic language, and other specialized seminars and lectures. The creation of forums and discussions using social media to engage Maronite youth would assist them in sharing their challenges as well as their experiences as Lebanese living and growing up in the United States. These forums could be extended to include Maronite youth around the world to share their experiences.

The church created initiatives such as Project Roots, the Christian Lebanese Foundation in the World, and the National Apostolate of Maronites. These programs created bonds between people and are successful in reconnecting immigrants to their Lebanese roots. There is need to create more outreach programs to connect Lebanese immigrants living in the United States. Similar programs would assist the church in creating a database of professionals, business owners, and entrepreneurs to assist new immigrants in their needs. An outreach program would

also help create a welcoming environment to new immigrants and visitors. A similar program also helps the church in assisting immigrants assimilating while preserving their ethnic identity.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

The quantitative study included 204 participants: 27 adults and 177 youths, as well as six clergy who participated in the qualitative study. Further research is needed across wider range of ages to include a larger sample of adult as well as youth participants. It would be helpful to include more clergy in the study to gain a broader perspective on the role of the church in the life of immigrants.

The demographics of the participants in the quantitative study were limited to age. It would be helpful to include information about how long the participants have been living in the United States. Further study could determine the difference in the development of ethnic identity among different age groups and different backgrounds.

Further study is needed among participants from different ethnicities and religions. Further study could investigate the different ethnic and religious groups and compare the differences or similarities in the process of the construction of their ethnic and religious identities and the role of religion in that process. A similar study would offer insight into the ways different religious groups help immigrants in the challenges they face.

This study researched Maronites in the United States. Further study could compare the difference in ethnic identity development among Maronites living in Lebanon and the different parts of the world. The study would provide an insight for the church on the issues immigrants face and could be a foundation for finding strategies to reach out to Maronite faithful in the world.



## **Conclusion**

The church has spiritual as well as the ethnic and social dimensions. Besides tending to the spiritual needs of the faithful, the church becomes the place around which the life of immigrants revolves and where they find ways to explore and live their identity.

The Maronite Patriarchal Synod (2008) considered the Maronite Church in the countries of immigration as a sign of hope:

This expansion has added a universal dimension to the Church and has put Her on the same level with other Churches, manifesting the diversity of the Church and her multiplicity in an undivided unity. But, the expansion entrusts the Maronite Church with a mission to remain authentic to her heritage, and to interact harmoniously with other Church traditions (p.24).

While preserving our own unique identity, the Maronite Church will continue to expand and move into a bright future. The Maronite Church, clergy and laity, is called today to be open to the diversity in her environment and welcoming to visitors. The diversity in the Maronite Church in the United States today does not present a threat or a challenge to the church. Rather, it is added strength and richness to the church so people can grow, discover, and appreciate who they are. The challenge today is to keep the Maronite Church unique, rooted in Lebanon, and flourishing in the United States.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

## Permission to Use Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

Dear Charles,

You are welcome to use my scale for the MEIM. However, the scale to you have shown is not the revised version. I have approved the 12 items version and the shorter 6 items version. Both are attached.

Sincerely, Jean Phinney

Appendix B

Permission to Use Map of Greater Syria

Dear Charles Khachan,

Thanks for the note. You have my permission to use the map.

Best wishes,

Martin Lewis

## Appendix C

## Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Caucasian or White, Lebanese or American Lebanese and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

**Please fill in:**

In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be: \_\_\_\_\_

Age in years: \_\_\_\_\_

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(4) Strongly agree    (3) Agree    (2) Disagree    (1) Strongly disagree

1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. \_\_\_\_\_

2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group. \_\_\_\_\_

3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me. \_\_\_\_\_

4- I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own. \_\_\_\_\_

5- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership. \_\_\_\_\_

6- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to. \_\_\_\_\_

7- I sometimes feel I would be better if different ethnic group didn't try to mix together. \_\_\_\_\_

8- I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life. \_\_\_\_\_

9- I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own. \_\_\_\_\_

10- I really have not spent time trying to learn more about the culture and history of \_\_\_\_\_  
my ethnic group.

11- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group. \_\_\_\_\_

12- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in \_\_\_\_\_  
terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups.

13- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other \_\_\_\_\_  
people about my ethnic group.

14- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments. \_\_\_\_\_

15- I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups. \_\_\_\_\_

16- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, \_\_\_\_\_  
or customs.

17- I am involved in activities with people from ethnic groups other than my own. \_\_\_\_\_

18- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group. \_\_\_\_\_

19- I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own. \_\_\_\_\_

20- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background. \_\_\_\_\_

21- My ethnicity is

(1) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others

(2) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic

(3) Lebanese

(4) American Lebanese

(5) Middle Eastern (not Lebanese)

(6) American Middle Eastern (not Lebanese)

(7) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups

(8) Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

22- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above): \_\_\_\_\_

23- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above): \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval



7/28/2014

Charles Khachan  
6070 Babcock Rd.  
San Antonio, Texas 78240

Dear Charles:

Your request for revisions to expedited protocol 14-06-017 titled *Ethnic Identity among Maronite Lebanese in the United States* was approved. The expiration date for this protocol is 06/30/2015. The following revisions to your protocol have been approved:

- Approved study sites: changed from Maronite Youth Workshop to mailed surveys to the 80 Maronite parishes in the United States
- Consent forms: consent will be indicated by parental return of the survey rather than signed and returned forms prior to Maronite Youth Workshop

Please keep in mind these additional IRB requirements:

- This approval is for one year from the date of the IRB approval.
- Request for continuing review must be completed for projects extending past one year. Use the **IRB Continuation/Completion form**.
- Any desired changes in proposal procedures must be approved by the UIW IRB prior to implementation except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Use the **Protocol Revision and Amendment form**.
- Prompt reporting to the UIW IRB of any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.
- IRBs are filed by their number. Please refer to this number when communicating about the IRB.

Suspension or termination of approval may be done if there is evidence of any serious or continuing noncompliance with Federal Regulations or any aberrations from the original application.

Congratulations and best wishes for successful completion of your research. If you need any assistance, please contact the UIW IRB representative for your college/school or the Office of Research Development.

Sincerely,

*Rebecca Ohnemus, MAA, CRA*

Rebecca Ohnemus, MAA, CRA  
Research Officer  
University of the Incarnate Word IRB

ocuSign Envelope ID: 8893C442-B953-4BC9-99D2-D9F6A0C98D27

**Protocol Revision and Amendment Request**  
**University of the Incarnate Word Institutional Review Board**

This application is to be used for revision or amendment of currently approved IRB protocols only. Complete the form below and attach any revised documents with changes highlighted. Sufficient time must be allowed for IRB review of requests. Incomplete requests will be returned without review.

Submit the completed form to the Office of Research Development by email or to CPO 1216 for review and IRB representative signature. **Do not send directly to the IRB representative**, as this form will be electronically routed to them for review after a continuing review request has been logged into the IRB database.

1 Protocol Information			
IRB Number: 14-06-017		Approval Category: Expedited	
Title of Study: Ethnic Identity among Maronite Lebanese in the United States			
Principal Investigator:			
Name: Charles Khachan	Phone #: 210-844-4600	E-mail: khachan@student.uiwtx.edu	PIDM (if student): 791594
Faculty Supervisor (if Principal Investigator is a student):			
Name: Dr. Judith Beauford	Phone #: 210-829-3171	E-mail: beauford@uiwtx.edu	
Current Status of the Project:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project not yet started (no subjects enrolled)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Currently in progress (number of subjects enrolled: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a> )			
<input type="checkbox"/> Closed to subject entry (active interventions, data collection, or data analysis)			

2 Protocol Change Request
Indicate the changes requested:
<input type="checkbox"/> Research procedure(s) including manipulations, assessments, etc. (describe and justify changes below): <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/interview/data collection instrument(s) (describe and justify changes below): <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Study title (list new title below): <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved research sites (list changes below and attach letter of support if adding outside site): The location of the quantitative data collection will change from the Maronite Youth workshop. The surveys will be mailed to all the 80 Maronite parishes in the United States.
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding status (describe changes below): <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Addition to the investigative team (complete section 3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Deletion from investigative team (complete section 3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Number of approved subjects (describe and justify changes below): <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent form(s) (describe and justify changes below): The parental consent form will be changed from signing the form in case of their disapproval to returning the completed survey if they approve their child's participation in the study.
<input type="checkbox"/> Translation of consent form to and additional language (list additional languages below): <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment materials, flyers, etc. (describe and justify changes below): <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):

3 Change in Study Personnel
List additions to the investigative team including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal Investigator(s), Faculty Sponsor, Co-Investigator(s), and</li> <li>• All study staff who interact with subjects or private identifiable data</li> </ul>

ocuSign Envelope ID: 8893C442-B953-4BC9-99D2-D9F6A0C98D27

<b>All study personnel must complete CITI Training prior to approval.</b>				
<b>Additional Personnel</b>				
Name:	Role in Research:	CITI Training Date:	Email:	PIDM (if student):
<b>Personnel to be Removed</b>				
List by Last Name, First Name separated by a semicolon: Click here to enter text.				
Justify the removal of personnel below (include plans to compensate for any loss of specific expertise, if appropriate): Click here to enter text.				

<b>Investigator Signature(s) &amp; Assurances</b>		
I certify that the information above is accurate and complete. I will request prior IRB approval for any changes to the approved protocol and/or informed consent forms, and will not implement those changes until I receive IRB approval. I will report any adverse effects to the IRB immediately. I agree to comply fully with the ethical principles and regulations regarding the protection of human subjects in research.		
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>		
Name:	DocuSigned by: <i>Charles Khachan</i>	Date: 7/23/2014
Charles Khachan	208A28F71E48C29	
<b>Faculty Supervisor (if Principal Investigator is a student):</b>		
Name:	DocuSigned by: <i>J. B. Beauford</i>	Date: 7/25/2014
Dr. Judith Beauford	166E9D6A21874B4	

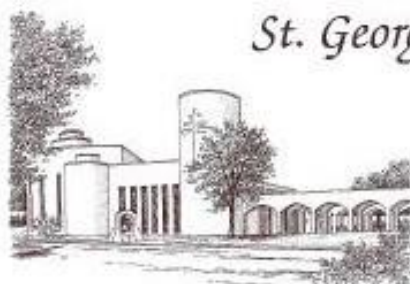
**This Section for Office of Research Development Use Only**

<b>Approval Signature(s)</b>		
<b>IRB Representative:</b>		
Name:	DocuSigned by: <i>Michael T. Risku</i>	Date: 7/28/2014
Michael T. Risku	500918ACB7FA48B	
<b>IRB Chair (or Chair's Designee):</b>		
Name:	DocuSigned by: <i>Kevin B. Vichales</i>	Date: 7/25/2014
Kevin B. Vichales	7B082B8F3F7473	



## Appendix E

## Letters to Obtain Permission to Access Parishes

*St. George Maronite Catholic Church*

Most Rev. Elias Zaidan  
 Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles  
 1021 S. 10th St.  
 St. Louis, MO 63104

Your excellency,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As you know, I am writing my doctoral dissertation at the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) in San Antonio, TX. The title of my study is: "Ethnic identity among Maronite Lebanese in the United States" and will explore the extent to which transnational religious practices in the Maronite Church persist among the descendants of Lebanese immigrants in the United States.

This study will attempt to provide a snapshot of the current situation of the Maronites in the United States and offer insights in the construction of ethnic and religious identities among Lebanese immigrants in our Maronite parishes in the United States.

I am asking your permission to access our Maronite parishes and collect my data by giving out surveys to 5 youths in each parish. This research and survey tool has been approved by the UIW Institutional Review Board (IRB #14-06-017).

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Charles Khachan, MLM

Dear Father Charles,

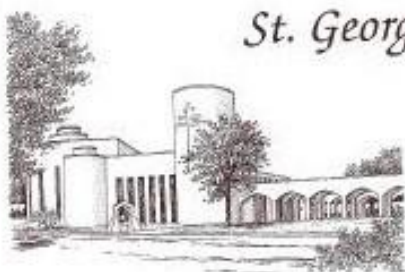
You have my permission and blessing. I wish you the best of success in all your endeavors.

God Bless! You are in my prayers.

+ A. Elias

## Appendix F

## Letters to Obtain Permission to Access Parishes



## *St. George Maronite Catholic Church*

Most Rev. Gregory Masnour  
 Eparchy of Saint Maron  
 109 Remsen Street  
 Brooklyn NY 11201

Your excellency,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As you know, I am writing my doctoral dissertation at the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) in San Antonio, TX. The title of my study is: "Ethnic identity among Maronite Lebanese in the United States" and will explore the extent to which transnational religious practices in the Maronite Church persist among the descendants of Lebanese immigrants in the United States.

This study will attempt to provide a snapshot of the current situation of the Maronites in the United States and offer insights in the construction of ethnic and religious identities among Lebanese immigrants in our Maronite parishes in the United States.

I am asking your permission to access our Maronite parishes and collect my data by giving out surveys to 5 youths in each parish. This research and survey tool has been approved by the UIW Institutional Review Board (IRB #14-06-017).

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Charles Khachan, MLM



**EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

109 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11201-4212  
Tel: (718) 237-9913 Fax: (718) 243-0444  
[chancerystmaron@verizon.net](mailto:chancerystmaron@verizon.net) [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org)

July 9, 2014

Prot. No. 375/1/14

Fr. Charles Khachan  
6070 Babcock Road  
San Antonio, TX 78240-2199

Dear Fr. Charles,

I received your letter dated July 8, 2014 with your request.

You have my permission to contact the priests in the Eparchy of Saint Maron for the purpose of your study.

I wish you all the best. With respect and love, I remain

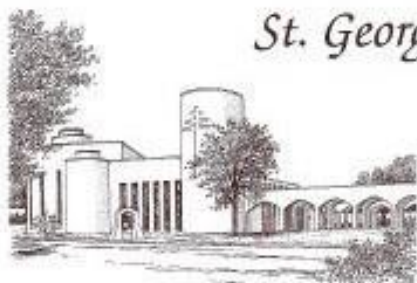
Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Gregory John Mansour

GJM/clb

## Appendix G

## Letters to Obtain Permission to Local Parish



## *St. George Maronite Catholic Church*

Dear Rev. Father,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As you may know, I am writing my doctoral dissertation at the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) in San Antonio, TX. The title of my study is: "Ethnic identity among Maronite Lebanese in the United States" and will explore the extent to which transnational religious practices in the Maronite Church persist among the descendants of Lebanese immigrants in the United States.

This study will attempt to provide a snapshot of the current situation of the Maronites in the United States and offer insights in the construction of ethnic and religious identities among Lebanese immigrants in our Maronite parishes in the United States.

I am seeking, with the permission of our bishops, your assistance in collecting my data by selecting 5 youths of your parish to fill out the enclosed short, 23-question survey. The survey will take only 7-10 minutes. I have enclosed also a parental consent form and a minor's assent form. This research and survey tool has been approved by the UIW Institutional Review Board (IRB #14-06-017).

Please return the filled out surveys in the enclosed self-addressed envelope no later than August 15, 2014.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Charles Khachan, MLM

Appendix H  
Parental Consent Form

**Dear Sir or Madam,**

My name is Charles Khachan and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, TX.

Your child is invited to participate in a research study about the ethnic identity of Maronite Lebanese in the United States and the extent to which transnational religious practices in the Maronite Church persist among the descendants of Lebanese immigrants in the United States. The Maronite youth in our Maronite parishes in the United States will be part of that study. I will use the information obtained from this survey in my dissertation work. Filling out this short, 23-question survey will take only 7-10 minutes. Your child's participation is completely voluntary and you may decline to take this survey if you choose. There will be no effect on your relationship with the church if you choose to decline. Declining or ceasing your child's participation in the study will not change my current or future status at UIW. Please note there is no direct benefit that will accrue to your child from taking this survey; however, his/her participation will contribute greatly to my knowledge and research.

**Things you should know-**

The responses to this survey will be completely anonymous and the research findings from the data collected will be reported in aggregate form. No personal identifying information about your child will be collected. The data I collect will be kept secure in a safe at my home and will be destroyed after five years.

**Taking the survey-**

Completing and submitting this survey represents informed consent to your child's participation in the research study. Enclosed to this letter please find a minor assent form and the survey to be completed.

If you have questions at any time about the study or survey, you may contact at any time at

[khachan@student.uiwtx.edu](mailto:khachan@student.uiwtx.edu) or at 210-844-4600.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information or offer input, contact the UIW IRB Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (210) 805-3036. This research and survey tool has been approved by the UIW IRB (IRB #14-06-017).

I thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Charles Khachan

## Appendix I

### Minor Assent Form

#### **Do You Want to Participate in a Research Study?**

I am doing a study to learn about people from Lebanese families in the Maronite Church and their feelings about their heritage and ethnicity. We are asking you to help because you are a member of the church and you and your family have Lebanese roots.

If you agree to be in our study, you will take a short survey on your feelings about your heritage and ethnicity. We want to know how you see yourself, your heritage, and your ethnicity.

You can ask questions about this study at any time. If you decide at any time not to finish, you can ask us to stop and nothing bad will happen.

The questions we will ask are only about what you think and feel. There is no right or wrong answer. This is not a test.

If you complete the survey, it means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study.

If you don't want to be in the study, you don't need to do anything.

Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you don't sign this paper or if you change your mind later.