

**Narratives of the Maps: Emirati Undergraduate
Students' Stories of National Identity**

سرد الخرائط: قصص مجموعة من الطالبات الإماراتيات في الهوية
الوطنية

by

Rabaa Al Sumaiti, M.Ed.

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

at

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RABAA ALSUMAITI

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Thesis Supervisor

Dr Eugenie Samier

Approved for award:

Dr. Marlene Morrison
External Examiner

Dr Hanan Taleb
Internal Examiner

Prof Abubakr Suliman
Chair of Examiners

Prof Abdullah Mohammed Alshamsi
Chair of Research Degree Committee

Date: 31 /3 / 2014

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ABSTRACT

In 1971, the rulers of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) put their national dreams forward and celebrated the federation of the UAE. Since then, the UAE has changed rapidly to become a globalised country that aspires to achieve international prominence, thereby affecting Emiratis and exposing them to external factors at odds with Emirati values emerging from Muslim and Arab culture. This has caused great concern regarding Emirati youth national identities, and the possibility that they are building weak understandings of their culture and citizenship. This doctoral thesis explores four Emirati female undergraduate students' experiences of national identity through cultural and political symbols.

The theoretical framework is a synthesis of Mead's (1934) and Goffman's (1959) symbolic interactionism and Moscovici's (1988) social representation theory. The study follows a social constructivist methodology based on narrative and ethnography using participant observations, ethnographic interviews, and visual methods to create stories of national identity experiences. The findings demonstrate that the students' experience of national identities in everyday contexts included socially interacting with cultural and political symbols producing an internalised image of the UAE they relate to their objectives and future ambitions. Recommendations include addressing further research and theoretical implications of identity studies in the region, reviewing higher education curricula and youth programmes, as well as the need for a comprehensive cultural strategy in the UAE.

موجز البحث

في العام 1971 حول شيوخ دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة حلمهم الوطني إلى واقع واحتفلوا بقيام الاتحاد. ومنذ ذلك الحين تسارعت التغييرات في دولة الامارات، وتحولت إلى دولة تنسم بالعالمية، يسعى قادتها إلى تحقيق التميز في المحافل الدولية. ولقد أثرت هذه التغييرات على الإماراتيين، الأمر الذي جعلهم عرضة للمؤثرات الخارجية التي لا تتوافق مع القيم الإماراتية النابعة من الثقافة الإسلامية والعربية، وجعلهم قلقين على الهوية الوطنية لدى الشباب وعلى توجهاتهم الثقافية ومفهومهم للمواطنة الإماراتية. تهدف رسالة الدكتوراه إلى دراسة الهوية الوطنية لدى أربعة طالبات إماراتيات جامعيات واختبارهن لها في حياتهن اليومية من خلال رموز ثقافية وسياسية.

اعتمد الإطار النظري على جمع نظريتي ميد (1934) وجوفمان (1959) في التفاعل الرمزي، وكذلك على نظرية التصور الاجتماعي لمسكوفيكى (1988). واعتمدت منهجية البحث على البنائية الاجتماعية، وشملت على وسائل جمع بيانات اثنوجرافية وسردية مثل الملاحظة المشتركة والمقابلة الاثنوجرافية ووسائل بحثية بصرية، تم استخدامها في كتابة قصص سرديت اختبار الطالبات لهوياتهن الوطنية. وأظهرت نتائج البحث أن الطالبات اختبرن هوياتهن في أربعة سياقات يومية تضمنت تفاعل اجتماعي مع رموز ثقافية وسياسية، نتج عنه صورة مبطنة عن الامارات العربية المتحدة تجلت للطالبات كلما فكرن في أهدافهن وطموحاتهن المستقبلية. وشملت توصيات البحث على طرح دراسات مستقبلية في هذا المجال، ومعالجة بعض المسائل النظرية في هذه الدراسات، وأشارت إلى أهمية مراجعة مناهج التعليم العالي وبرامج الشباب وإلى الحاجة إلى اعتماد استراتيجية ثقافية شاملة.

DEDICATION

To the beautiful woman who showed me that life is simply unlimited

To my mother

Rabaa

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My journey of getting my EdD was a journey full of amazing experiences. It was not just a journey of getting a higher qualification, it was a journey of challenging my thoughts, ideas and beliefs. A journey that has transformed me into a new person, eager for new experiences. This journey would not have affected me deeply if it was not for the people that surrounded me all that time. I would like to thank my EdD supervisor Dr. Eugenie Sameir, her guidance throughout my journey was valuable and inspiring. She had set high expectations for all of us, and insisted that we meet them. Her words and feedback assisted me in every step I made, and now I'm more competent in my research and analytical skills because of her.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is considered to have one of the most fascinating stories of nation-building in the modern era (Hellyer, 2009; O'Sullivan, 2008).

Located in the Middle East, where events keep changing drastically, the UAE has risen as a modern Muslim and Arab state working its way gradually into international prominence. With one of the largest economies in the Middle East, the UAE has become one of the world's most successful small nations (O'Sullivan, 2008).

With all the changes that have taken place in the UAE since its federation in 1971, this small state has become a diverse country with global aspirations. For instance, in 2011 the Federal Government of the UAE announced the bid to host Expo 2020 in Dubai (Croucher, 2012). This exhibition is one of the world's largest, attracting millions of people every five years for a period of six months, an exhibition that has never been held in the Middle East (Rahman, 2013). The UAE launched a national campaign to educate people about this event and its importance to the country (Al Bayan, 2012). In November 2013 it was announced that Dubai won the bid to host the exhibition in 2020, and the entire country celebrated this historical achievement (Menon & Belleza, 2013). Those who do not know the UAE might be sceptical about the UAE's potential to host such a large international event. However, such national initiatives in the UAE are all linked to the vision of the founder of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed. He imagined the UAE as a modern country aspiring to achieve high

international ranking, and hence the current leadership follows his steps and ensures that Emiratis aspire to high achievements.

Transforming societies into globalised and diverse contexts that affect youth identity development is a global phenomenon; however, this raises more concerns in the UAE where the population of Emiratis is much less than other resident nationalities. The rapid change in the UAE has transformed the Emirati society into a globalised society within the country as the population of expatriates moving to the UAE for investment, better employment opportunities and new possibilities has increased significantly (Sher, 2009). This has affected the population of Emiratis, who have become a minority in their homeland (Matthew, 2009). In 2010 the total population of the UAE reached 8,264,070, of which 7,316,073 were expatriates and only 947,997 were Emirati (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

All of these changes have influenced how Emiratis, particularly Emirati youth, visualise themselves and their opportunities as Emirati citizens. Concerns about Emirati youth's national identity and their Emirati cultural attachments, such as using the Arabic language and traditional customs, have increased since then (Matthew, 2009; Mohammed, 2008). In the light of all the rapid changes that are occurring in the UAE and affecting the lives of Emiratis, this doctoral thesis aims to investigate the national identity experiences of a group of female Emirati undergraduate students, and the impact of these experiences on the choices they make as undergraduate students. Young Emiratis are expected to develop a national identity that links them with their history and their rich Emirati culture, and to be proud of it. However, people in the UAE are concerned that this is difficult to achieve with the rapid

changes that are occurring in the country and affecting Emirati youth at the same time.

Since these concerns first emerged in the 1990s, the national Government has adopted several initiatives to support and promote national identity across the country. As it continues to do so, questions are raised about how youth builds its sense and understanding of national identity. People in the UAE are becoming more aware of the importance of having a solid national identity, a topic that is increasingly appearing in the media (Mohammed, 2008). In 2010, the Ministerial Cabinet issued the UAE Vision 2021 document (UAE Interact, 2010), a national charter that describes the next phase of the country, and the core values and standards that Emiratis should aspire to. In the Standard 1.4: Vibrant Culture section of the Vision 2021 document is the following goal:

The UAE distinctive culture will remain founded on progressive and moderate Islamic values and endowed with a rich Arabic language, to proudly celebrate Emirati traditions and heritage while reinforcing national identity (p. 12).

This was the first time an official Government document of the UAE used the term ‘national identity’. In addition to its emphasis on adhering to vibrant Emirati culture, it stresses preparing globally aware Emiratis who are ready to embark on achieving national aspirations as entrepreneurs and innovators. The UAE Vision 2021 represents Emiratis as nationals with strong ethnic and cultural ties, and as global citizens at the same time. Based on that, Emirati national identity could be said to be comprised of elements from four types of identities:

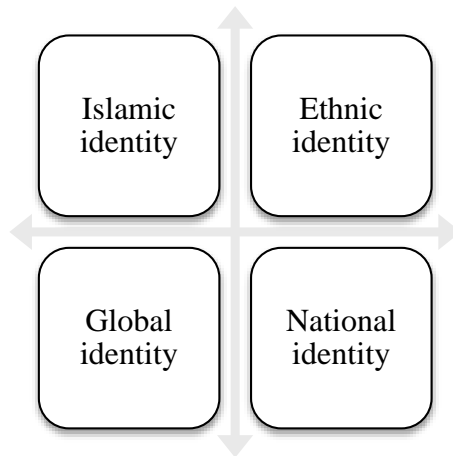


Figure 1: Elements of the Emirati identity

Figure 1 represents Emirati national identity as a fluid one in which Emiratis are sometimes expected to play different roles, but links them to their national identity. In addition, Emirati youth are expected to build ethnic and cultural ties, embrace Islamic values, be globally aware, and demonstrate their nationalism at the same time. Abandoning any one of these means abandoning an important aspect of Emirati national identity.

The situation of Emirati youth is worth investigating. They are encouraged by their leaders to build a strong national identity, but they face many challenges that affect their attachments to culture and the UAE. More importantly, they are in a phase which requires making important life decisions, such as those involving their education and career. While they are thinking about important decisions they are also experiencing their national identities and attempting to understand their roles and what is expected from them. In addition, what makes this topic worth studying is the fact that Emirati youth between the ages of 15 and 25 make up 52.9 % of the

population (Nazzal, 2012a). This means that half of the population in the UAE might be at risk of losing their attachment to national identity. Despite the fact that national identity has become an issue in the UAE, there are limited studies that have explored this topic (Findlow, 2000; MCYCD, 2009a).

Because of the reasons discussed above, this study focuses on exploring female Emirati undergraduate students' national identity and aims to contribute to the field of knowledge of this important topic and factors associated with its development. This study focuses on female Emirati students because federal higher education statistics show that there are more female undergraduate students in the UAE than male students. In 2013 more than 10,000 female Emirati students joined the main federal higher education institutions in the UAE, compared to 6,395 male Emirati students (MOHESR, 2014). Statistics also demonstrate that federal higher education institutions attract 65% female Emirati students in Dubai (KHDA, 2013b).

1.1 Purpose and research questions

In exploring national identity experiences, this thesis follows a combined research design of ethnography and narrative inquiry. After collecting the field notes, a story of the national identity experience is assembled from each participant. The stories are then analysed using a narrative analysis approach to identify main concepts, and later to draw conclusions and recommendations for improving higher education and youth programmes and further research. In his investigation of cultural identities and the impact of colonisation on them, Said (1993) explains in his work 'Culture and Imperialism' that people use stories to assert their identities and sense of belonging.

He uses narratives from different contexts to investigate the impact of colonisation on people's cultural and national identities. The narratives he uses present the experiences of people in defining and redefining their cultural and national attachments. This study follows a similar approach in exploring the experiences of students by telling their stories; it explores their experiences in labelling their surroundings and assigning symbolic categories and meanings. This experiential approach focuses on understanding the symbols they relate to, the meanings they present, and their impact on the students' national identity, and on students' attitudes and the decisions they make.

The main research question in this study focuses on understanding the role of social interaction to convey meanings from cultural and political symbols to female Emirati undergraduate students, and to create experiences of national identity. The sub-questions are as follows:

- 1) How do female Emirati undergraduate students define national identity?
- 2) How do female Emirati undergraduate students draw upon cultural symbols in their experiences of national identity?
- 3) How do female Emirati undergraduate students draw upon political symbols in their experiences of national identity?
- 4) What is the role of social interaction in experiencing national identity?
- 5) How have young female Emiratis' understanding of national identity influenced their educational and career choices?

The first research sub-question aims to understand the overall definition of national identity from the students' perspectives. This includes identifying the main aspects

from their experiences, which they find more significant to their national identity than others; they consider them not only part of their experiences, but also a main part of their definition of their national identity. The second and third research sub-questions explore the role of cultural and political symbols in experiencing national identity. These two questions examine the significance of cultural and political symbols in the students' experiences, their interconnections, and the difference between the meanings they convey to the students.

The fourth sub-question investigates social interaction and its role in conveying meanings of national identity. Given the nature of Emirati culture and society that depend on cultural and familial values, and the significance of kinship in the UAE, this question assists in understanding the importance of social interaction in national identity experiences, and its impact on students' national attitudes. The last sub question explores the experience of national identity as a student, and its implications, mainly the role of national identity in affecting students' educational and career choices.

Three participants were female undergraduate students at public universities in the UAE, and one of them an international student studying in Dublin. Research into youth studies and their college experiences indicates that interaction and experiences in college have a major impact on students' identity experiences, and on their values and civic attitudes (Evans et al, 2010; Luyckx et al, 2010). This means that Emirati undergraduate students are making important decisions at the same time as they are trying to make sense of their national identity. Therefore, the impact of national

identity on their college-related decisions and choices is expected to be more significant compared to undergraduate students in other contexts.

The significance of this study is that it explores not only definitions of national identity, but also the research sub-questions designed to explore cultural and political symbols, both of which are argued by political scientists such as Anderson (2006) and Parekh (1999; 2008) to be the most important aspects of national identity. In general, for Smith (2010), culture is considered an important highlight in the politics of national identity; however, after the industrial revolutions that transformed many Western countries, civic and political values and notions have also emerged as important in the politics of national identity (Connor, 1994; Gellner, 1994a). Currently, these aspects are considered the main domains in studying the politics of national identity (Kymlicka, 2001). Nevertheless, Asaeed and Sharab (2012) explain that in countries such as the UAE, where ethnic culture, mother tongue and Islamic rituals play a vivid role in constructing the society and shaping the everyday experiences of Emiratis, culture plays a more significant role. Therefore, this research study sheds light on nationalism in traditional communities, where ethnic culture is an everyday reality.

In addition, this study is important because it investigates national identity from the perspective of group of young female Emiratis. Although national identity is discussed occasionally in the UAE, mostly by the media (Al Bahli, 2009), most of the time youth perspectives on this important topic are overlooked (Al Bahli, 2009). Therefore, results from this study are expected to present important findings that could assist in reviewing youth educational and development policies and

programmes. Such findings are important for the UAE, as there is a need to address youth national identity formation and their cultural attachments in order to identify the challenges that are facing their national identity development, and to present more grounded solutions for the surfacing concerns discussed above.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the perspectives of symbolic interactionism and social representation theory, both of which highlight the importance of social interaction in experiencing identity and in constructing everyday social reality (Augoustinos, Walker & Donaghue, 2006; Collins, 1994; Kenny, Whittle & Willmott, 2012). They also emphasise the role of others and of symbols in social worlds in creating social experiences, and they support the research questions in investigating social interaction, and cultural and political symbols (Brewer & Gardener, 1996; Brewer & Yuki, 2007; Sandstrom, Martin & Fine, 2010). This study follows a social constructivist paradigm, and the methodology, as mentioned earlier, is based on narrative and ethnographic design. Data collection methods include participant-observations, ethnographic interviews, and the use of visual methods. The narrative inquiry is used after collecting the data in creating a story of the national identity experience for each student.

1.2 Overview of the chapters

The second chapter of this study is the literature review, discussing the theoretical framework and models of nationalism. The chapter also provides a construct of a history of the UAE that provides a historical interpretation of the development of nationalism and national identity in the UAE. This chapter also links the topic's studies to the research that will take place. The methodology is described in the third

chapter, in which the approach, the data collection methods, the participants' selection and the trustworthiness of the study are all discussed.

The findings of the research are included in the fourth chapter, in which analysis of the findings is presented. This includes presenting the findings from the multiple methods used for each student, and the overall general themes that emerge. The findings are then discussed in more depth in Chapter five; here each research sub-question is discussed separately, while making links with the literature review and the theoretical framework. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations of the study are included in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is divided into three sections. The first section explores the historical development of national identity in the UAE; it presents a historical account of the UAE before and after the federation, and highlights important phases that affected national identity in the UAE. This section ends by discussing examples of empirical research on Emirati national identity. The second section explores theoretical perspectives and a literature review in nationalism and national identity. The third section in this chapter examines theoretical perspectives in identity studies; it also discusses the theoretical framework and links it with previous discussion of nationalism and national identity.

2.1 Historical development of the UAE

The historical development of the UAE includes several turning points that transformed the Emirates and influenced Emiratis, their sense of belonging, and their cultural attachments. All of these turning points explain how Emiratis changed from being a group of people with limited socio-economic status to having better life opportunities that exposed them to innovative citizenship and global understanding (Hellyer, 2009; Matthew, 2009). This section explores the history of the UAE, and traces the development of Emirati national identity over several historical periods. This section will only explore the history of the UAE, and later, in discussing models in nationalism, links are made with this section, in order to fully understand the development of nationalism in the UAE. The history of the UAE can be divided into

two major phases: colonial and the federation. Each phase includes a number of national periods.

2.1.1 The colonial phase

Before colonisation, the UAE was known locally as the Arabian Emirates in the coast of Oman; internationally it was referred to as the coast of Oman (Al Qassemi, 2009).

There were several colonial attempts there, such as the Portuguese, French and Danish attempts (Heard-Bey, 1997a). Nevertheless, the British colonisation was the major one that affected the Arabian Emirates profoundly, and that made Emiratis think nationally for the first time (Al Qassemi, 2009; O'Sullivan, 2008). Before the British colonisation the Arabian Emirates were a number of tribes who lived by the coast in divided units and survived on fishing and pearl-diving (Al-Fahim, 1995).

There were some disputes between these tribes mostly over territories and dominance (O'Sullivan, 2008). Although these tribes share common culture, heritage and history, and people suffered from low economic conditions; there were no serious attempts at unity until the British colonisation (Al Qassemi, 2009).

The British forces started expanding their invasion towards India and the Arabian Emirates on 1588 (Heard-Bey, 1997a). They fought the Danish, Portuguese and French forces until they were able to control the area (Kazim, 2000). The purpose of the British colonisation of the Arabian Gulf was mainly to control their trade (Al Qassemi, 2009), since the entrance to the Gulf was controlled by the Arabian Emirates, which had an active trading business with India and East Africa (Heard-Bey, 1997a). The British forces realised that in order to establish their full domination on the coastal areas of the Arabian Gulf and protect their territories in India, they had

to control the entrance to the Gulf (Heard-Bey, 1997a). Between 1809 and 1819 the British forces started fighting the Arabian Emirates along the coasts and suppressed their activities; these campaigns continued until the British forces were able to seize and take control of the entire region (Kazim, 2000).

After suppressing trade activities in the Arabian Emirates, the British forces adopted another approach: they held peace treaties with the sheikhs of the Emirates, and announced the Trucial Emirates Council in 1920 (O'Sullivan, 2008). The Emirati sheikhs realised that joining the council would help protect their resources and organise their political priorities (Heard-Bey, 1997a). However, this arrangement isolated the Emirates from the rest of the world since the British Government prevented any kind of local representation of the region in international contexts and controlled its international affairs, as well as all economic arrangements including oil settlements (Bristol-Rhys, 2009).

There were two major impacts of the British colonisation of the Emirates; the British forces suppressed their trade activities and controlled all international and economic issues, which resulted in Emiratis losing their jobs and suffering from low social conditions (Al Qassemi, 2009). At the same time, this resulted in delaying any kind of national union in the region (Al Qassemi, 2009). The significant impact of this phase is that it made the Emirati sheikhs think nationally for the first time; they realised the different threats around them, thought about the federation, and dreamt of better lives for all Emiratis.

As mentioned above, during the colonisation the Arabian Emirates were divided into several units, with each ruled by a sheikh from a certain tribe (Heard-Bey, 1997a).

There were some disputes between them; based on their needs, the British forces followed an approach of sometimes supporting the division and sometimes supporting the union between the tribes (Al Qassemi, 2009). Regardless, joining the Trucial States was in fact the first step to the federation. The sheikhs wanted to change from disputing Emirates to working collectively; given their shared ethnic background, heritage, culture and traditions, they knew that they could form a union and work together (Rugh, 2007).

Around that time, two sheikhs were immersed in learning modernist ways more than the others, and started making plans for modernising their Emirates and building modern communities: Sheikh Rashid the ruler of Dubai and Sheikh Zayed the ruler of Abu Dhabi (Wheeler, 2005). One of the Emirates that underwent many changes was the Emirate of Dubai, an Emirate that made economic progress before the discovery of oil (O'Sullivan, 2008). Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum (1913-58), the founder of this Emirate, was able to make Dubai's port a successful economic hub, which increased trade and exporting and importing businesses (Al Qassemi, 2009). This resulted in improving income and employment opportunities for Emiratis (O'Sullivan, 2008). When Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed (1912-90) succeeded his father in 1958, he continued reforming and building modern Dubai. He introduced new changes that transformed Dubai internally and economically (Rugh, 2007). He established Dubai as the aviation centre of the Gulf, built the air traffic system control, established Dubai Police, the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, built more schools, and nationalised oil and gas operations (O'Sullivan, 2008).

Abu Dhabi was also going through changes that transformed it into a modern Emirate and paved its way to become the capital of the country. Modernism in Abu Dhabi started later than Dubai, and only when Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan (1918-2004) became the new ruler of Abu Dhabi (Al-Fahim, 1995). Sheikh Zayed was the ruler of Al Ain, and had spent 20 years ruling it and putting efforts into bringing the tribes in the western areas together, as well as improving farming and agriculture, health services and education (ECSSR, 2004). All of this prepared him to be the next ruler of a large Emirate, and he was appointed as ruler of Abu Dhabi in 1966 (Rugh, 2007). When he moved to Abu Dhabi he followed the same approach in reforming and making improvements; he improved transportation, education, the health service, infrastructure and the governing system (Al-Fahim, 1995). At same time, he visited neighbouring states, and met with rulers and political representatives to make strategic and political agreements (Al-Fahim, 1995). He turned to the other Emirates, invited their sheikhs to projects, provided them with support, and worked on ending political conflicts (O'Sullivan, 2008).

Around that time, the sheikhs of the Arabian Emirates became alarmed by the neighbouring threats from Iran, which started claiming authority of land belonging to the Arabian Emirates (Al Roken, 1997). This was the first time the rulers of the Emirates were alarmed about the dangers around them, and realised they needed to form a union to face these challenges (Al Roken, 1997). There were many federation attempts that took place in the area; however, all these attempts failed until Dubai and Abu Dhabi announced the federation between them (Al Qassemi, 2009). When Britain withdrew its troops from the Gulf in 1968, the two rulers of Dubai and Abu

Dhabi met and decided to form the federation between the two Emirates, inviting the other Emirates to join them (O'Sullivan, 2008). It was Sheikh Zayed who initiated the federation with Sheikh Rashid and convinced him of the importance of settling their conflicts and working together to build a country (Al Qassemi, 2009).

In the next phase between the years 1968 and 1971, the sheikhs of the Emirates had to make critical decisions and negotiate the federation (Al Qassemi, 2009). At that time, the negotiations included the nine Emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Qatar, Bahrain, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah (Abed, 1997; Al Qassemi, 2009). The membership of Bahrain and Qatar was challenged because both had allies who opposed the federation, which made the two countries withdraw from the federation project later (O'Sullivan, 2008). On the second of December 1971 the federation of the United Arab Emirates was announced, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain and Fujairah (Al Qassemi, 2009). The sheikhs elected the ruler of Abu Dhabi as the President of the country, and the ruler of Dubai as the Vice-President (Al Abed, 1997; Rugh, 2007). The Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah joined the federation later, in 1973 (O'Sullivan, 2008).

2.1.2 The federation

After announcing the federation, the identity of the newly formed Gulf country was challenged, and the federation of the United Arab Emirates was not widely accepted. It faced political challenges and rejection from some Arab countries (Al Qassemi, 2009). However, Sheikh Zayed continued to pursue his vision through strategic settlements with rulers of regional countries (O'Sullivan, 2008). Because of that, and in addition to his efforts in building the country later, Sheikh Zayed is considered the

father of all Emiratis, the first leader and the creator of the country (ECSSR, 2004; O'Sullivan, 2008). His vision and aspirations of unity, development and prosperity are regarded as the reasons for pursuing the federation, and are always recognised in national celebrations (ECSSR, 2004).

In addition to the external challenges, Sheikh Zayed had to face some internal challenges. One challenge was changing the governance from a tribal system to a constitutional system (Al Abed, 1997; Rugh, 2007). To move from the old system to the new one, the rulers ensured that there was balance, distribution of power and avoidance of conflict (Al Qassemi, 2009; Peck, 1997). They did that by establishing ministries and federal entities, and assigning them to selected individuals (Al Qassemi, 2009). It was important for the new Government of the UAE to build a strong sense of national belonging that could decrease the sense of tribal belonging (Al Qassemi, 2009). This phase also included unifying defence, organising oil operations and policies, organising residency and immigration regulations, and organising public services and others (Al Qassemi, 2009).

It is important to highlight that discovering oil was one of the important factors that had a significant impact on the federation and the prosperity of the country. Before the federation, oil attracted many Western companies in the 1960s, mainly from Britain to make agreements with rulers of the Emirates; the sheikhs immediately realised it was important for the Emirates to protect its resources and use them for the benefit of the people (Bristol-Rhys, 2009). Oil had two major impacts on the federation: it was a national and natural resource that needed protection, and it also contributed in building the modern country (Al Qassemi, 2009; Bristol-Rhys, 2009).

Oil transformed the country entirely and was an asset to build the infrastructure, which affected the social and economic aspects of the country: roads were paved, schools and hospitals were opened, and buildings and towns arose (Al-Fahim, 1995; Wheeler, 2005).

In the desire to have better lives and to become contributors to the UAE, Emiratis started moving from rural to urban areas a few years after the federation: they realised that cities offered better employment opportunities, and had better public services (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). The better employment opportunities also attracted people from other Gulf, Arab, Western and Asian countries. As a result, expatriate communities started to emerge in the UAE (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). In addition, the UAE has been following an approach of economic openness; Dubai in particular “has gone a long way in the field of economic openness” (Al-Issa, 2005, p. 117). All of this has transformed the UAE and increased the features of globalisation across the country (Al-Issa, 2005). Dubai was one of the Emirates that transformed completely after the federation as Sheikh Rashid put great effort into establishing the city as a centre for trade and business (Rugh, 2007). With the increased business projects, thousands of foreigners arrived in Dubai to work in the oil industry, infrastructure plans and other business projects (Bristol-Rhys, 2009; O’Sullivan, 2007). Now, expatriates in the UAE work in different fields such as health, education, banking and other types of services and industries (Shihab, 1997).

The increasing expatriate population has also affected the UAE drastically. By the 2000s the natural population growth rate in the UAE had been long “outstripped by the country’s economic plans, many foreigners had come to the country to work, and

nationals formed a small per cent of the total population” (Matthew, 2009, p. 110). These changes had a positive impact; Emiratis became more aware of the world around them and more prepared to be global citizens (Al Hashimy, 2009). They are characterised as being tolerant and accepting of living in a diverse community (Alkhazraji, 2012; Gupte, 2009; Hellyer, 2009; Sher, 2009). It is common now to see Emiratis, including young Emiratis, involved in global cases such as humanitarian projects, or international projects such as Expo 2020 (Al Bayan, 2012). However, because of their small population and the increasing expatriate population, Emiratis have become a minority in their own country (Matthew, 2009). In 2011, the percentage of the expatriate population in the UAE had nearly reached 88% of the total population (UAE Interact, 2012), which put the UAE among the Gulf countries with the lowest proportion of natives (UAE Interact, 2013). In 2013, the UN migration report listed the UAE as one of the most popular migrant destinations in the world (UN, 2013). All of this has affected national identity in the UAE; Emiratis have become more concerned about youth national identity and the negative impact of these changes on their attachment to their country, including feelings of cultural insecurity or job insecurity (Matthew, 2009).

There was another reason that made the issue of national identity more concerning: it is the fact that culture and heritage were not prioritised at the beginning of the federation. The Government of the newly federated state was busy in establishing the identity of the country in the international community and in ensuring that Emiratis were living in a modern country that provided them with better life choices (Lawson & Al-Naboodah, 2008). According to Asaeed & Sharab (2012), until lately, there was no clear cultural policy or strategy that states priorities and objectives for promoting

cultural attachment in the UAE, and this was one of the factors that affected national identity.

Globalisation and modernisation have also affected higher education in the UAE. Higher education institutions in the UAE now incorporate more global curricular aspects in their programmes, and provide more opportunities for students, including Emirati students, to engage in learning about the world, adopt universal values and experience cultural exchange (Fox, 2007; Kamali, 2009; Wagie & Fox, 2005). Since the early years of the federation, the Government of the UAE offered Emirati youth scholarship opportunities to pursue international education (Goodman, 2009). Leaders in the UAE continuously encourage young Emiratis to pursue education to be more equipped to participate in the growth of the country (Kamali, 2009). Whether they are studying at home or abroad, Emirati undergraduate students are now expected to be aware of global issues, immersed in universal values, and engaged with people from other cultures (Matthew, 2009). These expectations are important to meet the needs of the growing market economy in the UAE that requires innovation, global awareness and establishing and maintaining a global and well-integrated corporate governance framework (Tarbuck, 2009). At the same time, this increasing emphasis on global education is one of the reasons for raising concerns about youth national identity. Emirati students are required to increase their understanding of their roles as global citizens; however, little has been done in the UAE to improve youth's understanding about their own culture and history (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012).

2.1.3 Cultural and national initiatives in the UAE

Emirati citizens are now questioning whether the diverse society of the UAE, in addition to the increasing signs of globalisation everywhere, will create conflict and identity problems for Emirati youth (Matthew, 2009; Mohammed, 2008). For instance, although the Arabic language is the official language of the UAE, diversity, globalisation and modernisation have made English the dominant language in the country (Bristol-Rhys, 2009). In addition, feelings of being overwhelmed and the sense of alienation increased among Emirati citizens (Matthew, 2009). In response to these concerns, members of the ruling families and representatives from several governmental entities have initiated and sponsored cultural and national projects (Lawson & Al-Naboodah, 2008).

The cultural revival phase started in the UAE during the 1990s, when several heritage centres and projects were established across the Emirates (Al Qassemi, 2009). This was in addition to other initiatives such as producing stamps that represented cultural icons, museums and archaeology projects, which continued until the 2000s (Lawson & Al-Naboodah, 2008). These attempts succeeded in reconnecting people with their culture, however, because it began late, almost 20 years after the federation, factors of globalisation were significantly affecting cultural attachments in the UAE at that time, and leaders realised that more had to be done in order to maintain national identity in the UAE (Lawson & Al-Naboodah, 2008).

In 2008, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the second ruler of the UAE, announced marking 2008 as the National Identity Year (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012; Habboush, 2008). Also, in 2010 the UAE Cabinet released the UAE Vision 2021

(UAE Interact, 2010). The UAE Vision 2021 is the official document that charts the next stages of development in the UAE (UAE Interact, 2010). This document is also the first official document in the UAE that included the term ‘national identity’. In 2012, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid, the Vice-President of the UAE, announced a number of initiatives that targeted maintaining the Arabic language (WAM, 2012a). These initiatives included creating an Arabic language charter that compiles all policies and regulations related to maintaining the Arabic language, and establishing a committee of experts to work in reviving the Arabic language and reviewing modern methods for teaching the Arabic language (WAM, 2012a; WAM, 2013a). In addition, the Government of the UAE continues to regularly and actively encourage Emiratis to participate in building a self-sustaining economy and country, and connecting it to their national identity (Al Maktoum, 2009; Al Qassemi, 2009; Findlow, 2000). This is conducted through creating different schemes that encourage national enterprise and entrepreneurship (Findlow, 2000).

Hence, since the 1990s the Government in the UAE continued to initiate projects to promote national identity and cultural awareness (Al Qassemi, 2009). In these projects, cultural or political symbols are often used to highlight important Emirati values and beliefs. One of the most important examples of these symbols was the logo used for the 40th National Day’s celebrations in the UAE. The Government of the UAE adopted an official logo for the important event (WAM, 2012c). The illustration in the logo represented the former rulers of the Emirates when announcing the federation and raising the national flag of the UAE for the first time, with the slogan ‘spirit of the union’ (WAM, 2012c). The Government used a very important political memory in that year’s National Day’s celebrations as a symbol to revive sentiments

and to direct national thinking towards continuing the work of the former fathers. This logo received a wide public appeal from society in the UAE, and as a result remained the official logo for the 41st National Day's celebration the next year (WAM, 2012c).

One of the latest initiatives to support and promote Emirati national identity was issuing the Emirati citizen code of conduct and values (UAE Cabinet, 2013; WAM, 2012d). The purpose of this code is to educate Emiratis, especially the young, of their responsibilities towards the UAE, their society and their families (Al Bayan, 2013). Although this document looks like a promising initiative that could assist in restoring youth national identity; the code was issued alone with no supporting schemes that provide guidance on how to achieve the expectations listed in the document. In addition, the UAE Cabinet also announced including Emirates' studies as a mandatory course in undergraduate programmes across universities in the UAE (WAM, 2012d). The purpose of this mandatory course is to educate undergraduate students about the UAE as a country and a society (WAM, 2012d).

The different symbols and their initiatives assisted in restoring culture, spreading movements of nationalism across the country, and made people - including youth - aware of the importance of their national identity (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012; WAM, 2012c). However, as the UAE continues to develop further, these projects still stand at odds with the globalising cosmopolitan nature of the Emirates, especially Dubai, and with growing concerns of the diminishing of cultural ideals (Lawson & Al-Naboodah, 2008). UAE Vision 2021 emphasises acquiring further global standing, but at the same time it highlights the need to maintain cultural beliefs. This means that

Emirati youth should understand their roles as Emirati citizens and be part of nation-building, but at the same time they need to maintain cultural beliefs.

2.1.4 Research on national identity in the UAE

The discussion above indicates the necessity to understand issues concerning Emirati national identity and its effects on Emiratis, and their understandings of their roles as citizens. However, there has been very little empirical research on Emirati youth, their cultural attachments and national identity. One of the studies is Findlow's (2000) study in nationalism in the UAE. In this research Findlow (2000) attempted to compare national identity development in the UAE with other models of national identity development that are based on Muslim and Arab identity. Findlow (2000) based her research on general observations of the current situation of the UAE, and included data she collected in 1999 through interviewing and surveying Emirati undergraduate students, and Emirati staff members who worked in higher education institutions. Results of the study demonstrated that the Emirati collective identity is not mainly constructed on the regional models of national identity that incorporate aspects from Muslim and Arab identities. Data collected from undergraduate students showed that students did not have a strong understanding of what constituted their Emirati identity. They were slightly concerned about the Arabic language, but at the same time most of them confirmed that they prefer English as the language of instruction.

Findlow's (2000) study provides important insights about issues related to Emirati national identity. Given that the UAE was founded during periods of Arab nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s, it is commonly assumed that Emirati nationalism

would follow classical models of Muslim and Arab identities (Al Qassemi, 2009; Findlow, 2000). However, Findlow's (2000) empirical research was not solid enough to make clear conclusions, as her research design lacked a clear framework, and in some parts it seemed detached from the research questions. Despite that, her study's results are noteworthy and demonstrated that, although Emiratis have attachments to Arab and Muslim identity, the nature of the foundation of the UAE, its history and development of the UAE have perhaps made the Emirati identity different from other identities found in the region.

Rahman's (2008) oral history study with Emirati elderly is another important study that explored youth cultural attachments in the UAE. His study was mainly based on interviewing Emirati elderly; however, he also interviewed Emirati undergraduate students and compared their results with discussions he had with the other participants. His interviews with Emirati elderly were significant because they documented the impact of societal changes on Emiratis and highlighted the raising concerns of this generation about such changes, and the rapid development in the UAE. At the same time, Rahman's (2008) study emphasised the sense of pride the Emirati elderly carried for belonging to the UAE. In comparing these discussions with interviews with Emirati college students, the results indicated that the generation gap between Emirati elderly and the young might have created a lack of appropriate communication, which limited their opportunities to learn from them.

The generation gap discussed in Rahman's (2008) study is perhaps one of the things affecting youth national identity in the UAE and causing them to develop conflicting cultural attachments. Another important result from this study is that young Emiratis

were interested in learning more about their heritage and history. At the same time they were receptive to issues affecting their national identities, and learning about their culture such as the generation gap. The last study is Lawson and Al-Naboodah's (2008) historical analysis of national initiatives in the UAE. This study included analysing national artefacts and documents dating from the early years of the federation and until the late-2000s. The results demonstrated that the cultural revival in the UAE started in early 1990s, and prior to that there were no national or Government initiatives that targeted culture. The majority of the national initiatives before that were focused on promoting the international standing of the UAE and the development of the modern state. Lawson and Al-Naboodah's (2008) study is not an empirical research study, and they only investigated national documents. However, their study provided insights into important factors that affected the development of national identity in the UAE.

2.2 Theoretical perspectives in nationalism and national identity

This section of the literature review explores literature on the theoretical models of nationalism. It also links with the previous section in order to understand what models of nationalism are more suitable for the UAE and for the context of the research. The second part in this chapter examines the functions and features of national identity, and their impact on individuals.

2.2.1 Theoretical models of nationalism

National identity and nationalism are both global phenomena that have taken place in different parts of the world. These national phenomena varied according to the place and people, their nature and their characteristics. Political scientists have identified five models of nationalism, and each of them has a different area of focus: modernism, perennialism, primordialism, ethno-symbolism and everyday nationalism (Breuilly, 1994; Edensor; 2002; Gellner, 1994a; Gilbert, 1998). The discussion in this section includes presenting a theoretical background of every model, explaining its focus and limitation. At the same time, the discussion will explore every model's perspective in defining the experience of national identity, and its potential to be used as an approach for interpreting the results in this research study. In addition, after providing a historical background on the development of nationalism and national identity in the UAE, this section will make links with the previous historical background. Every nationalism model will be linked with the history of the UAE in order to understand the national phases, which the UAE experienced, and their impact on Emiratis' national identities.

2.2.1.1 Modernism

Modernism is the dominant model in understanding nationalism: it considers nationalism a modern phenomenon (Edensor, 2002; Gilbert, 1998; Ichijo & Uzelac, 2005; Smith, 1991). Modernists assume that nation and nationalism are consequences of the modernised social development of societies, that is, the development of modern nation-states, which occurred as an impact of the Industrial Revolution (Gellner, 1994a; Nairn, 1994). According to Ichijo and Uzelac (2005), modernisation brought

economic, social and political changes to societies, as a result of which new notions of “self-determination, democracy, sovereignty and citizenship came into surface; after that nationalism was created as rationalisation for seeking state power” (p. 10). There are some variations in describing this model; for instance, Hechter and Levi (1994) describe it as a socio-economic phenomenon. Here, they indicate that the reasons why some regions or communities experienced movements of nationalism in modern states is because they were facing socio-economic problems. In other cases, nationalism is labelled as sociocultural; this includes institutionalising culture and infusing it throughout society via a standardised education system (Gellner, 1983). In cases of nationalism arising in opposition to some types of political states, it is considered to be a political movement (Breuilly, 1993). In many cases, nationalism was a result of postcolonial periods, where people have to uphold to their sense of national belonging, and detach from their decolonised identities to construct national identities based on their cultural and ethnic sources (Said, 1979; 1993). Regardless of the differences, the main focus of nationalism remains on building modern states and organising civic systems (Gilbert, 1998).

The different perspectives in modernism indicate the complexity of this model. It is one model with several perspectives that could explain nationalism in different approaches. For instance, the UAE experienced socio-economic changes, starting from suffering from low life conditions as a result of colonisation, to building the modern Emirates and then continuing nation-building after the federation (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). One major period of modernism was building the new governing and civic system after the federation. This shows that several periods of modernist nationalism took place in the UAE before and after the federation but each occurred

for different reasons. Although most of these periods occurred for developing the country and to improve the socio-economic conditions, there are others that occurred as an impact of political changes such as the federating the Emirates, or as influence of the colonisation. The previous discussion of the history also showed that the Government of the UAE is still continuing nation-building; hence the UAE is still experiencing a modernist nationalism.

While most modernist perspectives focused on modern development of the nation, Anderson's (2006) modernist perspective highlights the role of culture in experiencing nationalism. He considers nations to be 'imagined communities'; members cannot know most of their fellow members, yet all of them have the image of their nation in their minds. In other words, members share an understanding of what constitutes their nation, and they live believing that their fellow members share the same cultural and social norms that constitute their nations. Anderson (2006) explains that people imagine their nations through print language, which provides a means for disseminating the image of the nation. His concept of 'imagined communities' indicates that individuals can reproduce and represent their imagined nation, which means that their experiences of national identity will vary based on the image they produce in different situations.

Although modernist nationalism provides solid perspectives in explaining nationalism in some cases, this model focuses on people as masses experiencing nationalism, and overlooks their individual experiences. Modernist nationalists such as Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1994) insist that elites construct national identity from 'high culture', and masses passively accept it. High culture is the type of culture that is tended by

experts (e.g. arts, music), and is mediated through education systems (Edensor, 2002; Gellner, 1994). In this situation, masses are part of the national project controlled by the elites, but they experience their national identity through interacting with selective cultural products. This model also overemphasises nationalism as a modern occurrence while overlooking its historical sources (Smith, 2010). Even though Anderson (2006) presents a different perspective and emphasises an important concept on how the understanding of nations is disseminated in political communities, his discussion of communities fails to address the complexity of postcolonial communities, where the image of the nation might be ramified and not as simple (Robertson, 2011). In addition, Anderson (2006) overemphasises the role of the print language in spreading the image of the nation. The role of the print language is in fact important for this purpose; however, there are other symbols in popular and everyday culture that could create experiences of national identity. Popular culture includes cultural activities and commercial products that represent patterns or aspects of traditional culture, but more suit the tastes of general masses of people (Edensor, 2002). Anderson's (2006) overemphasis on print language overlooks the rich complexity of cultural symbols drawn from popular and traditional culture, and sometimes favoured by people in our contemporary world.

Based on the above, experiencing national identity in modernism involves adopting a civic role, and being part of nation-building. Periods of national modernism took place in the UAE before and after the federation; however, these periods did not include manipulating masses and exposing them to a constructed national identity.

Nation-building in the UAE included having Emiratis as part of the process.

Regardless of these modernist periods, modernism does not explain the proactive role

of the Emiratis during the modernist nationalism periods. At the same time, the many projects and schemes initiated by the Government demonstrate that there were attempts to build the imagined nation of the UAE, and sustaining a national consciousness among Emiratis. The difference here is that sustaining the imagined nation was done by inviting Emiratis to participate in nation-building, not through Anderson's (2006) concept of print language.

One of the interesting studies that investigates the impact of modernist nationalism is Kaneva and Popescu's (2011) study of national branding in Romania and Bulgaria. After the collapse of Communism in 1989, post-Communist states suffered from economic, political and social turmoil, and needed national initiatives to face these challenges. Romania and Bulgaria suffered from similar turmoil and felt the need to reinvent the public national image. The study examines two countries' efforts in inventing their public national image through national branding. Some of the national branding initiatives involved adopting a new national anthem in Romania, and a new national logo in Bulgaria. Both countries also revived cultural symbols from ethnic myths and folklore and used them as national symbols. This study provided interesting insights into people's reaction to the initiatives, but it was limited to people's reaction more than to examining the impact of the national branding initiatives on people's national attitudes. Although it explored what people thought about these new initiatives, it did not link their thoughts to their national identity or their perception as citizens.

Education is one of the major fields that is affected by modernist nationalism, the reason for that is governments want to make sure that nationalisation reaches all

people (Calhoun, 2007; Gellner, 1983; 1994a). In this situation, education is considered one of the fields to spread national awareness and to unify people's understanding of their national identity (Gellner, 1994a). Because of that, many studies in modernist nationalism were conducted in curricular studies, especially studies that examined citizenship and national education (Ben-Porath, 2007; Rapaport, 2008; Schuitema et al, 2009; Stone, 2001). For example, in his study of analysing New Zealand's new citizenship education, Roberts (2009) examined New Zealand's vision for tertiary education in the model of citizenship presented in the tertiary education strategy. Results showed that the strategy conveyed a narrow concept of citizenship, which is limiting students from linking their understanding of their citizenship with their national understanding. Rapaport (2008), on the other hand, explored citizenship education in the US, and showed its need for major curricular review because it lacked important and contemporary concepts in citizenship education. Such studies show that concepts such as national identity and citizenship are in fact complex concepts subject to change. Countries all over the world are concerned with their civic and national curricula and want to make sure that their students are receiving the education they need to become good citizens (Greenwalt, 2009; Rapaport, 2008; Roberts; 2009).

2.2.1.2 Perennialism

The second model in understanding nationalism is perennialism. In this model nations are regarded as having always existed in periods of history (Seton-Watson, 1994; Smith, 2010). It emphasises the concept of continuity, in which some nations "have a long, continuous history, and can trace their origins back to long times in the history" (Smith, 2010, p. 54). People can then associate themselves with history and make

connections with it through experiencing a collective cultural identity (Seton-Watson, 1994; Smith, 2010). Because perennialism provides a framework for understanding nationalism from a historical perspective, historians view this model as a strong one in history (Reynolds, 1994).

Although this model is strong historically, it is limited because it only captures the historical development of nations; critics of this model question its ability to provide assumptions or propositions to understand nationalism (Smith, 2010; Topic, 2011). Hence, its potential in connecting historical factors with occurring political, social or cultural factors to establish an understanding of nationalism is a major concern. This model is the only one that presents a historical basis for understanding nationalism, an important aspect that was lacking in modernism, which considers nationalism as a new phenomenon. Nevertheless, it does not link historical development with contemporary issues affecting national identity.

Experiencing national identity in perennialism involves recalling historical memories, or interacting with historical symbols, and individuals realising their roles in maintaining the continuity of the nation. The previous discussion of the history of the UAE indicates that history is important in the UAE. The UAE has always existed in history, but has been transformed throughout different phases. This means that perennial nationalism occurred in the UAE, but was always interlinked with other types of nationalism. At the same time, UAE Vision 2021 highlights the importance of history and learning from the legacy of the nations' founding fathers, and Emiratis are considered part of history building. In addition, using a symbol that represented an important historical memory during National Day's celebrations indicates that

historical memories and reviving historical memories, as ways of experiencing national identity, are important in the UAE.

Although the UAE went through perennial nationalism, in countries where national identity continues to be an important topic affecting current issues, a model that is limited to historical development will not assist in thoroughly understanding the experience of national identity. It is evident from the previous discussion of modernism that nationalism in the UAE involves more than one type of nationalism. History is important in the UAE; however, there is more to the Emirati national identity, and it cannot be examined only from a perennial perspective.

Creating historical memories from national collective history is one of the approaches governments use to strengthen people's attachments to their nation. This is found in museums and other projects of reviving important historical memories (Khalaf, 2008; Trofanenko, 2008b). Khalaf's (2008) study examines creating historical memories of pearl-diving in Kuwait. He explained that using these created historical memories to transfer national meanings as societies go through rapid transformation is important for reviving national sentiments. A similar study was conducted by Alkhozai (2008): he explored the restoration of important historical sites in Bahrain and its impact on people's cultural and national attachments. Lawson and Al-Naboodah's (2008) paper on cultural nationalism in the UAE investigates the revival of historical memories and portraying them in stamps in the early 1990s. Their paper demonstrates that this revival of historical memories in the UAE took place around the first time the fears of losing attachments to culture and national identity appeared.

2.2.1.3 Primordialism

The third model in nationalism is primordialism. It follows a naturalistic approach that deals with the origins of nationalism, and asserts that nations and ethnic groups can be traced to their descent origins, and that they are formed from their ethnicity (Geertz, 1994; Smith, 2010). It is not as dominant as other models; in fact, some historians believe that primordialism is a peculiar paradigm (Smith, 2010). Although ethnicity could be one reason for nationalism, researchers in nationalism such as Geertz (1994) and Smith (2010) suggest that modern movements of nationalism occur for other reasons, too. Because nationalism is observed to generate so much passion and strong attachment, Geertz (1994) and Smith (2010) believe that nationalism and national identity cannot be attributed to ethnicity alone.

There have been many research studies in primordialism, but because of this model's focus on ethnicity, most of these studies are concerned with ethnic identities, and they fail to connect them with nationalism (Geertz, 1973; 1994; Llobera, 1999). Some of these studies, such as Harold's (1975) and Berghe's (1981), targeted ethnic identity as a group identity and its impact on group relations, but at the same time made links with the wider community. Nevertheless, even in such studies the focus remained on ethnic identity, and their links with national identity were limited. Contemporary studies in ethnicity such as Moran et al. (1999), Whitehead and Ainsworth (2009) and Stroink and Lalonde (2009), focus on studying bicultural identities and ethnic identities and their impact on national identities.

To conclude, primordialism presents a key aspect in nationalism that was missing from the previous models: the link between ethnicity and nationalism. Hence,

experiencing national identity in primordialism involves interacting with symbols and aspects from ethnic culture, and realising the importance of ethnicity in maintaining the continuity of the nation. Ethnicity is important in countries like the UAE, which has a rich ethnic culture. As discussed earlier, the Government in the UAE initiated several projects that revived ethnic culture as a way of promoting Emirati national identity (Lawson & Al-Naboodah, 2008). Even though ethnicity is important, national identity is a complex experience. Ethnicity is only one factor that might contribute to this experience, even in countries like the UAE, where ethnic culture is considered very important. Adopting a model that regards ethnicity as a sole reason for national phenomena is a major limitation. A more empirical approach that analyses ethnic attachments is needed to understand that.

2.2.1.4 Ethno-symbolism

The fourth model in nationalism is ethno-symbolism. This model seeks to explain nationalism from an 'inner perspective', it moves away from the elite-oriented analysis of modernism and concentrates on how people experience national identity through interacting with cultural aspects (Topic, 2011; Smith, 2009). Ethno-symbolism stresses the need to analyse all social and cultural aspects and patterns, and, by doing so, ethno-symbolist historians believe that they can explain the complex relationship between past and present and its impact on people (Smith, 1991; Smith, 2010). Similar to primordialism, ethno-symbolism also explores notions of ethnicity and its role in nationalism (Smith, 2009). In particular, it explores the existence of ethnic communities within nations, and how nationalism and ethnic associations evoke passion and attachment (Edensor, 2002). In addition, ethno-symbolism stresses that national identity includes both cultural and civic aspects; in other words, although

it emphasises ethnic culture, this model also highlights that citizens in nation-states experience their national identity through interacting with cultural and civic aspects (Cobban, 1994; Smith, 2004).

Ethno-symbolism is criticised as a model that provides no theory but only approaches in understanding nationalism (Hutchinson, 1994; Smith, 2010). Critics have argued that ethno-symbolism is an attempt to connect factors within nationalism rather than explaining nationalism as a phenomenon; as a result, ethno-symbolists sometimes confuse some factors (Ozkirimili, 2003). For instance, Smith (1991), the founder of this model, seems to be confusing nationalism with citizenship in some of his writings. Although citizenship and nationalism could be coalesced in some contexts, it is important to address them as separate areas in a political context. Ethno-symbolism is also criticised for overemphasising experiencing national identity through interacting with ethnic culture. Edensor (2002) explains that, although ethnic culture is important, popular culture is also important in experiencing national identity.

The UAE has experienced an ethno-symbolist period; it began during the cultural revival phase in early 1990s when culture and heritage were prioritised for the first time as important aspects of Emirati national identity. The recent Government initiatives also indicate that Emiratis are still experiencing an ethno-symbolist period. However, the late arrival of ethno-symbolism severely affected national identity in the UAE. Ethno-symbolism began when people's understanding of national identity was limited to their role as citizens in the process of nation-building. Civic understanding and the importance of building the modern UAE are both important aspects that definitely contributed to developing the Emirati national identity as discussed earlier.

However, in countries with a rich culture that plays a significant role in everyday life, serious damage might result in people's national identities if culture is ignored. In these cases, an ethno-symbolist nationalism is more relevant. For instance, Canefe's (2002) work on interpreting Turkish history using the ethno-symbolist model is rather significant. He explains that modernist, perennialist and primordialist models address different aspects of nationalism in modern Turkey, but they fail to address the role of ethnic culture, myths and memories in affecting people's national attachments. Hence, he uses ethno-symbolist elements in interpreting the Turkish history, and in addressing the wide appeal of nationalism in Turkey.

Compared to previous models, ethno-symbolism seems a more complex model. Experiencing national identity in this model involves interacting with social, cultural and civic elements, in which individuals realise the importance of culture, and adopt civic roles at the same time. Despite its complexity, which makes it unclear and far too inclusive to be effective in some aspects, this complex set of elements is what makes this model unique and suitable for this research study. This model explores sociocultural attachments of nationalism and national identity from a sociological perspective. It highlights individual experiences of national identity, and studies the reciprocal relationship between 'elites' and 'masses' rather than focusing on an elite analysis. Because this research study explores both cultural and political symbols and their role in experiencing national identity, this model presents a framework that acknowledges the involvement of more than one set of elements in the experience of national identity. One problem of depending on this model is that it focuses on ethnic and traditional culture, and neglects popular culture. Ethnic and traditional culture is very important in countries like the UAE. However, recently more writers are

stressing the importance of popular culture in nation-states (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002). Because participants in this research study are undergraduate students, their experiences of national identity might involve aspects from popular culture.

2.2.1.5 Everyday nationalism

Everyday nationalism is the fifth model, it is considered a new model and is less common than the rest (Edensor, 2002; Smith, 2010). The movement of everyday nationalism began with Billig (1995) and Edensor (2002), who noted the absence of the everyday reality of national identity. They wanted to study the everyday reality of people in experiencing their national identity and understand the role of the popular beliefs, sentiments and practises in the process (Edensor, 2002; Smith, 2010). They both argue that most analysts and political scientists focus on social movements, violence and modernism when attempting to analyse and understand nationalism, and they fail to notice the everyday experiences of nationalism that involve people shaping and reshaping their sense of belonging to their countries. This model stresses the role of culture, including both traditional culture and popular culture in everyday experience. Edensor (2002) reports that despite numerous studies in national identity and nationalism, almost all of these studies concentrate on the role of political understanding, political context and history in shaping and experiencing national identity, and only few studies explore the role of cultural elements in shaping the everyday experience of national identity. For instance, in her study about Caribbean migrants to Britain, Chamberlain (1999) explains how their sense of belonging was an everyday experience because it is connected to culture, which they lived every day with their families, sometimes at their workplace and in the street. The migrants

believe that as long as they keep transmitting culture, values and traditions to others, their national identity will survive.

What signifies everyday nationalism is that it explores the sense of national belonging and how it is envisioned and experienced by people in their everyday lives. As citizens, people are engaged in decision-making every day, they socially interact with others, experience national sentiments, discuss personal preferences and participate in several activities on a daily basis. In addition, everyday nationalism links between popular culture and everyday experience of national identity (Edensor, 2002). It indicates that people experience their national identity through interacting not only with traditional culture, but also with popular culture.

Everyday nationalism is criticised for having a static nature: it focuses more on explaining the individual experience of national identity, and fails sometimes to make links with the collective experience of national identity (Skey, 2009; Smith, 2012). In addition, it is criticised for being detached from history and focusing on everyday occurrences of nationalism (Skey, 2009). Everyday nationalism might present a static approach in looking at individual experiences; however, it does also present a fluid type of identity experience. In everyday nationalism, individuals make their own connections with national symbols, rather than interacting only with symbols that are selected for them. Hence, individuals can connect and reconnect at different levels and in different ways depending on their personal experiences and preferences. This means that individuals move from one type of experience to another through their everyday encounters, and end up forming a fluid national identity; the intensity of this identity changes according to the nature of the experience. Therefore, experiencing

national identity in this model involves individuals interacting with symbols in their daily lives and realising their roles as citizens.

During the early years of nation-building in the UAE, Emiratis were invited to be part of the process, the Government continues to do so. This means that Emiratis continue to experience their national identities through identifying their roles in the process of nation-building. This research study focuses on understanding individual experiences of national identity personally. Hence, a model that provides a micro-analytical approach in understanding the everyday experience of national identity will assist in understanding individual experiences of Emiratis, and how they make connections between their collective and their individual experiences of national identities.

The five models of nationalism present different perspectives in experiencing national identity. At the same time, there are some similarities. For instance, all the models apart from primordialism stress the role of people in nation-building and in maintaining the continuity of the nation. Primordialism, ethno-symbolism and everyday nationalism highlight the role of ethnic culture in experiencing national identity. Despite their differences, in all of the models experiencing national identity involves interacting with certain values, symbols or principles. Regardless of these values, symbols or principles involved, the discussion above indicates that nations need to build a national identity mainly for the purposes of attaining or maintaining autonomy, unity and identity of a nation (Anderson, 2006; Caputi, 1996; Edensor, 2002; Smith, 1991; 2010). Therefore, national identity can be summarised as an experience that involves interacting with significant national values, symbols or principles that reconnect the individual with her/his sense of national belonging.

Table 1: Models of nationalism and their impact on the UAE

Modernism	Main aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationalism is a modernist phenomenon that happens for political, socio-economic and sociocultural reasons. • People are part of the collective nationalism and are manipulated by the ruling class. 				
Modernism in the UAE					
1820	1930s	1958-1968	1968-1971	1971-1990s	1990s - present
Peace treaties. Foundation of the Trucial States.	The collapse of the natural pearl market. First oil explorations. Founding the new Dubai.	Building the new Abu Dhabi. The two Emirates form a union.	The British Government announces its intention to withdraw from the Emirates. Beginning of discussions of the federation. Foundation of the state of the United Arab Emirates.	Obtaining international recognition. Establishing the new political and governing system. Building infrastructure and public services. The increase of foreign labour.	Becoming the new UAE and continuing nation-building.
Perennialism	Main aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nations have always existed in periods of history, they have a long, continuous history which can be traced back. • People are part of the continuous history. 		Perennialism in the UAE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UAE has always existed, and Emiratis are always invited to participate in continuing the history. 		

Primordialism	<p>Main aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nations emerge from ethnic groups, which can be traced back to their descent origins. • People are part of the ethnic groups that form nations. 	<p>Primordialism in the UAE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity is important in countries like the UAE, which has a rich ethnic culture. • The Government in the UAE initiated several projects that revived ethnic culture as a way of promoting Emirati national identity. • Ethnicity is not the only factor that contributes to nationalism and national identity in the UAE.
Ethno-symbolism	<p>Main aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic culture (language, myths, memory) and history are important sources of nationalism. • People build attachments to their ethnic culture and experience their national identity and sense of belonging through that. • People are part of the nation-building. 	<p>Ethno-symbolism in the UAE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the 1990s, a period of ethno-symbolism started in the UAE, where the Government established cultural centres for the first time. • The Government continues to initiate cultural projects to promote national identity.
Everyday nationalism	<p>Main aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationalism is an everyday experience. • People interact with several cultural aspects from traditional and popular culture. 	<p>Everyday nationalism in the UAE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emiratis are involved in the process of nation-building in their daily lives. • Emiratis identify their roles as citizens through interacting with culture.

The discussion of the five models showed that traces of these models can be found and linked to the history of the UAE (Table 1). One important conclusion from the two previous discussions is that the ‘nation’ in the UAE emerged from the small ethnic community and was transformed into a nation-state. Smith (1991) defines a nation-state as “state’s boundaries coincide with the nation’s boundaries, and the total population on the state share a single ethnic culture” (p. 15). Connor (1994) explains that by the early 1970s only 10% of the states could claim that they were ‘nation-states’; interestingly, the UAE was founded as a federation at the same time. States can be nations when people belonging to this self-defining state share the same history, myths, memories, beliefs and values, practise the same culture and traditions, and inhabit or are attached to the same homeland (Connor, 1994; Edensor, 2002; Mitter, 2004; Smith, 1991; Smith, 2009). All of this exists in the UAE; in fact, this was one of the reasons that made the notion of the federation rational for the sheikhs of the Emirates, because they all shared the same common culture, beliefs, values and traditions, and had the same attributes.

Nationalism in the UAE evolved from experiencing colonisation, to a modernist phase for political and socio-economic reasons, to an ethno-symbolist phase of reviving culture and heritage (Table 1). Leaders in the UAE initiated these phases and then transferred it to people, who started realising their roles and their identity as Emiratis. The three phases signify important transformations in the UAE that have influenced Emiratis’ national identities drastically. The different events that took place in every phase have affected Emiratis’ lives, sometimes individually and sometimes collectively. As a result, it made them realise and assess their attachment to the Emirates on different levels. At the same time, as discussed earlier, there are some perennial, primordial and everyday national aspects across the development of nationalism

in the UAE. Using the link between the discussion of the history of the UAE and the discussion of the models (Table 1), three attributes that characterise Emirati national identity can be identified as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Main attributes of the Emirati national identity

1) Defining and representing my identity
2) Contributing to the UAE, and excelling in it
3) Reconnecting with ethnic culture and heritage

During the British colonisation, Emiratis lost their jobs, suffered from hunger, and their identity was stripped from them (Al Qassemi, 2009). They could not represent themselves: the international community identified them as another British colony (Heard-Bey, 1997a). The impact of this phase on Emiratis is that the notion of identity has become important: Emiratis want to define themselves, represent themselves and protect their identity (Al Qassemi, 2009). Secondly, the Emirates experienced a long national modernist phase that emerged for socio-economic and political reasons. As a result, Emiratis always strive to excel and to plan for more improvement, and to identify ways to contribute to the UAE. Emirati sheikhs in particular stand out as role models that encourage Emiratis to excel and work harder. Finally, although the modernist phase appears to be still occurring in the UAE, what signifies the later phase of nationalism is the revival of culture and heritage through a phase of ethno-symbolist nationalism. It was during this phase that Emiratis realised the importance of continuity: the need to reconnect with their culture and heritage in order to maintain their nation. Although Emirati youth did not experience the previous phases of nationalism, perhaps meanings of the three attributes are

communicated in society and shared among all Emiratis. Later in the discussion chapter, the findings of the research will be linked to the three attributes.

Finally, because of the different phases of the history of the UAE, and the different national drives involved in each one of them that have influenced Emiratis and their sense of citizenship, Emirati national identity is a fluid identity. Apart from primordialism, periods of modernism, perennialism, ethno-symbolism and everyday nationalism can be identified in the historical development of the UAE. Therefore, in discussing the findings of this research, aspects from four models of nationalism will be used in the results and in making connections. The national identity experience of every student might include different factors; hence, aspects from the four models will help in understanding the experiences. Given the history of the UAE, it is difficult to focus on only one model and claim that only that model will be used in interpreting the results, when it is clear that the history of the UAE includes periods from more than one model of nationalism.

2.2.2 National identity features and functions

The last section in this chapter explores the features and functions of national identity. This study includes understanding individual experiences of national identity, hence examining the features of national identity and their functions is important because they will assist in understanding the significance of the experience for every individual, its uniqueness, and the variations between the experiences.

National identity fulfils a number of functions for individuals and groups; these functions are divided into external and internal functions (Parekh, 1999; 2008; Smith, 1991). The external functions are: territorial, economic and political functions; and the internal are social and psychological functions (Parekh, 1999; 2008; Smith, 1991). Belonging to a nation includes belonging to a defined territorial and a social place; nations define membership, and organise resources, manpower and shared economic benefits (Gellner, 1994). National identity also has a political function; membership of the political community includes a regulation of political conduct, and the legitimation of common legal rights and duties. These aspects define the nation's characteristics, the characteristics of its citizens, their daily encounters and interactions among themselves and with different entities (Calhoun, 2007; Cobban, 1994; Gilbert, 1998; Smith, 1991).

National identity also has a social function; through social interaction in the common social settings such as educational institutions, nations ensure that citizens are developing values and attributes of the homogeneous culture. National identity provides social bonds among citizens by providing "repertoires and relationships of shared values, symbols and traditions" (Smith, 1991, p. 16). By using symbols such as flags and monuments, and by participating in ceremonies and practising traditions, citizens are reminded of their heritage, culture and the nation they belong to. This kind of social bond is essential, because it creates the desired, shared understanding of nationalism and national identity, in which citizens feel that they are part of the nation (Gilbert, 1998). This function is very important because it assists in creating social unity and solidarity (Kymlicka, 2001; Weber, 1994; Smith, 1991).

The final internal function of national identity is psychological: it deals with our sense of belonging to the nation (Parekh, 1999; Smith, 1991). National identity assists individuals to locate themselves in their nation and in the world. As a result, it makes them understand themselves; by rediscovering nations through experiencing culture, heritage and traditions, individuals discover themselves (Parekh, 1999). It is argued that the concept of self-definition provided by national identity is in fact the key to national identity (Kedourie, 1994; Smith, 1991). In her work with Lithuanian school students, Garsve (2011) demonstrates how students built their understanding of national identity through a social process of self-identifying with culture around them and then identifying stronger attachments to some cultural factors more than others.

Table 3: National identity features and their functions

Feature		Function
1	A historic territory	Territorial (external)
2	Common history (including myths and memories)	Social and psychological (internal)
3	A common public culture	Social and psychological (internal and external)
4	A system of shared legal rights and duties for all members	Political (external)
5	A common economy	Economic (external)

Five features of national identity can be identified in Table 3, all of which can be found in the UAE as well. Members in nations belong to the defined territory, they share the same history, culture, a common economy, and a system of civic rights and duties. In this case, experiences of

national identity are created as a result of individuals interacting with these features or factors associated with them. The impact of these experiences will differ based on the feature and its function.

2.2.3 Women and nationalism

A number of scholars have investigated women's attachments to national movements and national experiences (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1994). Considering the social role of women in societies, most of those scholars assert that both genders experience nationalism and assume their civic roles and duties differently (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1994; Geiger, 1990). In this regard, Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1994) suggest five forms that women's roles in their experiences with nationalism take. The first is biological, which means that as mothers they reproduce national groups. The second role is symbolic, similar to contexts where female figures are used in constructing collective and national experiences. The third role is being a transmitter of cultural and national understanding such as a mother, teacher or an artist. The fourth, is being a transmitter of national boundaries by only associating with men from the same national group. Finally, the fifth is an active and a civic role in assuming different careers or community service roles that support national movements.

Since the federation, human development in the UAE has not differentiated between men and women - it aims at improving everyone's social and economic status regardless of gender (Al Qassemi, 2009). The first women's association in the UAE was established in 1975 with the objective of improving Emirati women's social, cultural and political participation (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). The several initiatives discussed earlier to promote youth national identity are

also aimed at young Emirati males and females. This indicates that the government expects similar civic roles from both genders. In addition, the constitution of the UAE emphasises the role of women as family members and as active members in nation-building (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012; Mahmoud, 2012). This means that aspects of the five roles discussed by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1994) are in fact similar to what is expected from Emirati females as well. This also points out that their understandings of their national identity should perhaps include aspects from Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1994)'s five roles. However, because participants in the research are young females, their perceptions of their national roles might differ because of their age and according to the nature of their experiences.

2.3 Theoretical perspectives on identity

This section explores theoretical perspectives on identity. It explores identity theories from three major and influential disciplines in identity studies: analytical or psychoanalytical psychology, phenomenology, and social psychology. The theoretical framework of this study follows perspectives from social psychology, hence the discussion of the other disciplines is limited to highlighting their focus areas in exploring identity. Discussion will also include links with the previous section and emphasising perspectives of social psychology as the most suitable ones used in this type of study.

2.3.1 Psychoanalytical psychology

The first discipline in identity studies is psychoanalytical psychology. The study of psychoanalytical human nature started in Central Europe with Freud (1917) and psychoanalysis. Before that, most thinking about the human nature was theological, philosophical and speculative in nature (Kenny, Whittle & Willmott, 2012). This field developed further due to the works of psychoanalytical researchers such as Freud (1979) and Winnicott (1968). In psychoanalysis, the term ‘identity’ in a psychological sense was first used by Erikson (1968). Influenced by Freud, he followed a neo-Freudian approach of psychoanalysis in his developmental theories that described the process of formation over the course of a lifespan. He explores identity development through social interaction, and stresses that new experiences and different information we acquire from our interaction with others affect our identity development (Erikson, 1968; 1980). In general, the psychoanalytic perspective in identity suggests that individuals build emotional identifications “with particular things they come in contact with, at different times in their lives” (Kenny et al, 2012, p. 18). As a result individuals become alert when these identifications are endangered and identity changes around the process of identification. Psychoanalysts report that individuals go through this process of identification and re-identification for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the self (Kenny et al, 2012).

The psychoanalytic perspective has been used mainly to explore the interaction between personal and collective identities such as national and cultural identities (Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor & Usborne, 2010). For instance, in his study of life stories, McAdams (2006) demonstrates that Americans shape their personal identity through interacting with forces from their collective cultural identity. Usborne

and Taylor (2010) investigated the impact of collective cultural and national understandings on self-concept. Their empirical research showed that individuals identify and re-identify themselves with factors from their cultural and national contexts, and as a result they build and maintain their self-concept and their self-esteem. In addition, Abel, Condor and Stevenson (2006) present an interesting study in which they interviewed a group of Scottish and British participants, and investigated how the members of the two groups relate personally to aspects associated with their nationality and national identity.

Although the examples above indicate how this perspective can be used to understand attachments to collective identities, most studies that follow the psychoanalytic perspective tend to focus on studying individuals and their personal attachments to their social contexts and collective identities, and fail to research the collective identities separately (Taylor, 2010; Taylor & Osborne, 2010). Therefore, the psychoanalytic perspective in identity theories is criticised for inhibiting the role of the collective experience of individuals, and focuses more on their 'inner worlds' (Kenny et al, 2012). In fact, researchers have mostly used this perspective to explore intrinsic drives that influence human experience as a result of extrinsic triggers (Fox, Prilleltensky & Austin, 2009; Kenny et al, 2012). Because of this, it is difficult to use it as part of the theoretical framework in studies that are exploring social aspects, as in this study, which is mostly concerned with the interaction in the social worlds of the participants. While this perspective might assist in investigating the individual experience of national identity, and perhaps its impact on psychological development, there are other perspectives that offer better frameworks for understanding the role of social interaction in identity experiences.

2.3.2 Phenomenology

The second discipline in identity studies is phenomenology. While psychoanalytical psychology focuses on the inner experience, phenomenology focuses on social experiences. Phenomenology emerged as an approach for studying human experiences in the work of Heidegger (1962), Gadamar (1975), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and others. It is centred on experiences from an individual perspective, and the perception of objects and time consciously and unconsciously (Mautner, 2005; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Human beings are considered “tellers of stories and subjects of stories told by themselves or others” (Kenny et al, 2012, p. 26). Individuals choose to narrate their experiences, and, in doing so, they make connections with elements of the experiences (Ricoeur, 1991). As a result of narrating experiences, individuals go through processes of self-understanding, which gradually influence their identity formation (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

In phenomenology, narrative identity theory focuses on understanding how individuals make sense of their experience through telling their personal stories (Ricoeur, 1991; Kenny et al, 2012). Stokoe and Edwards (2006) argue that “it is through storytelling that people’s lives are experienced and made meaningful” (p. 56). In order to research identity in phenomenology and understand the individual experience, phenomenologists use unstructured research approaches to be able to grasp the entire experience (Dukes, 1984; Manen, 1982).

An important aspect that is emphasised in phenomenology, and almost ignored in the other identity perspectives, is everyday experience. Phenomenological narrative identity theory provides a framework for studying everyday elements, how individuals treat them in their

narratives, and as a result their impact on identity development (Mautner, 2005; Ricoeur, 1991). It assists in understanding how individuals make sense of their everyday interactions through using narratives (Ricoeur, 1991). Nevertheless, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that phenomenological narrative studies produce diverse narratives, and it is difficult to build a theory from diverse narratives. Kenny et al. (2012) also stress that the overemphasis on meaning-making in phenomenological narrative studies is of a greater concern as it tends to neglect the social context, and focus on the individualistic perspective of meaning-making.

Following a phenomenological perspective in identity, Baylis (2003) investigated her life experience as an American from African ancestry, and made sense of several aspects of her life that link her national understanding with her racial and cultural identity. Another important study that followed this approach is Greenwalt's (2009) with French secondary school students. He explored their national identity experience as school students and researched school impact on forming a national identity. Greenwalt (2009) spent time asking students to recall events in which they became attached to their national identity in school. He also investigated the impact of their national identity experiences on their choices, values and actions. The results of his study showed that school, curriculum and sometimes interactions with teachers affect students' national identities.

Greenwalt (2009) drew on personal stories of the students to understand their national identities. However, because of the unstructured phenomenological approach, stories took different turns; it was difficult to make connections between them or to form an overall understanding from all. Although phenomenology provides a potential framework for understanding identity experience,

because of its heavy reliance on unstructured research methods in producing narratives it might be vague for research studies that target specific aspects, such as this study. In addition, its overemphasis on meaning-making might interfere with understanding the role of symbols in the social experience. In general, phenomenology is a potential approach for exploring general human experiences, but when the study targets exploring factors that might be interlinked in different levels, other approaches in social psychology that explore the social factors in more detail and provide more solid frameworks for understanding the impact of social interaction are an essential aspect of this study.

2.3.3 Social psychology

The third discipline in identity studies is social psychology. Compared to phenomenology; perspectives of social psychology pay more attention to social interaction and its role in social experiences. There are two perspectives in social psychology that provide a theoretical understanding of identity experience and development: social cognition and symbolic interactionism. Social cognition and its role in understanding behaviour were first discussed by Miller and Dollard (1941) and later by Bandura (1969); however, it was Tajfel and Turner (1979) who presented one of the most significant identity theories in social cognition: social identity theory (SIT). According to them, SIT explains how individuals develop their self-concept as a result of social interaction and communication in groups. This theory situates individuals within a social category; for instance, a social position or social status; for instance being a national or a citizen of a country (Brewer & Yuki, 2007). The impact of SIT was profound on social psychology; nevertheless, it was found to be more focused on group relations and dynamics, and

that it underpins other important aspects in social experiences such as the cognitive processes (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Hornsey, 2008). To go beyond the group relations and emphasise the cognitive element, Turner et al. (1987) developed the self-categorisation theory, which focuses on social categorisations that cause people to identify themselves within groups and construe themselves as group members. Later both theories were re-established as the social identity approach, which states them as two different theories while indicating their overlapping (Hornsey, 2008).

The social identity approach has been used in studying group relations, and its relation to how individuals develop a national image (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Jenkins, 2008). In their study of young people in Kazakhstan, Eshpanova and Nysanbaev (2006) used this approach in demonstrating that their participants were not able to self-categorise themselves as social members in their country. The authors explain that youth in Kazakhstan suffer from low social status, which has affected their national image as contributing citizens. In many empirical studies, the social identity approach is used to explore children's national identifications and attitudes (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011). In such studies, the social identity theory and the self-categorisation theory are used to understand children's interactions with national symbols, and their impact on their group relations and their social interactions (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011; Bennett et al, 1998).

Although the social identity approach has been used extensively in understanding social identities and the dynamics of the social identities of different groups, this approach limits the research to the group defined by the targeted social identity. For instance, self-categorisation

offers more insights into understanding how individuals make their decisions about group relations, and how they internalise their decisions. However, similar to the social identity theory, its main focus remains to understand group relations. In fact, the two theories limit the social context to other group members, and disregard other contextual factors or aspects that could affect identity experience. Hence, although the social identity approach is the most common approach used in studying group identity such as national identity, unlike social identity theory, other perspectives in social cognition such as the social representation theory, and the other approaches in social psychology such as symbolic interactionism highlight other contextual aspects such as shared knowledge and symbols.

2.3.3.1 Social representation theory

In addition to the social identity theory, Moscovici (1981; 1984; 1988; 2000) presented the social representation theory as another approach to thinking about social identity in social cognition. Moscovici (1984) emphasises that individuals belong to a collective of others who share the same culture, environment and experiences. He focuses on understanding how individuals develop socially and psychologically within groups, and the role of the social process in influencing their understanding and their function as group members. Moscovici (1981) defines a 'common consciousness' as the collective knowledge, which all members of the community share and understand. He reinstates the role of social interaction and communication in generating social representation. This aspect assists in understanding collective representations, and its impact on their identity development, which makes it important in this study. This study involves two kinds of collective and shared knowledge: the cultural and political symbols, all of which are expected to generate from shared knowledge and collective culture in the UAE. Unlike

the social identity approach, Moscovici's (1988) social representation theory emphasises the importance of shared knowledge and collective culture.

Augoustinos et al. (2006) criticise the social representation theory because, although it does not separate an individual from the group or from the social context, it views the individual as being a product of the group. The collective element is an essential part of this study, but this study aims to explore the individual experiences of national identity, which involve studying the individual as an independent agent. In addition, one feature of empirical research that uses Moscovici's (1981) theory is that it tends to focus on exploring social issues that affect identity representation rather than exploring identity experiences in a holistic approach and their impact on social attitudes (Augoustinos et al, 2006; Farr, 1994). For instance, Doise, Spini and Clemence (1998) investigated social attitudes towards human rights using the social representation theory. They demonstrated that people build their understanding of human rights from a shared system of meanings of human rights; in experiencing social conflict, people process some of these meanings, and as a result develop an attitude towards human rights. Joffe (2003) explored perceptions towards the concept of 'risk' and its impact on attitudes, whereas De Rosa (2013) investigated how tourists' attitudes in different places are shaped based on their demographic characteristics and nationality. These studies show that the social representation theory is more effective in exploring perceptions or attitudes and their impact on identity, rather than studying the identity experience in overall. Hence, in addition to using social representation theory, which addresses the collective knowledge, another theoretical perspective that examines identity experience thoroughly is needed.

2.3.3.2 Symbolic interactionism

The last theoretical perspective in social psychology that is used in identity studies is symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism grew out of the tradition of pragmatism, and first appeared in the writings of James (1907), Cooley (1902), Mead (1934) and Dewey (1922). It provides the means for understanding how individuals experience identity through constructing meanings socially and the impact of these meanings on their identities. It analyses identity from an interactionist perspective through exploring individual potentials in adjusting to different social roles and rules, and creating different identities based on the social situation (Stryker, 1980). Symbolic interactionism critically examines the role of interaction in developing identities; it explores both social and material interaction, the meanings they generate and their impact on identities (Stryker, 1968). Identity in this perspective is not static, it is fluid and changes according to the situation and the kind of interaction the individual is experiencing (Sandstrom et al, 2010).

Two of the most influential perspectives in symbolic interactionism are Mead's (1934) and Goffman's (1959) perspectives. Mead's (1934) interactionist approach in symbolic interactionism focuses on two important aspects; the first is his theory of mind. He explains how mind and thinking are shaped through social interaction and how selves develop as a result of that, which leads to understanding complex social situations that include abstract symbols and building a mind. In his perspective, individuals acquire an identity through socialising with others, and in the wider community they internalise understandings and expectations from people around them. As a result they build, develop and experience their identities (Collins, 1994; Sandstrom et al, 2010).

In Mead's (1934) perspective, individuals identify themselves in two forms: the 'I' that senses the world, processes understandings and expectations through socialisation, and internalises meanings. The other form is 'me': "the sense that we build up of how others perceive us, or what 'I' identifies itself to be" (Kenny et al, 2012, p. 24). In other words, the 'me' is an outcome of the process of internalisation and processing of understandings that the 'I' undertakes. Individuals think about the meanings they receive from socially interacting with people around them and the wider community; they process them and then act and present their identities (Sandstrom et al, 2010). This study includes exploring how participants interpret meanings through social interaction to develop their understanding and experience of national identity, and then how this understanding affects their actions and choices. In symbolic interactionism, Mead's (1934) theory of mind provides one of the best outlines for understanding how thinking is shaped through an internalised social process.

Another important aspect in Mead's (1934) perspective is the role of symbols. Sandstrom et al. (2010) define a symbol as "any object, gesture, or word that becomes an abstract representation of something else. Whatever it represents constitutes its meaning" (p.52). Mead (1934) emphasises the role of symbols in social experiences more than other symbolic interactionists and explains that symbols we see or encounter in our everyday life charge meanings into our minds, which results in building our thoughts. Mead (1934) introduced the concept of 'significant symbols': he asserts that humans are capable of building powerful meanings through their communication with symbols around them. In this perspective, symbolic interactionists explore how individuals assign significance to symbols; here significant symbols are gestures,

objects or symbols that create a similar reaction in individuals socially interacting with others (Hewitt, 2003; Mead, 1934; Sandstrom et al, 2010), which include both the producer and the recipients of the symbol (Hewitt, 2003). This is an important aspect for this study, because national symbols are important in exploring national identity. The previously mentioned research studies of Kaneva and Popescu (2011), Khalaf (2008) and Alkhozai (2008) indicate that national symbols such as cultural and historical symbols contribute to experiencing national identity.

Goffman (1959) emphasises Mead's (1934) concept of 'me', and strengthened its representation and the individual's self-consciousness. In his dramaturgical theory of symbolic interactionism, Goffman (1959) stresses how dramatic effect leads to established selves (me) rather than reflected selves (I), and how this influences their unfolding motives. While Mead (1934) focuses on both with more emphasis on the 'I', Goffman (1959) is more concerned in his theory with self-representation in everyday life. His perspective highlights people's ability to change their roles and adapt to different situations, sometimes unconsciously.

The two perspectives of 'me' and 'I' point out an important concept in symbolic interactionism: role-taking. This concept stresses that human beings socially interact with others in different social experiences, in response to individual social roles that differ from one social experience to another based on the situation (Dolch, 2003; Sandstrom et al, 2010). Symbolic interactionism emphasises that social role-taking is a dynamic process in which individuals are aware of social expectations but might decide to choose other roles than the expected ones (Goffman, 1969). This indicates the possibility of individuals choosing to respond in creative, unique and unpredictable roles, which also stresses that roles are always changing (Dolch, 2003; Goffman,

1969). This concept also demonstrates the difference between ‘self’ and ‘identity’: while the ‘self’ does the thinking and the internalisation in social experiences, identity is the social self-representation of the self (Sandstrom et al, 2010). In other words, individuals think about what they receive in social experiences and then represent that in their social identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Goffman, 1959; Jenkins, 2008; McCall & Simmons, 1966; Sandstrom et al, 2010). Hence, identity experience in symbolic interactionism involves internalising meanings received from social interaction and deciding on the representation of the self as a result.

Symbolic interactionism is used in educational research to investigate social interactions, behaviour and identity. However, before discussing contemporary examples of such studies it is important to address Ibn Khaldun’s (1967) classical work “Al Muqaddimah”. In this work, Ibn Khaldun (1967) describes the pre-modern world from an Islamic history perspective: he explores the social interaction between rulers and people, and its impact on affecting people’s identities. He reported that this impact is intense and powerful more than anything else; it makes people conduct themselves in a collective behaviour and become absorbed in collective sentiments. He also explores the impact of symbols such as flags and royal emblems in affecting people’s group identification and collective identity.

Ibn Khaldun’s (1967) work was built on his ethnographic experiences in the various places he visited. He only aimed to describe and interpret his observations from a sociological perspective, and did not present any theoretical perspectives in describing the impact of leadership on collective identities. However, it is clear that he was one of the first scholars who described national identity experience from a symbolic interactionism perspective. In particular, he shed

light on nationalism in traditional and tribal communities. He explained that in such contexts people share collective understanding of themselves as members of the community, which is transferred to them from their interactions with their leaders, and symbols, which leaders utilise whenever needed. He indicated that people are in fact part of their nations; it is important that people understand that so that they participate in building their nations.

In educational research, there are some important research studies that examined identities from a symbolic interactionism perspective: for instance, Corsaro's (1985, 1988, 1994) extensive works with children explored young children's abilities in producing peer cultures and using them to generate their thoughts through their everyday routines. Other studies like Larkin's (1979), Kinney's (1999), Wexler's (1988) and MacLeod's (1995) investigated adolescents' social behaviour and formation of social identity. Wexler's (1988) work in particular was important in examining identity formation through social interaction and symbolic communication in schools.

Loe and Cuttino (2008) studied identity experiences of ADHD-diagnosed college students and their identity construction while being affected by medication. The results showed that the students questioned their attachments to the medication and the impact on their identity of stopping taking it after leaving college. Estes (2011), on the other hand, explored identity experiences of student-parents. He demonstrated that the students perceived social expectations around them, and were able to merge their identities by interpreting the importance of education in their lives as students and as parents. In another study conducted by Silver (1996), students moving to college for the first time experienced their college student identity by building

attachments to home objects, internalising the meanings they convey and deciding on the ones to take to college with them.

The difference between the above studies and this research study is that most of the important studies done using perspectives of symbolic interactionism examined specific types of behaviour or attitude-related issues and their impact on identity development, whereas this study aims to understand national identity experience overall, with a focus on specific areas. In addition, the shared and collective knowledge of most of the above studies are context-specific and participants interact with it physically almost in their everyday experience. However, in this study it might go beyond that; in addition to having some aspects of the shared and the collective knowledge that might be context-specific and part of the everyday experience, participants in this study might be interacting with symbols representing meanings they received from their families but they have not experienced by themselves, such as historical memories and their significance. In this case, the theoretical framework in this study should take into account the rich and complex collective and shared knowledge.

Symbolic interactionism has been criticised as being vague and too broad, and does not explore social situations into micro-level sociological details such as motives, needs and emotions (Bolton, 1958). It was also criticised for ignoring the social structural issues, and focusing more on micro-interactions (Kenny et al, 2012). It is argued that the wider social structures and contexts are important aspects for understanding social relationships and attachments and their complexity (Bolton, 1958; Morrione, 1988). While gender as social structure, and college as a social context are important factors in this study, the findings of the research might reveal other

important social structures and social contexts. In addition, Mead (1934) was criticised for making assumptions that there are two cognitive entities in the human nature (Kenny et al, 2012), whereas Goffman (1959) was criticised for focusing more on self-representation (Kenny et al, 2012; Sandstrom et al, 2010). Goffman (1959) was also criticised for making researchers concerned with the use of the dramaturgical metaphors in their studies more than being concerned with the problem itself (Sandstrom et al, 2010). However, this is a concern for studies that adopt Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory mainly. The criticism indicates that a framework of combining both aspects will perhaps be better; hence, this research study combines perspectives of both Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959) to avoid such consequences.

Mead's (1934) concern with theory of mind made him overemphasise the mental internalisations individuals make, whereas Goffman's (1959) focus on the self-representation made him lose connections with the impact of the cognitive process of self-representation. This criticism of the two perspectives indicates that they are distinct yet parallel at the same time. Although self-representation might appear to be more important in national identity, as it will involve examining representing national attitudes, it is essential to trace the different elements of the experience of the national identity to their core internalisation. Doing so will assist in understanding the impact of national identity and any national attitudes in decisions and choices participants make. Therefore, using the two perspectives presents a more effective approach in investigating national identity experience. One problem with only depending on symbolic interactionism is that it does not emphasise the role of the shared knowledge similar to the self-representation theory.

The discussion above indicates that a synthesis of both symbolic interactionism perspectives and the theory of social representation theory constitutes a better theoretical framework for this study, and it will be more appropriate for investigating the research questions. In her work on self-representation of historical places, De Rosa (2013) emphasises the need to synthesise identity theories to build better frameworks for understanding social identity experiences. This was also discussed by Deaux (1992; 1993), Brewer and Gardner (1996), and Brewer and Sedikides (2001). All of them were mainly focusing on synthesising identity theories to explain the relationship between individual and collective identities. For instance, Deaux (1992; 1993) explains that social identities are integrated, and the two systems of individual and collective integrate whenever needed. At the same time, Brewer and Gardner (1996) and Brewer and Sedikides (2001) explain that there are different identity levels, each representing a different interpretation of social reality. However, these syntheses focused on synthesising perspectives of social identity approach and self-representation theory only.

Table 4: A synthesis of the two theoretical perspectives

	Level	Symbolic interactionism	Social representation theory
National identity experience	Individual	Sensing the social world through social interaction and building social meanings and using them to construct self-representation.	Constructing self-representation through a process of social interaction.
	Collective	Individuals self-identify themselves by giving meanings to significant symbols in their social world and by playing social roles.	Individuals are an inseparable part of their collective milieu (collective culture, shared knowledge, social categories social contexts).

The synthesis used in the theoretical framework in this study emphasises two levels of the national identity experience: individual and collective (see Table 4). On the individual level, perspectives of symbolic interactionism will be used to understand how participants receive social meanings, internalise them and construct their self-representation, such as attitudes or making choices. Symbolic interactionism will be stronger in this level in particular. The self-representation theory will assist in understanding the role of social interaction in self-representation, but this theory will tend to link this to the collective experience most of the time. On the collective level, symbolic interactionism will be used to investigate significant symbols, and the social roles individuals play as part of their collective experience, whereas the self-representation theory will provide insights into the role of shared knowledge of identity experiences. Thus, this synthesis, which combines the two perspectives, is more applicable in this study, where social interaction is explored in different social contexts, and students' internalisation of their educational and career choices is also investigated.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to explore how female Emirati undergraduate students experience national identity, including studying their social interactions with symbols of cultural or political significance around them. It also aims to examine the kind of social meanings these interactions create, and in turn how they influence their experience of national identity. This type of study requires an exploration of how people create social meanings in their ordinary everyday activities, and the impact of these social meanings on their everyday interactions (Bernasconi, 2011; Denzin, 1997; Sandstrom et al, 2010). At the same time, this study also aims to capture the stories of participants and their experience of national identity. To achieve these objectives, the research follows a social constructivist paradigm and a methodology consistent with this paradigm, here consisting of a narrative and ethnographic design.

The first section in this chapter addresses the research approach followed in this study; this includes discussing the combination between ethnography and narrative design. The second section addresses the site and participants' selection, whereas the third section explains the data collection methods used in this research study. The fourth section explains the process of translation followed in this research study, while the fifth section discusses the steps followed for creating the stories on national identity. There are three types of data analysis conducted in this research, which are explored in the sixth section. The seventh section presents the ethical considerations, and finally the eighth section discusses trustworthiness.

3.1 Research approach

The study follows a social constructivist qualitative approach. In this approach, researchers assume that individuals build their understandings of the world they live in through socially relating to objects that exist in their world, and socially interacting with others around them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Falmagne, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue that “members in the community create and recreate psychological, linguistic, mental and social worlds, and it is the role of social researchers to explore them and discover their richness” (p. 177). In such studies there is more than one social reality: individuals share realities with others but subjectively experience them differently, leading to individual constructions of social reality (Cohen et al, 2000).

In order to explore these realities, researchers use qualitative data collection methods to interact with individuals and visit the context to gather data; they engage with participants in discussions about their social life and interactions, and how they construct meanings from this experiential world (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Karuss, 2005). They ask the participants about their everyday life, and attempt to understand the impact of everyday interactions on experiences and constructions of social meanings (Creswell, 2003). Although it is expected that similar patterns exist, participants have their own subjective patterns and biographical features that vary from one participant to another (Polkinghorne, 1988).

The nature of reality in this research study is multiple: it is expected that every participant experiences national identity differently. Although their experiences might involve others, every one of them constructs different social meanings; hence every participant has a different type of

social reality. In order to understand these social realities, this research study involves interacting with participants and listening to their experiences of national identity. Therefore, methodology follows a qualitative approach based on narrative and ethnographic design. While other approaches focus more on understanding predictions and making comparisons, critiques and evaluations, and consider the researcher independent from participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), the social constructivist approach provides the means for interacting with participants and listening to their stories to understand their construction of social reality.

3.1.1 Narrative and ethnographic design

The methodology chosen for this research study combines a narrative and ethnographic research design. This combination of both narrative and ethnographic research is commonly used in studying individual experiences and identity (Brinegar, 2010; Gubrium & Holstein, 2008; Wickenden, 2011). Gubrium and Holstein (2008) suggest that although ethnography has taken different forms, combining narrative inquiry with ethnography into narrative ethnography might be a new emerging method of qualitative research procedure and analysis that investigates social situations, their actors, actions, the thoughts they develop, and their relations to the experience. Narratives in narrative ethnography not only reflect the experience, but also provide the analytical platform that is needed to capture the everyday experience (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008). Goffman (1961) wrote about the need to use this type of ethnography in his work with mental patients, where he used ethnography and narratives to understand human experience. In general, a combination of ethnography and narrative inquiry has been used in symbolic interactionism studies (Herman-Kinney & Verschaeve, 2003).

Exploring national identity experiences of female Emirati undergraduate students requires listening to their stories, and then collecting them in a methodical form that demonstrates the highlights of these experiences and their impact on the participants. Using ethnography assists in capturing the experience by listening to the participants describing their experiences in their daily lives, whereas presenting the experiences as narratives ensures that the whole experience for every participant is documented and told. This point is further discussed in the next two sections.

3.1.1.1 Narratives and narrative inquiry

The social constructivist approach followed in this research includes writing stories about individual experiences of national identity. The purpose of the stories is to best describe, evaluate and explain the experiences (Creswell, 2008; Elliott, 2005). Over the last two decades, researchers in social sciences became more aware of the importance of narratives (Elliott, 2005). They gained interest in researching life and everyday stories, seeking to understand stories of people and to produce narratives that can be linked with the participants' everyday and social experiences (Plummer, 2001). Creswell (2008) maintains that "researchers describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people's lives, and write narratives of individual experiences" (p. 512). The assumption here is that experience happens narratively, and it is the researcher's role to interact with participants over time to relive and retell the stories of experiences that make up their lives both individually and socially (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Using narratives in social science research is one of the methods known for having a participant's voice; in some research studies, researchers ensure that they

have built their participant's voice before they embark on making interpretations (Gray, 2009; Phillion, 2008).

The aim of using a narrative inquiry in this study is to link all parts of the experiences, meanings and aspects that influence or create the participants' experiences of national identity, and present them in personal stories that are organised, shared accounts of interconnected thoughts, memories and feelings. In addition, the aim of using a narrative inquiry is to ensure that participants' voices and stories of national identity are understood from their perspectives before making any interpretations. Creswell (2008) identifies the following as the characteristics of narrative research: "experiences of individuals, chronology of experiences, life stories, restorying, themes or categories, incorporation of the context and the collaboration between the researcher and the participants" (p. 517). This results in researchers working with participants to present narratives that tell stories of the participants in thematic style and chronological order (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The narrative design used in this study captured the experiences of the participants, and tells their stories; it incorporated the contexts of experiences, and it was later analysed into themes. The narratives were also restoried and developed from the field texts, through collaborating with participants. Because chronology was not a major theme in the stories, a thematic order was used in data collection instead (see Section 3.5).

Narratives are commonly used as data collection methods in identity studies, which require exploring the contextualisation of the self and identity, and understanding identities in contexts where people are exposed to changes, and develop, but want to maintain the same characteristics at the same time (Gergen & Gergen, 2006; Elliott, 2005; Smith, 1994). Hence, one approach of

exploring identity is by connecting people and events through past, present and future that emphasises using narratives as one of the few data collection methods that “organise sequences of occurrences, involving experiences, our actions, and actions of those around us” (Elliott, 2005, p. 126).

According to Plummer (2001), there are three forms of writing stories in ethnography: the everyday naturalistic, which explores stories that are naturally occurring every day; the researched and the reflexive, which integrate stories that do not occur everyday, but take place in different settings; and finally, recursive stories, a method researchers use when they are more concerned with writing. In this third form, researchers spend time rewriting the stories in order to present them in the required or expected writing form (Plummer, 2001). The narrative design in this study followed the second form in which participants describe a number of situations, segments, events and incidents related to their experience of national identity, all of which took place in different contexts and occurred in different times, with some of them occurring every day. Using the everyday naturalistic approach meant assuming that the entire experience occurred in an everyday setting, whereas rewriting the stories meant losing participants’ voices.

One of the issues that affects the quality and validity of narrative research is the line between fiction and fact: for instance, narrative researchers build close relationships with their participants and spend extended time with them; as a result this might affect the details of the narratives and their accuracy (Bulter-Kisber, 2010; Gready, 2008). In order to avoid this, Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) suggest that narrative researchers use a framework for the research process and then use criteria for ensuring the quality and accuracy of the narratives they produce. Such techniques assist in demonstrating the coherence of the narratives,

and clearing researchers' bias (Lieblich et al, 1998). Ensuring the validity of the narratives used in this study is discussed in the data collection methods.

3.1.1.2 Ethnography

Ethnography has developed as a research design in several disciplines, starting originally in anthropology as a method for investigating 'exotic' settings, and later evolving into several forms in a more diverse range of social worlds (Deegan, 2001), such as in sociology as a methodology for studying social groups, social behaviour and communities (Wolcott, 1999). It is a naturalistic inquiry: that is, a humanistic methodology that requires researchers to engage with people in order to access their experiences and understand them and their social settings (Brewer, 2000; Rock, 2001; Sandstrom et al, 2010; Wolcott, 1999). Brewer (2000) defines ethnography as "the study of people in naturally occurring settings of 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities" (p. 12).

In ethnography, researchers rely heavily on qualitative data collection methods to study a cultural group or phenomenon where they attempt to examine a group of people or their social context (Wolcott, 1999). The main purpose of ethnographic research, as Creswell (2008) explains, is cultural interpretation where "the researcher describes, interprets and analyses a phenomenon or a shared group culture, which involves sharing the same patterns, behaviours, beliefs and language in an attempt to understand reality from the participants' perspectives" (p. 481). The researcher immerses him/herself in the life-worlds of participants, seeking to understand experiential worlds (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995).

Ethnography is not without limitations. In the social sciences there are two major critiques of ethnography, one from the advocates of the natural science methodology in the social sciences (Giddens, 1974, 1996; Platt, 1981), and the other the postmodernist critique (Brewer, 2000; Denzin, 1992; Richardson, 1992). Those from the natural science perspective, where researchers must retain 'objectivity' by not interacting closely with participants (Angrosino, 2005), criticise the unstructured data collection methods used in ethnography that permit researcher participation (Giddens, 1996). In the natural science model, researchers are not allowed to become a variable in the research study, because their own experiences might have an impact on participants' experiences (Brewer, 2000). They criticise the ethnographic data collection methods "that appear to be unsystematic and might increase differences in data because of the variations in the way they were collected" (Brewer, 2000, p. 20).

The second critique of ethnography is the postmodernist, which criticises ethnography for producing partial and selective descriptions of the social world, which influence the validity, reliability, and the ability to generalise the data (Denzin, 1997; Brewer, 2000). Postmodernists argue that there is more than one reality; however, ethnography only produces one reality based on what the researcher decides what to select (Hammersley, 1992).

Although ethnography might have emerged first as an unstructured research design, it has developed over time and has become an established methodology in which researchers define their theoretical framework, research settings and scope (Hammersley, 1992; Angrosino, 2005; Brewer, 2000; Murphy & Dingwall, 2001). Researchers have also adopted more structured,

rigorous and formal approaches in their data collection procedures (e.g. structured and semi-structured interviews) while retaining their in-depth style of data collections in natural settings (Denzin, 1997).

However, it is important to note that using open-ended and unstructured procedures in ethnographic research studies is sometimes necessary for the research questions. In addition, although it is criticised for not producing generalisations, not all ethnographic studies aim at making generalisations. Therefore, advocates of the previous claims fail to identify the different character of the ethnography and its uses. Overall, ethnography has changed considerably from being mainly descriptive to become descriptive and interpretive. This change has particularly influenced symbolic interactionists who started producing more theoretically grounded ethnographies in the 1980s that assisted them in understanding and interpreting how participants construct their stories (Sandstrom et al, 2010). With this, interpretive ethnography in particular has become an established methodology in investigating research studies that are based on a symbolic interactionist theoretical framework.

3.2 Site and participant selection

Participants included a group of five female Emirati undergraduate students from Dubai. As discussed earlier, because of the concerns arising with regard to Emirati youth's national identity, especially university students who are exposed to universal values and global

perspectives, the focus on this research is to explore female Emirati undergraduate students' experiences of national identity.

Research into youth studies and youth identity development suggests that exploring cultural attachments leads to positive identity development experiences (Ainsworth, Witting & Gadino, 2009; Dimmock & Walker, 2000; Phinney, Ferguson & Tate, 1997). Here, researchers point out the importance of providing youth with opportunities to affirm their ethnic and cultural identity, and to develop a positive sense of belonging. Research also suggests that during the undergraduate phase, when students become young adults, they explore their relationships with their contexts on deeper levels and redefine their intrapersonal and interpersonal attachments in their social worlds (Evans et al, 2010). In addition, it is during this phase that young people start building a strong sense of purpose, and they develop and demonstrate behaviours and attitudes that lead to certain dispositions (Evans et al, 2010; Laird, 2005).

Emirati undergraduate students are engaged in making decisions about their choices and objectives, while experiencing all the changes taking place in the UAE. At the same time, they are pressured to adhere to cultural values and represent their own national identity while being exposed to aspects of globalisation in their community. Therefore, Emirati undergraduate students were selected as participants for this research study. Because of the reserved nature of Emirati culture, male students did not feel comfortable in spending long hours with a female researcher. Only two students expressed interest, but they did not meet the selection criteria, hence the study focused on the experience of national identity of Emirati female students.

The five participants in the study were attending different colleges. Three of them were attending universities in Dubai, one was attending a university in Al Ain, and the last one was attending a university in Dublin. Since the focus is on the individual experience of national identity, this did not require having participants from certain types of colleges; thus, site selection was not important in this study, as long as participants attended an undergraduate programme, regardless of the type of programme, and that they were accessible for this research.

Criteria for participant selection included: to be undergraduate students from Dubai, who were articulate, open and willing to participate. Because ethnographic research studies include spending long times with participants, it was important that potential participants were willing to participate in long research sessions and were able to describe their experiences articulately. Similar criteria in selecting participants were used in other research studies in identity and national consciousness (e.g. House, Stiffman & Brown, 2006; Trofanenko, 2008b). Given the different circumstances for the development of every Emirate, student national identity experience might vary across the UAE. In order to make the research more focused, only students from Dubai were selected.

A student council of a local university was contacted to identify potential participants and later a snowball sampling was used, in which participants recommended other participants. This was a public university that follows an American higher education system. The language of instruction is English, but students have to take some Arabic-language classes in their general education programme before they start their subject of study. This university offers degrees in education, business, communication, information technology, and arts and sciences. The university is one of

the largest in Dubai, attracting students not only from Dubai but also from the rest of the Emirates. It has a strong emphasis on English language, and offers a wide range of cultural exchange programmes, where students learn about other cultures and experience them. At the same time, celebrating National Day is one of the most important events in this institution. On this day, members from different student societies compete in organising events and activities that promote nationalism. It is a gender-segregated university; however, male students sometimes join female students in some of the activities. A small percentage of expatriate students are studying in this institution, and the majority of the students are Emirati.

This student council recommended four students, two of whom were not able to participate, and two who did: Alia and Shamma. Alia was a senior student, majoring in youth and family services. During the research sessions, Alia was in her final year internship programme. She was doing her internship in a government agency that conducts and manages youth and cultural programmes and activities across the UAE. Shamma, on the other hand, was majoring in media and communication with a minor in psychology. During the interviews and observation sessions, Shamma was finishing her internship and making plans for her final semester.

A student council of a public university in Al Ain was also contacted. The language of instruction there is mostly Arabic, with some programmes being offered in English. Students from all the Emirates join this institution. It is a gender-segregated university; however, on a few occasions and for a few events, students are mixed. It offers graduate and postgraduate programmes in education, information technology, business, law, media and communication, and arts and science. This university strongly emphasises nationalism and national identity in its

extra-curricular activities. National Day is considered a very important event and is often celebrated there over several days. A small percentage of expatriate students are also there; however, the majority of the students are Emirati. The council recommended three students, only one of whom, Reem, agreed to participate. Reem was a fourth-year student, majoring in law. She was living in the student accommodation, and goes to Dubai at the weekends and during holidays.

Alia recommended Afra: she was a student in a private medical school that offers medical programmes for female students only. The student population in this school is comprised of several nationalities, with Emiratis comprising a small percentage only. This school is academically focused and does not offer its students a wide range of activities. National Day is celebrated but is not considered a large event as it is in the other universities.

Reem recommended Khadijah, she was an overseas student who recently started her medical studies in a university in Dublin. She has received a scholarship to study medicine from the Ministry of Higher Education in the UAE. Although this university is diverse and has students from many parts of the world, there is a large number of Emirati students studying there. This university emphasises global awareness and cultural exchange. For instance, in foundation English classes, students are encouraged to explore each other's cultures and countries. Research sessions were conducted with Khadijah during her summer vacation.

The students had the choice to identify their place of reference for conducting the research sessions; the five participants chose to have the research sessions at home. The aim was to

include all five participants in the research study; however, Afra was not able to complete the research because of being busy with exams and deadlines.

3.3 Data collection methods

Following a combined design of narrative and ethnographic research includes using qualitative methodology: this section addresses the qualitative data collection methods used in this research study. The section defines every data collection method, provides a rationale for using it, and then explains how it was used and implemented in this research study.

The qualitative inquiry in this research study included three data collection methods: participant-observations, ethnographic interviews, and concept maps (Figure 2). Every data collection method assisted in generating data about the experience of national identity, which was used later in creating the stories.

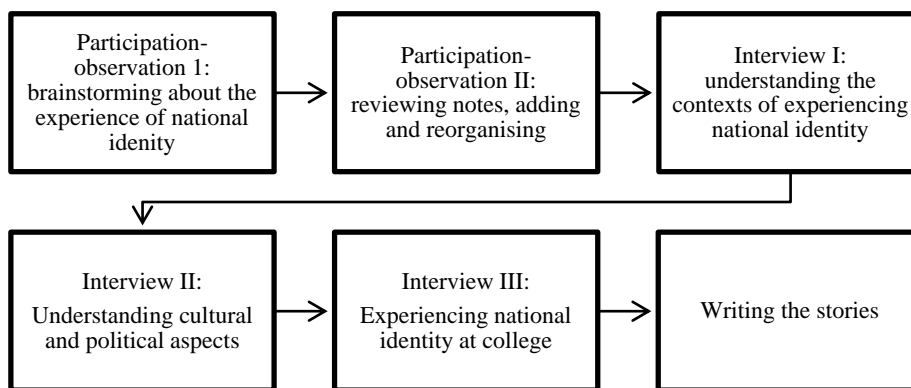


Figure 2: Data collection methods

The purpose of the participant-observation was to help the participants brainstorm about their experiences of national identity and organise them. Then each interview had a different focus related to the experience (discussed in more detail below). The field notes collected from the two methods were then used to write the stories. This process is discussed further in the next sessions.

3.3.1 Participant-observation method

Participant-observation is a classical data collection method in ethnography that has been used in investigating social settings, social groups, exploring identities and understanding experiences (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2001). In order to understand the experience and find out what factors affect it, ethnographic researchers have to get closer to the activities and experience of their participants (Emerson et al, 1995). Participant-observations have been modified and used in social psychology and identity studies (Emerson et al, 2001, Stein, 2011; Vyas, 2008). However, even though it is a well-established method, it has been criticised because of the heavy involvement of the researcher, he/she might be intrusive to the field and might direct the research to another direction (Creswell, 2003). This was monitored in this research study by having other data collection methods to support the field notes collected from the participant-observation sessions.

Participant-observations were conducted while participants were working on their concept maps (described in more detail in the next subsection). The focus of the participant-observation was as follows in Table 5:

Table 5: The focus of the participant-observations

Focus	Researcher's role
Concepts and thoughts related to the personal experience of national identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording emerging concepts and thoughts • Asking for clarifications • Recording links, interconnections and conflicts among concepts and thoughts
Sentiments related to the personal experience of national identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observing sentiments and recording them • Investigating strong attachments among sentiments and thoughts and recording them • Asking for clarifications

The researcher's role in the participant-observation sessions was to engage with participants while working on their maps, and ask them about their work on their concept maps. The researcher's role also included building social rapport with the participants to build the research grounds and to enable further collection of field notes (Glesne, 2006). Hence, the researcher's role changed and transformed from a participant-observer to an interviewer and vice versa. The plan was to have at least a week between research sessions, but because of participant study work some needed more than a week between sessions. The reason for having a one-week period was to provide participants with a time to reflect on their discussions. Participants used their concept maps during the participant-observation sessions to reflect on their ideas about their experience of national identity and write them on the concept map. The researcher's role was to observe participants while working on their concept maps, and to engage with them as well for clarifications. In addition, the researcher's role was to observe emerging sentiments, ask the participants about them, and listen to their justifications and explanations. An MP3 recorder was

used to record discussions during participant-observations, and the session was for one hour. Participant-observation sessions were conducted in Arabic.

3.3.2 Concept map method

Concept maps were used as visual data collection methods in qualitative research and in ethnography (Herman-Kinney & Verschaeve, 2003; Pauwels, 2011; Pink, 2007). One of the many types of visual data collection methods (e.g. artefacts, photographs, video documentation) (Rose, 2007) is researcher-guided protocols, in which researchers ask their participants to create visual representations of the research topics such as concept maps, drawings or diagrams (Wagner, 2011). The purpose of this method is to “encourage participants to disclose their perceptions, sentiments and ideas about the research topic” (Wagner, 2011, pp. 55). In some topics, asking participants to visually represent their thoughts and sentiments encourages them to organise their thoughts about the topic, and share some sentiments and thoughts that might be difficult to disclose otherwise (Pink, 2007).

Concept maps were first used in social science research in the 1970s (Butler-Kisber, 2010), and since then used in participant-observations, interviews and in focus groups. It was adopted as a data collection method in different disciplines to illustrate evolving ideas and conceptions, and also it was used sometimes to help people think together and produce clear conceptions of their complex ideas (Mertens, 2009; Butler-Kisber, 2010). Meyer (1991) argues that asking participants to produce visual data might reveal attributes that often “are fragmented by hierarchal thinking, verbal reporting and alphabetical writing” (p. 233); such a method was used

in this study to assist participants in clarifying their discussions, and to confirm their ideas for them.

Concept maps were used in this study because personal sentiments and thoughts about national identity are not something people in the UAE commonly share with each other or talk about (Asaeed, & Sharab, 2012). There was a need to use a method and an instrument that would assist participants in organising their thoughts and elaborating them later on. The concept map method used in this research study was based on Pauwels’s (2010) integrated framework for visual social science, which he established to set the boundaries of visual research, provide researchers in this field with a platform to assist them in designing their research and their methods, and to understand the interconnected options in visual research designs (Figure 3 below).

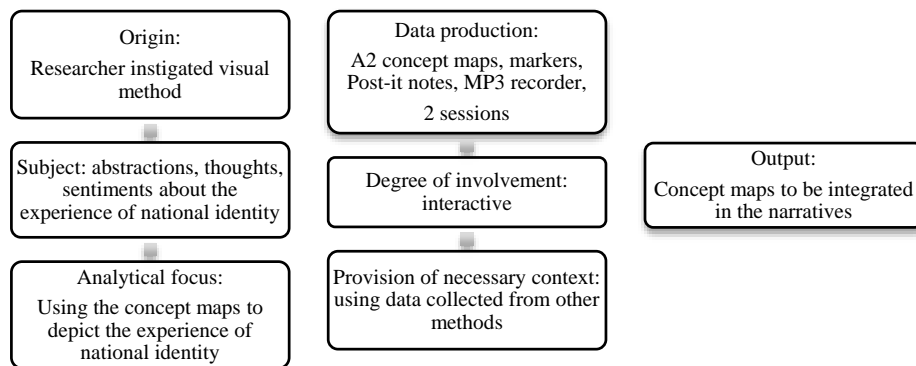


Figure 3: The use of concept maps

The concept map was a researcher-instigated visual method to collect field notes about sentiments, abstractions and thoughts related to the experience of national identity. The template of the concept map used in this research study represented the map of the UAE; concept maps

shaped after geographical maps have been used in studying different forms of identity (Macnaghten & Urry, 1999; Taylor & Spencer, 2004; Spencer, 2011). According to Spencer (2011), using such maps in social sciences assists in eliciting data related to people's personal experiences, memories, shared culture and collective knowledge. A2 concept maps, markers, Post-it notes and an MP3 recorder were used in producing the concept maps over two sessions (see Figure 5).

Each participant was asked to work on a concept map of her national identity. The approach followed here was semi-structured. They were set the following tasks: a) write down whatever you think creates your experience of national identity, it could be concepts, ideas, words and symbols, things you do or any other things; and b) try to use the concept map to explain any relationships between the different things you wrote. Participants were also informed that they could use Arabic or English in writing.

There were two concept map sessions, which included the participant-observation sessions at the same time. Participants had the option to have their concept maps with them during interviews in case they felt that they needed them to clarify ideas. Photographs of the concept maps were taken to document their development in the two sessions (see Appendix 4). In the second concept session, participants had the option to start on a new concept map if they wished. They were asked to review the ideas, thoughts and sentiments they represented in their concept map in the first session, and were informed that they could make any changes if they wanted. All participants used the same concept map across the sessions.

3.3.3 Ethnographic interviews

Interviews are one of the main data collection methods used in qualitative research, and involve researchers interacting with participants and asking them questions on the context, topic and purposes of the research (Glesne, 2006). Participants on the other hand answer these questions in the contexts of the dispositions, and where these dispositions (e.g. motives, values, attitudes, concerns and needs) direct them (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). In an interview the researcher interacts with participants to explore the topic of research, to understand reasons, connections, ideas and sentiments. Similar to other qualitative data collection methods, interviews require a significant involvement from researchers; thus, while interviewing, researchers not only ask their questions, they also should anticipate answers, analyse as participants are answering, and direct the interview to the different parts of the research areas of focus as it requires (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Glesne, 2006).

One of the commonly used qualitative methods in ethnographic studies that generates extensive and comprehensive data is ethnographic interviewing (Creswell, 2008). Ethnographic interviews not only are used to collect data about participants' views of the experience, but also assist in creating a framework to help in describing, analysing and interpreting the experience (Spradley, 1979). Research studies in qualitative and ethnographic inquiry demonstrate that interviews are very successful in providing rich data in studying identity formation and patterns (e.g. Cherot, 2009; Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2009; O'Sullivan-Lago, Abreu & Burgess, 2008; Sherman, 2006).

There were three interviews conducted after the participant-observation sessions. The interviews were semi-structured to allow new ideas to be brought up and discussed. All interviews were

recorded using an MP3 recorder, and conducted for approximately one hour each. Interviews were conducted in the Arabic language. The researcher's role in the three interviews included two aspects: interacting with the participants to seek further comprehension of topics that emerged and were discussed during the participant-observation sessions and to discuss more questions needed to build a better understanding of the experience. Therefore, the researcher became an interpreter and interviewer: asking questions, but interpreting answers and asking follow up questions as needed.

The purpose of interview I (see Appendix 3A) was to explore the experience of national identity generally, and to study some significant contextual details (e.g. figures, locations, occasions, events). Before exploring details related to the experience of national identity, it was important to explore the general aspects that create national identity experiences, and to explore participants' thoughts and sentiments about them. Questions 1 and 2 explored national identity in general: general thoughts and patterns of national identity. Question 3 focused on understanding the significance of having national identity. Questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 explored important locations or occasions that create experiences of national identity, whereas question 8 targeted figures or everyday aspects that assist in creating experiences of national identity. Question 9 investigated sentiments of national identity and how students describe them. The last question targets social representation of national identity (see full table explanation for question purposes in Appendix 3A).

Interview II (see Appendix 3B) explored details (e.g. sentiments, symbols, language, cultural patterns) which were mostly related to the general contextual information in interview I. This

included investigating cultural and political symbols, meanings, and social interaction that created experiences of national identity. The questions in this interview explored memories of experiencing national identity, and participants were asked to share stories of experiencing national identity that involved interacting with discussed symbols. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 explored cultural symbols, and their importance on national identity experiences, whereas questions 5, 6 and 7 investigated the meanings they convey to the students. Questions 8, 9 and 10 explored political symbols, their significance and role in creating experiences of national identity (see full table explanation for question purposes in Appendix 3B).

The focus of interview III (see Appendix 3C) was to explore the experience of national identity in college. The purpose of this interview was to provide the participants with enough time to identify all links and associations of their national identities with college. Interview III addressed college experience details (e.g. course work, college activities, student attitude) and their impact on their national identity experiences. Question 1 was a general question in which students were asked to talk about the impact of national identity on their lives as students. Questions 2, 3 and 8 explored the impact of their national identities on choices and decisions they make as students. Questions 4, 5 and 6 investigated the impact of national identity on attitudes they develop, whereas questions 9 and 10 focused on understanding the impact of national identity on their objectives. Finally, questions 11 and 12 investigated the role of national identity experiences on learning about their rights and duties as citizens. Similar to question 1, question 7 was also a general question that targeted the impact of national identity on other aspects of their lives (see full table explanation for question purposes in Appendix 4C).

3.4 Translation

As discussed above, interviews and participant-observation sessions were conducted in Arabic. Conducting the data collection methods in a language other than English makes this study a cross-language study (Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, 2010). This makes translation a very important phase in this study that needed to be addressed and conducted in a structured method to ensure the validity of the field notes. Although all participants spoke English fluently, it was necessary to conduct the sessions in Arabic because the study explored cultural and national aspects that are part of the everyday experience; hence, participants were more comfortable discussing them in Arabic and to use common vocabulary rather than having to translate everything into English. There were two types of translation in this study: translating the interview questions from English to Arabic, and translating the field notes, from both participant-observations and interviews, from Arabic to English.

Translation has always been one of the issues that emerge in ethnographic research, in which researchers have an essential role in ensuring that they are presenting the culture that is being studied accurately, and that they are not misinterpreting any emerging aspects (Yengoyan, 2003). In cross-language research studies, there is more pressure to ensure that culture is being represented authentically (Regmi et al, 2010). In ethnographic research studies, representing culture and maintaining accuracy of what participants say is challenging; it becomes more challenging when the research is conducted in one language but then data is analysed and synthesised in another language (Khan & Manderson, 1992). Recommended by Regmi et al. (2010), researchers should spend time in “understanding their texts and their meanings in order to come up with accurate and valid translation” (p. 19).

The type of translation used in ethnography is a cultural translation, in which ethnographers seek to translate their field notes not only literally, but also in a framework that will produce their proposed areas of study into categories (Yengoyan, 2003). Ethnographers are thinking about the meanings they are identifying in their texts as they translate them, and they have to make sure that no meanings are misinterpreted or neglected, so that generating their themes becomes more flexible.

Brislin's (1970) translation model in research is one of the most widely accepted models of translation in qualitative and ethnographic research. This model suggests having two bilingual translators; the first one translates the documents that need translation, which can be data collection instruments, field notes, or both. This translator translates them from the source language (non-English) to the target language (English): this process is called forward translation (McDermott & Palchanes, 1994). The second translator translates them from the target language to the source language: this second process is called backward translation (Jones et al, 2001). Then, both versions are checked to ensure accuracy and equivalence (Brislin, 1970; 1980; Regmi et al, 2010).

A process of translation based on Brislin's (1970) model was used in this study. A translator was used who was familiar with qualitative and social science research. The forward translation was conducted by the researcher, and the hired translator conducted the backward translation (see Appendix 5). To facilitate the process, a strategy developed by Halai (2007) was used, which involved agreeing on the most common source words and their equivalent words in English.

After finishing the backward translation in the field notes, the versions were compared together to check accuracy and equivalence. There were no issues that emerged from translation, aside from some discrepancies, which later were agreed on. There were also a few words that needed revision, but overall, only minor corrections were made to the original English field notes.

3.5 Creating the stories

The stories of national identity were developed in three phases. The first phase involved organising all field notes: the purpose of this phase was to identify similar parts and collate them into categories (see Table 6). In this phase, the field notes were reviewed, and parts that carried similar information - for instance, similar situations - were copied, pasted and organised together. The result was having a document for every participant who compiled all the field notes in categories. This document was labelled: story notes (see Appendix 6 for a sample story notes document). The categories were general for all participants.

Table 6: Creating the stories

Step 1	Copying and collating similar parts
Result	Creating a story notes document, the initial categories included: Time/places, people, society, culture, politics/leadership, symbols, feelings/thoughts, my life as a student
Step 2	Cross-checking phase with the concept map analysis
Result	Finding missing data and adding to the story notes
Step 3	Copying all the data into the story, reorganising them, removing the categorisation, editing and generating a title
Result	Creating stories with no categories to maintain participants' voice

The second phase was a cross-checking phase with the concept map analysis. The purpose of this phase to make sure that all information gathered from the data collection methods was added and nothing was missed (see Table 6). In the third phase, the reorganised field notes were copied from the story notes to the stories. Therefore, despite the first two phases of reorganising the field notes in the story notes, the stories were created directly from the field notes, using the participant's voice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Corrections and editing were only made for grammatical reasons to allow easy reading. The stories include some words that were put in square brackets that were added to ensure clarity.

The field notes collected in the story notes were categorised based on themes; these categories were not added to the stories. The field notes were categorised initially to have an initial interpretation of the findings, and to assist in organising the stories (Table 6). However, in order to ensure that participants' voices were maintained, the stories did not include any kinds of categories. The researcher's voice was limited to reorganising similar field notes together and to the title of the story. A title was generated for every story that represents the highlight of the experience of national identity for that student. Overall, using the story notes and maintaining the continuous cross-checking were important steps to ensure the validity of the stories.

The process of creating the stories transferred the researcher's role into that of narrative writer and storyteller. This included combining all the field notes to create the stories by maintaining the participant's voice and ensuring coherence and clarity of the stories (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000). The role of a narrative writer and a storyteller facilitated the next role the researcher played which is ethnographer. This role is explained further in the next section.

3.6 Data analysis

There were three types of data analysis conducted in this research study. The first one is the narrative analysis: this was conducted on the stories of national identity experiences. The second one is a quantitative analysis; this type of analysis was conducted alongside the narrative analysis. Finally, the concept maps were also analysed following a process of artefact content analysis. Detailed discussion of these follows below.

3.6.1 Narrative analysis

Since this study is based on ethnography and narrative research design, it included telling the stories of the participants' experiences of national identity using a narrative analysis approach. According to Cortazzi (2001), "there is an increasing recognition of the importance and usefulness of narrative analysis as an element for doing ethnography" (p. 284). He explains that social science researchers have turned to this type of analysis because narrating is a method for making sense of past experience and sharing it, and because it includes human involvement in reporting and evaluating experience.

The narrative analysis approach used here followed the holistic analysis form discussed by Lieblich et al. (1998). Holistic analysis is similar to categorical analysis, in which extracted

sections of the texts are placed into categories for analysis (Lieblich et al, 1998). However, categorical analysis only includes categorising and understanding the categories, whereas in holistic analysis the researcher “attempts to understand sections of the text in the context of other parts of the narratives” (Elliott, 2005, p. 38). In order to do that, the extracted parts are connected to other sections, and these connections are further explored. The holistic approach used in this research study included two phases: content analysis and genre analysis.

When people are continuously experiencing they are engaged in experiencing sentiments, thoughts or actions, which referred to elements or factors of the experience (Bruner, 1990; Elliott, 2005; Lynch, 1997). To fully grasp identity experience, researchers in social psychology attempt to extract these elements that recreate the experience using a content analysis (Bruner, 1990; Elliott, 2005; Lynch, 1997). Genre analysis involves “providing a framework that is culturally shared and can therefore be used to structure events and experiences so that they are meaningful and easily communicated” (Elliott, 2005, p. 46). In this type of analysis, elements of the experiences are further explored and interpreted using identified categories or themes.

Table 7: Summary of the process of narrative analysis

Phase no.	Phase title	Purpose
Phase 1	Content analysis	Identifying actions, sentiments and thoughts related to experience of national identity
Phase 2	Genre analysis	Extracting the contexts of the participants’ experiences of national identities
	Genre analysis	Identifying the elements of the experience of national identity (identified in phase 1) within their contexts (identified in the first phase of genre analysis)
Phase 3	Checklist	Creating a list for every participant that included the number of elements found in her experience, and the number of elements in every context found in her experience

The holistic analysis approach followed in this research study included two phases of content and genre analysis (see Table 7). Following the type of experience analysis discussed by Bruner (1990), Elliott (2005) and Lynch (1997), the purpose of the content analysis was to identify actions, sentiments and thoughts related to experience of national identity (see Table 7), which were defined as elements of the experience of national identity. This included reading the narratives several times until a list of elements was produced for every narrative. The content analysis of the narratives resulted in identifying a list of (100) elements from all participants that varied between sentiments (14 elements), thoughts (36 elements) and actions (50 elements) (see Appendix 8). For validity purposes, this list was cross-checked with the story notes and results from the analysis of the concept maps. Findings showed that each element includes more than one type: hence each type was also analysed into sub-types. The elements and their sub-types are defined and further explained in Chapter 4.

The genre analysis followed the content analysis. The first phase of genre analysis focused on extracting the contexts of the participants' experiences of national identities. This included matching the checklist of elements with the narratives and finding out when or how every element occurred. The result was matching the elements with their contexts. Again, the story notes were used to cross-check the results in this phase. Findings showed that there were four contexts for experiencing national identity that included cultural attachments, political understanding, everyday encounters and college life interactions. In order to fully understand the

contexts, they were defined and divided into categories: definitions and categories of the contexts are explained in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

3.6.2 Quantitative analysis

To create a framework that would assist in understanding the findings of this research study, the elements of the experience of national identity were quantified. The purpose of this was to measure the proportion of every type of element within every context. Using such techniques in social sciences assists in organising data and in making conclusions (Glesne, 2006; Clark-Carter, 2010). For instance, using percentages in this research was important in describing the proportion of the elements and the contexts, and in describing the proportion of the elements in particular contexts.

The quantitative analysis was conducted after identifying the elements of the experiences of national identity and the contexts. The first step included numbering and coding the elements. An action element was coded: A# in the same pattern, elements in the other two element types were coded as: S# (sentiment) and TH# (thought). A checklist of the three types of elements and their contexts was created for every participant (see Appendix 8). The checklist included all the elements accumulated and from all the participants: this meant that checklists included elements that did not occur in the experience of national identity for that participant. Hence, a scoring formula was conducted to identify the elements that occurred for every participant.

Table 8: Scoring formula

A value of 1	If the element exists in the participant’s experience in that context.
A value of 0	If the element does not exist in the participant’s experience in that context.

If the element occurred in a context, it was scored 1 (see Table 8). In case an element did not occur in a context it was scored 0. In case the same element occurred in more than one context, the element was scored 1 in each one of them (see Appendix 8). Scoring the elements was used in the next step of quantitative analysis, which included calculating the proportions (percentages) of elements in total and their proportions in every context for every participant. The percentages were generated using the total number of elements in each context, the overall percentage of the total number of elements was generated using the expected total number for every set of elements. Table 9 describes the process of calculating the percentages using an example.

Table 9: Quantitative analysis- example

The numbers of actions identified in participant A’s experience of national identity in every context were:			
Cultural attachments: 18	Political understanding: 15	Everyday encounters: 27	College life interactions: 26
Total: 86 action elements. The total number of action elements is 50 in every context, 200 in total. Therefore, the percentage of actions in every context for Participant A is:			
Cultural attachments: $18/50 * 100 = 36\%$ Political understanding: $15/50 * 100 = 30\%$ Everyday encounters: $27/50 * 100 = 4\%$ College life interactions: $26/50 * 100 = 52\%$		In total: $86/200 * 100 = 43\%$ This means 43% of participant A’s experience of national identity is constructed from actions.	

The quantitative analysis was done using Microsoft Excel, and the percentages were visually presented in graphs, which are included in the next chapter. The calculated percentages do not add up to 100, as mentioned above; it was expected that elements could exist in more than one context, and therefore some elements were calculated more than once. This affected the overall percentage of the contexts; and, as a result, they do not add up to 100. Expecting the percentages to add up to 100 means that every element or context that contributes or creates experiences of national identity is known and their proportions in the experiences of national identity are also identified. This is beyond the scope of the purposes of this research.

The process of the data analysis demonstrates the last role the researcher played in this study which is an ethnographer. After playing the other roles of a participant-observer, an interviewer, a narrative writer and storyteller, the researcher became an ethnographer. This role included reviewing and making further interpretations of the stories to understand how the participants experience their national identities. This also involved understanding the language, the terms and the expressions the participants made and categorise everything to build meanings.

3.6.3 Concept maps analysis

In ethnographic studies, which involve participants making artefacts, it is common for researchers to use content analysis procedures to analyse these artefacts and then link them with other data (Bock, Isermann & Knieper, 2011; Pink, 2007; Rose, 2007). In this type of analysis, researchers explore arising themes from the artefact, and link the artefacts with the experiences

of the participants in order to identify implicit links, and to fully grasp the experience (Pink, 2007).

Concept maps were photographed in every participant-observation session and photographs of the concept maps were analysed using a content analysis. This analysis did not include any interpretation, but only included listing the writings of every student in every session (see Appendix 4 for photos of the concept maps). However, in case some clarifications are required, these were included in the content analysis between brackets. Findings of the content analysis for each participant are included in Chapter 4.

Each concept map was analysed separately for every participant. Findings of this analysis were compiled with the rest of the field notes collected from the participant-observation sessions and the interviews, were used in creating the stories, and were later included in the narrative analysis as well. Such analysis is used in ethnographic research that includes photography as a data collection or documentation method (Bock et al, 2011; Pink, 2007; Rose, 2007).

3.7 Ethical considerations

In qualitative inquiry researchers are expected to build a rapport with subjects and be empathetic, and remain involved at the same time, in which they interact with participants to collect required data (Creswell, 2003). This requires a number of ethical considerations related to dealing with participants to be taken into account for every data collection method (Glesne, 2006). In addition to the common ethical consideration required in any human subject research, participants in this

study were required to speak about their emotions and thoughts regarding their national identity. As indicated before, speaking about one's national identity is not common in the UAE, where national identity is perceived as being experienced collectively more than individually. The five participants stated that they have never spoken about their national identity in this depth before, and that participating in this research made them do that for the first time. They all confirmed that participating in this research has in fact affected their perception of their national identity, and made them understand it better and see it more clearly. Therefore, in both the participant-observation sessions and the interviews, the participants had to process thoughts and sentiments they have never processed or shared before.

In addition to maintaining confidentiality, the researcher had to play different roles throughout all interactions with the participants. In some parts of interactions, the researcher was expected to be an intervener, which involved learning problematic things. For instance, one participant spoke about being prevented from learning about the UAE in her public university. Such information could expose universities to questioning. In addition, the researcher was treated as a friend by sharing some intimate information after sessions, which was not necessarily related to the study. In some situations, the researcher was viewed as a counsellor, and her advice was sought in some decisions related to education and professional experiences.

Glesne (2006) explains that qualitative researchers experience such roles as they get more involved in their research. Some of these roles are more problematic than others, such as the intervener. In order to address such concerns related to the research roles, the researcher set up a support group with two colleagues who were facing similar methodological issues in their

research studies. In this group, worries about handling such issues were discussed. Participants also received an informed consent form that included protocol information, outlined the purpose and nature of the research, and requested their approval (see Appendix 1). All participants were ensured in the informed consent that, in case they felt uncomfortable with the information they were sharing, or became very occupied with their studies, they could withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. The informed consent form stated that interviews and observations would be recorded using an MP3 recorder, and that only the first names of participants would be used to maintain confidentiality and anonymity (Creswell, 2003; 2008; Glesne; 2006).

3.8 Trustworthiness and validity

Issues of trustworthiness and validity require similar attention and handling procedures in both narrative and ethnography research designs. Strategies discussed by Creswell (2003) and Glesne (2006) were used to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the research. The first strategy was to create a self-reflection report (see Appendix 2) to clarify any identifiable bias the researcher may have, such as opinions on what constitutes national identity in the UAE. The second strategy was methodological triangulation. This included triangulating the data from participant-observations and the interviews to build justifications of the themes. Data collected from the participant-observations was compared with data collected from the interviews; they both included similar themes. In addition, the content analysis of the concept maps was also cross-checked with the rest of the data.

The third strategy was a cross-checking process that involved making sure that all field notes collected from participant-observations and the interviews were cross-checked with each other, and then used to create the story notes. This process was conducted in every step of the data analysis to ensure the validity of the narratives. Even after developing the narratives, field notes were retrieved whenever needed. The fourth strategy was a process of member checking and respondent validation that included sharing a thematic descriptive report with participants to check on the accuracy of their responses and validate the results. The participants reviewed their story notes and their stories. The fifth strategy was ensuring that the produced texts were rich, thick and descriptive, and included negative or discrepant information. This assisted in conveying the elements of the experiences, but at the same time reflected real life. Finally, the data was further validated in the discussion chapter by integrating results with an evolving literature review. In the discussion chapter, findings were linked with findings of other similar research studies.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the research study. The findings are divided into two sections: the first examines findings from each story of each participant in turn; the second summarises the findings of the study and presents an overview of the elements and contexts of the experiences of national identity. Although the elements and contexts of the national identity experience are included in the first section of this chapter as part of describing findings from each story, the elements and contexts are only defined in the second section of this chapter. The reason for this is that definitions, sub-elements and sub-contexts were all extracted from examining the stories individually. Hence, after describing the elements and contexts of each participant, they will be defined and further explained in the second section.

Both sections include quantitative analysis to demonstrate the proportion (percentage) of elements and contexts in the national identity experience for the participants. The first section presents the quantitative analysis for each participant, and the second section provides quantitative comparisons. It is important to emphasise here that the results included in this chapter are all descriptive findings that will establish the character of each participant, and will lead to the key aspects emerging from the results. Discussions and interpretations of the findings are included in the next chapter.

4.1 Findings from the stories

This section presents the findings from each participant's story. Each participant section begins by discussing the findings of the concept map analysis and then discusses the findings from the narrative analysis (see Chapter 3 for data analysis). The narrative analysis includes results from the quantitative analysis and makes references to extracts from the stories. In each story the findings of that participant are examined by context, and by highlighting the elements found in each context. The findings in this section are organised alphabetically based on the participants' first names. Some findings are repeated in the concept map analysis and the narrative analysis as well, because they were found in both the concept map analysis and the narrative analysis.

4.1.1 Alia's story

4.1.1.1 Alia's concept map analysis

Alia was hesitant at the beginning, and it took her a while to finally start working on her map. When she started working, she mixed between writing in Arabic and writing in English, but most of her writing was in English. She organised her thoughts on Post-it notes and distributed them over the map. In the second session, she reorganised some of these notes and added new ones, but did not remove any of the previous ones (see Appendix 4A for photos of Alia's concept map).

Table 10: Alia’s concept map analysis

Session I
<p>In the first participant-observation session, Alia wrote the following on her map:</p> <p>My role model, things I love and enjoy [her design and photography skills], the reference [people she refers to for advise such as her parents]</p> <p>Father Zayed, why I do things? Why?</p> <p>Twitter, using my skills as a designer + a photographer, my look [clothing and appearance]?</p> <p>Participating in activities.</p> <p>First of all, how do I represent my national identity in the right way? I always ask myself this question.</p>
Session II
<p>In the second participant-observation session, Alia reorganised her list and then added:</p> <p>Other cultures, daily interaction with people.</p> <p>Education.</p> <p>How can I deliver this message?</p> <p>Media, our history.</p>

Table 10 includes a content analysis of Alia’s concept map (see Chapter 3 for data analysis). Alia spent most of the first session talking about the importance of using her skills in photography and graphic design in serving the UAE. It was obvious that this was very important for her: she gave several examples of how she used them, such as in university activities. In her opinion, being an active student is one way of giving back to the UAE. In addition, as part of her experience of national identity, Alia spoke about having a role model and reference; for her, in order to make the right decisions as an Emirati citizen, she needs to follow and refer to someone. She considers both her parents and Emirati leaders such as Sheikh Zayed her role models. She networks with Emirati leaders such as Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed on Twitter, and considers this an exciting experience in which she learns more about her national identity. At the same time, Alia regularly

questions her inner motives behind trying to represent her national identity appropriately (see Table 12); by doing so she believes it would help her reflect on her actions and attitudes, and understands whether or not she is representing herself appropriately as an Emirati citizen.

In the second session, Alia spoke about the importance of respecting other cultures in the UAE as part of experiencing national identity. Her national identity not only motivates her to respect others, but also teaches others about the UAE and Emiratis; she believes that she is responsible for doing that. She also spoke in the about the importance of education, she believes that with education. She will be able to serve the UAE better; her university degree will qualify her to work and serve the UAE.

Here, on the second day Alia emphasised the importance of history and learning from history (see Table 10). Her experience of national identity encourages her to read about the history of the UAE and learn from ancestors and forefathers. Alia also added a point about the media: she explained that although national identity is an important topic, the media in the UAE is not taking this topic very seriously, and that youth in the UAE receive conflicting messages from the media. Finally, Alia believes that there are many messages she is responsible for delivering as an Emirati citizen with regard to her national identity: these messages are about the UAE and Emiratis. She is responsible for conveying these messages in her daily interactions with people including non-Emiratis, or even her family members or other people her age.

4.1.1.2 Alia’s narrative analysis

The narrative analysis of Alia’s story shows that she experiences her national identity mostly through her everyday encounters (see Table 11, for a complete table of Alia’s narrative analysis see Appendix 8A). Her experience of national identity through cultural attachments has the second largest proportion in her overall experience of national identity, and college life comes after that (see Table 11). She experiences her national identity through political understanding, but this context has the smallest proportion in her overall experience.

Table 11: Alia’s contextual distribution of the elements

Elements	Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions	Overall-elements
Sentiments	86% (12)	29% (4)	50% (7)	50% (7)	54% (30)
Thoughts	50% (18)	25% (9)	72% (26)	53% (19)	50% (72)
Actions	48% (24)	30% (15)	60% (30)	50% (25)	47% (94)
Overall by context	54% (54)	28% (28)	63% (63)	51% (51)	

*The number in brackets indicates the number of elements found in that category.

Cultural attachments are the second largest context in Alia’s experience of national identity. More interestingly, this consists mostly of sentiments (86%). She has similar percentages of thoughts and actions in her cultural attachments (see Table 11). This indicates that Alia has a sentimental bond with her cultural attachments: they influence her more than the other contexts, and as a result create many of her national identity experiences. One important point for Alia is representing her culture as part of her national identity. She believes that in order to represent herself as an Emirati lady she should always appear in modest Emirati appearance:

My appearance should always tell people that I'm Emirati, it is one of the most important parts of my national identity. I always want to look like the modest Emirati lady who respects her reserved culture.

Throughout her story, Alia appears proud of her culture and heritage, and she feels sad to see young people in her age diverting from Emirati culture, values and traditions. She believes that Emirati culture is a treasure that needs to be looked after, maintained and taught to young people. While working on her map, she kept referring to cultural heritage; she explained that it is not only a set of practices and norms that were transferred from ancestors, but also a treasure of experiences that Emiratis now should use and learn from. She learns about culture from her family, from Emirati leaders, and from reading about it as well. She is passionate about culture, not only as part of her experience of national identity, but also as part of her as an Emirati that she cannot let go:

Cultural heritage symbols tell us the story of the past and the beginning of the original Emirati culture: they are a part of our lives and our history, and we cannot abandon them. Sheikh Zayed once said: if someone does not have a past, he does not have a future. I strongly believe in this saying, and I see how important it is to hold onto our cultural heritage: it strengthens our national identity, and overwhelms us with pride. The more we understand our cultural heritage, the more we understand ourselves, and in return plan for a better future. The closer I am to my culture, the closer I feel I'm part of the UAE. Culture makes me feel that I belong to my nation.

The most important cultural symbol in Alia's experience is modest Emirati clothing, and observing people wearing such clothing overwhelms her with pride, especially if they are young Emiratis around her own age. At the same time, observing people wearing indecent clothing,

especially if they are young Emiratis, fills her with negative sentiments of being detached from her culture, which means being detached from her national identity. The importance of modest clothing comes from two sources: Islam and culture. Therefore, compared to other cultural symbols, Alia considers it the most important.

In addition to clothing, another important cultural symbol in Alia's experience is local dialect and the Arabic language. She considers them the most appropriate means for conveying her thoughts, especially when she is talking about things such as culture and national identity:

“Dialect and the Arabic language are important, and I cannot imagine that I'm able to talk and convey my thoughts about our culture and national identity in a different language”.

Alia understands that there are rich Arabic resources she can use in writing her assignments, but she is upset because her professors do not encourage her or her colleagues to use Arabic resources, and instead ask them to use English and Western resources only. For Alia, Arabic is not only a language of communication, it is also a language of identity and belonging; if she does not use it in different aspects in her life, such as writing assignments, she loses an important connection with her national identity.

The percentage of political understanding in Alia's experience of national identity is the smallest compared to the rest of the contexts (28%). The proportions of elements in her political understanding are mostly similar, with thoughts having the smallest percentage, and actions having a slightly larger percentage (see Table 11). Alia's political understanding is mostly constituted of interacting with leadership figures; for instance, she is fond of Sheikh Zayed:

“Sheikh Zayed is the one who taught us about loving the UAE, the importance of contributing to the country and protecting it”.

Alia reads about Emirati figures and follows their news; by doing so she learns about Emirati culture, the UAE, and how to be a better Emirati. Emirati leaders are not only political figures for Alia, they are also everyday figures: for instance, she networks with Emirati leaders on Twitter almost on a daily basis. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the percentage of actions in her political understanding is slightly larger than the rest, even though her experience overall in political understanding has the smallest proportion. Alia has read two books written by two Emirati sheikhs; the two books affected her national identity, and encouraged her to learn a lot about Emirati leaders and their expectations:

Despite all the modernisation and prosperity they aspire to, [Emirati leaders] did not lose their connection with history and heritage; thus, they did not lose their connections with national identity. I felt that they want to encourage us to always aspire higher but at the same time, keep connected with national identity.

In addition to leaders, another important aspect of political understanding in Alia’s experience of national identity, and an important source of her national identity, is history. Reading about the history of the UAE assists Alia in identifying herself as an Emirati citizen, and in her role and duty in continuing the work of her forefathers. History teaches Alia not only about the development of the UAE, but also about Emirati culture and values.

Alia's experience of national identity is mostly constituted of her everyday encounters. Her sentiments, thoughts and actions are all significantly higher in this context compared to the rest, but the percentage of thoughts (72%) is the highest (see Table 11). Experiencing her national identity through daily encounters includes representing herself as a responsible Emirati citizen: for instance, as a student, she chooses to link her projects to the UAE, and to use her skills in photography and graphic design in serving the UAE:

In the previous National Day's celebrations I designed the advertising poster and the invitation card. I met some students who confirmed that they attended the celebrations because of the poster that attracted them. The card I designed was sent to some sheikhs as well, which made me proud. When I work on such projects I make sure that I work hard and that I'm sincere in what I do.

In addition, she believes that she can use such skills to give back to the UAE; this aspect is very important for Alia, because her national identity encourages her to always find ways to give back, and she believes that all Emiratis should give back to the UAE. In her story she also stresses the importance of her internship programme on her experience of national identity: it provided her with many opportunities to work on projects related to cultural and national identity promotion. She believes that such projects are lacking, and she wants to pursue a career in this field.

Living in a diverse community is an important aspect of her everyday national identity experience: as an Emirati, she has to respect everyone and accept them in her community. However, sometimes such encounters overwhelm her with sentiments of loneliness and

estrangement; this occurs when she is visiting a place and finds out that she is the only Emirati there:

When I go to some places and I'm the only Emirati there, although in such experiences I feel proud for being an Emirati, it does not make me comfortable sometimes. It is strange to be in your country, but feel lonely at the same time.

In other situations, where there are many Emiratis, Alia feels a strong sense of cohesion and belonging. Alia emphasised here that she prefers and enjoys working with Emiratis: in such situations, she feels that together they can overcome any obstacle. This indicates that experiencing national identity collectively is perhaps significant in Alia's experience. Although she does many things individually that create experiences of national identity, her collective experience remains important and significant to her national identity.

Another important aspect of her everyday experience of national identity is interacting with her family members and her colleagues at the university. Sometimes these interactions are positive, such as her parents guiding her, and sometimes negative, such as disapproving of a type of behaviour or an attitude a colleague is adopting. In addition, the popularity of national identity as a topic in the media is another everyday experience. She reflects a lot on that, and believes that little has been done:

When I watch TV or read newspapers, I see that national identity has become a popular topic. But I always feel that there is a lot of talking but less action. National identity should not remain as something we talk about, it should be a reality we live.

Her experience of national identity in college life interactions is the third largest, and it has similar proportions in the three elements (see Table 11). She experiences her national identity there by working on her assignments, trying to link them to the UAE, and by participating in university activities. Alia reminds herself all the time, and regardless of the place she is in, that she is responsible for representing her national identity. This shows even in college, where she reminds herself of her cultural attachments, her values and principles, all of which she learnt from Emirati culture. Because Alia experiences her cultural attachments in another important context, which is college life interactions, and such attachments are also part of her everyday life, perhaps this is one reason for having cultural attachments as the largest context. This also indicates that her national identity at college affects her choices: for instance, she chooses to write about the UAE and it also motivates her to work harder in her academic work.

4.1.2 Khadijah's story

4.1.2.1 Khadijah's concept map analysis

Khadijah was articulate from the first moment she started working on her concept map: she was busy writing, editing her work, adding and modifying new notions throughout her concept map sessions. Compared to the rest of the participants, Khadijah was the only one who added significant additions in the second session (see Appendix 4B for photos of Khadijah's concept map).

Table 12: Khadijah’s concept map analysis

Session I
<p>In the first participant-observation session, Khadijah wrote the following on her map:</p> <p>Volunteering.</p> <p>With friends in Ireland: [from] Bahrain, China, Oman, KSA, Kuwait, Ireland, Canada.</p> <p>During studies.</p> <p>Sometimes on Twitter if I read or discuss something about the UAE.</p> <p>Discussions with family (future objectives, education, occasions, what we can do).</p> <p>Presentations + attending national occasions in Ireland.</p> <p>People who remind me of my national identity: some friends: Fatma, Wafa, Khulood, [author] Yasser Hareb, [author] Jamal AlShehhi - sometimes Sheikh Zayed.</p> <p>A+ makes me proud, reading.</p>
Session II
<p>In the second participant-observation session, Khadijah numbered the aspects she wrote about last time, and put them into two categories: identity, and methods for demonstrating a national identity.</p> <p>New additions: identity: ideas, behaviours, values that come from inside the person. A method that explains an individual’s ideas and traditions in any society. It links an entire society.</p> <p>Identity: religion + language [she linked them with: being with friends, volunteering and during studies].</p> <p>Traditions [she linked it with during studies].</p> <p>Objectives [she linked it with volunteering, presentations and getting A+].</p>

Table 12 includes a content analysis of Khadijah’s concept map (see Chapter 3 for data analysis). In the first session, Khadijah wrote down aspects to do with things she likes to do, and things she is used to do with her family, such as volunteering. Khadijah also wrote about her interactions with her colleagues and friends in Ireland as an important aspect of her experience of national

identity; the diverse context of her college there provides her with extensive experiences of national identity. As an international student living away from family and home, Khadijah experiences situations where her beliefs and cultural values are sometimes challenged; such situations create extensive experiences of national identity. Attending National Day's celebrations in Dublin and working with her classmates in preparing presentations about the UAE are particularly significant experiences of her national identity.

In addition to her friends, Khadijah identified two Emirati authors (Yasser Hareb and Jamal AlShehhi) and Sheikh Zayed as people who help her to experience her national identity - Sheikh Zayed as a figure, and the two authors when she read their writings or their tweets. Khadijah as an active user of Twitter is often engaged in discussions about the UAE; such discussions also create experiences of national identity. Discussions with family members about objectives, interests and dreams also create experiences of her national identity; in fact, in these discussions they all experience their national identities as a family. This is a practice they are used to doing as a family regularly and it has affected her significantly; it made her understand the importance of linking her objectives to the UAE. The last thing she wrote in the first session was the importance of obtaining high grades as part of her national identity: the better grades she obtains, the more prepared she will be to serve the UAE in the future. At the same time, it is one way to give back to the UAE for providing her with a scholarship.

In the second session, Khadijah restructured her concept map and separated everything she wrote into two categories: what defines and constitutes a national identity, and methods for representing a national identity. In this session, Khadijah explained that she researched the topic

of national identity and found that those two aspects are always there. In addition, she added a definition of identity to her concept map (see Table 12), and explained that it describes the relationship between people's identities and their societies.

In that session she added religion and language, and linked them to being with friends; she explained that, as an international student, she uses the Arabic language and practises her religion freely when she is with her friends. She linked volunteering with religion because she believes that volunteering emerges from the Islamic concept of helping and supporting others. Another interesting link she made was linking volunteering with having objectives, because volunteering is her way of giving back to the UAE; she wants to set objectives in volunteering, and work on achieving them.

4.1.2.2 Khadijah's narrative analysis

Khadijah's narrative analysis showed that she mostly experiences her national identity through her everyday encounters (see Table 13, for a complete table of Khadijah's narrative analysis see Appendix 8B). Her college life interactions have the second highest percentage, and then her cultural attachments. Khadijah experiences her national identity through political understanding, but this context has the smallest percentage of her overall experience.

Table 13: Khadijah’s contextual distribution of the elements

Elements	Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions	Elements-overall
Sentiments	43% (6)	43% (6)	71% (10)	64% (9)	55% (31)
Thoughts	50% (18)	28% (10)	83% (30)	58% (21)	55% (79)
Actions	32% (16)	24% (12)	50% (25)	52% (26)	40% (79)
Overall by contexts	40% (40)	28% (28)	65% (65)	56% (56)	

*The number in brackets indicates the number of elements found in that category.

The third largest context for Khadijah is cultural attachments (43%): it includes more thoughts (50%) than sentiments (43%) or actions (32%). Throughout her story, Khadijah appears proud of her Emirati culture and considers it as one of the most important sources for her national identity; however, because of being away from home she cannot experience her culture as she does at home. Even in Dublin she chooses to wear modest clothing, this makes her comfortable because she is following her cultural expectations and Islamic beliefs by doing so. However, one of the unpleasant experiences she had was observing some of her Emirati colleagues deciding not to wear modest clothing, which they would usually wear in the UAE: because nobody expects them to do so outside the UAE, she believes that those students create conflicting images of Emiratis. Hence, the most important cultural symbol in her experience is modest clothing:

[Modest] clothing is linked to Islam, when I wear [something like that] I feel that I belong to Islam and to the UAE. I cannot lose my shayla (head cover) or my modest clothing; abandoning them means abandoning Islam and my national identity.

She is proud of her Shayla (head cover) in particular because it indicates to everyone that she is Muslim. What makes modest clothing very important for Khadijah is the fact that it is rooted not only in culture, but also more importantly in Islamic principles. She considers Islam as the set of guiding principles that informs her about what she is doing. Khadijah believes that because Islam is linked to everything she does directly and indirectly, using it as a set of guidelines is very straightforward. This shows that Islam is another important cultural symbol in Khadijah's experience.

The Arabic language is the third important cultural symbol in Khadijah's experience. Although she uses English more than Arabic in Dublin, she and her Emirati friends make sure they use Arabic with each other; Khadijah believes that the more she is attached to Arabic, the better attachment she will have with culture, values and her national identity. In addition, Khadijah mentioned traditional Emirati food as another cultural symbol: she does not have many opportunities to have Emirati food in Dublin; hence, whenever they are having Emirati cultural or national celebrations she makes sure that they prepare some Emirati food. Regardless of this last symbol, what signifies the previous three cultural symbols in Khadijah's experience is that they are part of her everyday experience of national identity as well.

Khadijah learnt about the importance of culture from her family; she always experiences her national identity when she is gathering with them on important occasions like Eid. These include many of cultural traditions and practices, which strengthen her understanding of cultural values such as respecting elders, cohesion, family, hospitality, modesty and mercy; they also create experiences of national identity.

The percentage of political understanding in Khadijah's experience of national identity is the smallest (28%) compared to the rest. Most of her experience in this context is constituted of sentiments (43%); her thoughts and actions are significantly less than her sentiments in this context (see Table 13). Emirati leadership figures are the most important political symbols in her experience here, particularly Sheikh Zayed. Khadijah adores him and considers him the leader and sole creator of Emirati national identity. She remembers him with love and gratitude, and remembers how he used to remind people on important occasions of the importance of Islam, the Arabic language and culture. She believes that his words and leadership guided Emiratis to experience and understand their national identity: for instance, he is used to encourage people to work hard and achieve important objectives. This is important for Khadijah: she wants to make sure that she uses principles she learnt from him in planning her objectives and in presenting her national identity.

The second symbol in political understanding is history. Khadijah defined it as the chain that connects the different events that created the Emirati national identity. She considers the 2nd of December (the announcement of the federation of the UAE) a very important date in her life: it reminds her of the challenges people and leaders faced in building the UAE. She believes that there are so many Emiratis who do not yet grasp the importance of this date: "I believe this concept is important and we should always think about it. I think there are many Emiratis, especially Emirati youth, who have not yet grasped this concept and its impact".

History and leadership figures teach Khadijah to be loyal and feel a sense of belonging; hence she believes that not understanding history might result in not having solid attachments to her national identity. All of which encourage her to give back, and she understands that when she graduates her potential of giving back to the UAE will expand. The last political symbol she mentioned, but not as extensively as the others, is the national flag of the UAE. Khadijah hangs the flag on her apartment door; her Emirati friends do the same. She linked this with the importance of presenting to everyone her national identity and where she comes from.

In the context of everyday encounters, Khadijah has more thoughts (83%) than sentiments and actions, but has sentiments (71%) more than actions (50%) (see Table 13). As part of her everyday experience of national identity, Khadijah reminds herself every day of her reasons for coming to Dublin and deciding to study medicine there. She reminds herself that she wants to meet her family's and her country's high expectations. Her life as an international student is teaching her to be aware of her national identity and her responsibility to present herself as an Emirati lady; hence, Khadijah makes sure that she connects herself with her national identity every day.

Khadijah engages with her friends in discussions about their objectives and aspirations; here she experiences her national identity collectively with her friends. As international students they encourage each other and provide support, especially when one of them is feeling homesick. This has become a very important aspect of Khadijah's national identity experience. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, whenever she is home, she engages in similar discussions with her family members.

Khadijah considers her national identity as being with her all the time: she carries it with her everywhere because it is not something she represents just sometimes. Her national identity guides her through her decisions and her everyday experiences; having it with her all the time will always protect her: “I consider my national identity the guidance that I follow, it protects me, and it will not make me do something that might harm me in the end”.

College life interactions were the second largest context (56%) in Khadijah’s experience of national identity, which includes more thoughts than sentiments (58%) or actions (52%) (see Table 13). She experiences her national identity in this context as an international student, studying with people from different parts of the world, learning about others and teaching them about the UAE. Along with her Emirati classmates they make sure to link their English-language assignments to the UAE, and to be involved in the UAE Embassy’s National Day’s celebrations. These celebrations in particular are a very important aspect of her national identity experience, because quite often many people from different parts of the world attend them, and Khadijah feels that it is her duty to participate in presenting the UAE to all of those people.

Khadijah is grateful to the Government of the UAE for providing her with a scholarship to study abroad. She strongly believes that she has to show her gratitude by being a responsible person and student, by studying hard, and again by giving back to the UAE. Having objectives, planning to reach them, and working on them are all part of Khadijah’s experience of national identity. Here she also links her objectives to the UAE’s history; she believes that coming from a country with a history of achievements affects her, and enables her to plan her own objectives and work

on pursuing them. In her experience of national identity, by doing all of that she demonstrates her loyalty to the UAE:

Having objectives is an important part of my national identity. I always think about what I want to achieve, what I want to reach in the future, and what I want to give back to the UAE. By working hard and planning on reaching my objectives I prove my loyalty to the UAE.

Before deciding on her undergraduate major, Khadijah thought a lot about the impact of her education on her national identity, and the importance of choosing a major that would help her contribute to the UAE in the future. At the same time, she wanted to make sure that the major she chose did not affect her cultural or Islamic values. Khadijah expressed that, after participating in this research study, she realised that her objectives were in fact linked to her national identity. She was not aware of that before, and she is now more confident in speaking about her objectives and her national identity.

4.1.3 Reem's story

4.1.3.1 Reem's concept map analysis

Reem was very excited to participate in this research study. Throughout the research sessions she was eager, focused, and happy to talk about her experience of national identity. In her concept map, she wrote mostly short sentences that explained her ideas and did some illustrations as well, all of which were scattered around the map in no specific order. On the second day, Reem only added a few things to her concept map. (see Appendix 4C for photos of Reem's concept map).

Table 14: Reem’s concept map analysis

Session I
<p>In the first participant-observation, Reem wrote/illustrated the following: [She created an illustration of a college textbook that has the UAE flag on the title-page].</p> <p>Objective from obtaining an education. Attending classes and being committed to education. Homeland is the mother, Sheikh Khalifa is the father. Honouring parents. Keeping my country and my university environment clean. Raising the name of the UAE high in my external participations. Thanking Allah for safety and security. My clothes and appearance show my national identity. The way I deal with other people, whether at home or outside the UAE, shows my national identity.</p>
Session II
<p>In the second participant-observation session, Reem added: Obeying my parents. Encouraging people to speak and read in Arabic.</p>

Table 14 includes a content analysis of Reem’s concept map (see Chapter 3 for data analysis). In the first session, Reem focused on talking about her college as part of her national identity experience: clearly college was a very important context in Reem’s experience of national identity. She kept referring to it, and most of her work on her map on the first day was to do with her college.

One of the cultural aspects Reem added on the first day was the point about clothing: this was another aspect that was clearly significant to her experience. Reem respects modest clothing and considers it a very important aspect in national identity experience. Compared to the rest of the participants, who also pointed out modest clothing as an important cultural symbol, Reem mentioned traditional clothing in particular. She considers modesty important, but she prefers traditional Emirati clothing, which is also modest but more connected to culture.

In the second session, Reem added new elements. She added obeying parents to the previous point of honouring parents, and she also added encouraging speaking and reading in Arabic. She spent time discussing her relationship with her parents and their impact on her national identity; she considers them her guide in the decisions she makes. Her parents, particularly her mother, have a role in her national identity in college, as they support and guide her all the time. With regard to the Arabic language, prior to joining college Reem was not interested that much in the Arabic language. That changed later, and now the Arabic language is one of the important symbols in her national identity experiences.

4.1.3.2 Reem's narrative analysis

Reem's narrative analysis shows that the largest context in Reem's experience of national identity is everyday encounters (see Table 15, for a complete table of Reem's narrative analysis see Appendix 8C). The second largest context is college life interactions, and the third is cultural attachments. The percentage of political understanding as a context in her experience of national identity is small (33%) compared to the rest of the contexts.

Table 15: Reem’s contextual distribution of the elements

Elements	Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions	Elements-overall
Sentiments	86% (12)	50% (7)	64% (9)	71% (10)	68% (38)
Thoughts	56% (20)	31% (11)	75% (27)	61% (22)	56% (80)
Actions	36% (18)	30% (15)	54% (27)	52% (26)	43% (86)
Overall by contexts	50% (50)	33% (33)	63% (63)	58% (58)	

*The number in brackets indicates the number of elements found in that category.

In cultural attachments, Reem’s experience of national identity is mostly constituted of sentiments (86%). From her discussion about culture it was clear that Reem has a sentimental bond with Emirati culture, heritage and traditions. For instance, she adores the traditional Emirati dress, she enjoys her mother’s company when she helps her in choosing new designs for her traditional dresses, and she enjoys wearing such dresses during the month of Ramadan. Even when other students mock her for doing that, this does not affect her:

Such experiences challenge my national identity but strengthen it at the same time. It is important for me that I wear something that represents my culture and identity, and what is appropriate for me as an Emirati girl. I’m fully convinced that I do not want to look in a way that offends my Emirati values and does not represent my identity.

Therefore, the first important cultural symbol in Reem’s experience of national identity is traditional clothing, because in addition to being a cultural aspect it is part of Islamic values. Reem is happy for the new dress code in Dubai: she believes that having such a code will ensure that all people respect the reserved culture of the UAE. However, she sometimes notices that not

all people respect the dress code; hence, it has become a habit of Reem to notify security staff when she observes people not following the dress code in Dubai's shopping malls. She feels that by doing that she is respecting her national identity, and that it is her duty to do so.

Reem spent a long time also discussing her parents' role in teaching her about culture and cultural values. In her story she recalls her parents as an important resource not only for teaching her about culture, but also for teaching her siblings about culture. Reem considers respecting her parents and obeying them as an important aspect of her national identity experience:

My parents do not only encourage me to hold onto culture, they encourage me to hold onto everything that links to my national identity. They encourage me to work harder and make sure that I meet my objectives. I consider obeying my parents as part of my national identity.

In her experience of national identity, she wants to make sure that, despite modernity, which makes Emiratis divert from their heritage, she has to reconnect with her culture and heritage whenever possible. Islamic rituals such as praying and the prayer calls are also important symbols in Reem's story. She experiences her national identity when she listens to the call to prayer, which makes her feel safe and secure. She is also happy that Emiratis still hold onto their culture and values in Dubai regardless of modernity and globalisation.

The percentage of political understanding in Reem's experience of national identity is (33%); most of it is constituted of sentiments (50%) (see Table 15). Compared to the rest of the contexts,

political understanding does not emerge as a strong context in Reem's experience; nevertheless, a few aspects from this context emerge as significant symbols in her experience. Leadership figures are the most important political symbols in Reem's experience; she regularly follows their news and reads about them. For instance, she listened to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid during the 40th National Day's celebrations, and on that day she learnt new information about the history of the UAE. She is proud because Emirati leaders always make them feel safe and secure; she reads about their contributions and participation in public occasions and experiences her national identity while doing that. Reem makes sure that she reads about the decisions leaders make and reflects on them: this helps her understand their efforts in maintaining progress in the UAE, and their efforts in maintaining better lives for Emiratis.

The second important political symbol in her experience is history. It was after listening to Sheikh Mohammed that Reem realised that learning about history and listening to leaders assists her in planning her objectives. She wants to make sure that her objectives are linked to what Emirati leaders aspire to achieve. In her experience, history not only is about historical development, but also teaches her about values and cultural attachments: for instance, she learnt from Emirati leaders the importance of helping one another and supporting others.

Everyday encounters were the largest context in Reem's experience (see Table 15); her experience in this context includes more thoughts (75%) than sentiments (64%) and actions (54%). Throughout the research sessions, Reem kept repeating that her national identity is an everyday experience, she experiences it with her family, in her classes, when she is working on

her assignments, and when she is participating in university activities. Her parents are an important aspect of her everyday experience as well.

Glancing at the UAE flag is an everyday experience of her national identity, and she feels proud whenever she leaves or enters her neighbourhood and her home: “I experience my national identity when I see the flag. When I see it, I smile and feel proud”. Reem spoke about it as a significant symbol in her experience that reminds her of her national belonging and loyalty, and makes her feel secure. Therefore, the UAE flag is a political symbol that exists in Reem’s everyday experience of national identity.

Another important aspect of her everyday national identity experience is interacting and communicating with people in the diverse society of Dubai; Reem makes sure that she represents herself as an Emirati lady, and teaches them about the UAE. In addition, she makes sure that she interacts with all people respectfully, and represents her national identity appropriately. In this context, Reem also spoke about experiencing national identity through being a citizen who cares for her city: for instance, Reem always cares for the environment around her. She notices that there are some Emiratis who litter, but on National Day they participate in the celebrations. Reem believes that those Emiratis are conflicting their national identity, because being an Emirati with a strong national identity includes caring for your city, not just participating in national celebrations.

Several cultural aspects Reem recalls in her story are in fact everyday experiences as well: for example, traditional dress, Islamic rituals and the Arabic language. Hence, one reason for having

this context significant in Reem's experience is that it includes cultural symbols, and also political symbols. Another important component in her everyday experience is her college interactions, because being a student is an everyday experience.

College life interactions are the second largest context in Reem's experience of national identity: the percentage of sentiments (71%) is more than the other elements (see Table 15). The percentage of actions in Reem's national identity experience is the largest in her everyday encounters (54%) and in her college life interactions (52%). This was obvious in Reem's account of the university activities she is involved in: she is an active student who participates in activities in and outside the university. She considers such participations as part of her national identity, especially external activities which involve people from outside the UAE. In such situations, she considers it her duty to represent the UAE appropriately. This was one of the most important aspects of her national identity in her college life interactions.

The UAE flag appears in this context as well. Reem experiences her national identity the moment she glances at her law textbooks; all of them have the flag on the title-page:

A simple thing like glancing at my law textbooks reminds me of my national identity. It reminds me of the UAE, and of my objectives, which include studying law and representing the UAE as a successful lawyer.

The flag reminds Reem of her objectives, which are also another important aspect of her national identity experience. Reem is determined to work hard and excel academically; her national identity and her love for the UAE encourage her to work harder and aspire highly:

My national identity influenced my decision to study law. I aim to raise my country's name higher, and my national identity encourages me to study harder. It has affected my educational choices, and I think it will affect my career decisions in the future.

The Arabic language also appears in this context, as Reem explains that she realises the importance of the Arabic language when she joins college. In addition, traditional and modest Emirati clothing also appears here. As mentioned earlier, Reem recalls observing Emirati students wearing indecent clothing and mocking her traditional clothing. Reem considers all of these observations as challenges to her own national identity. She also can do the same, but she chooses to follow the norms in clothing that are expected by her parents and what matches her sense of national identity.

4.1.4 Shamma's story

4.1.4.1 Shamma's concept map analysis

Shamma was hesitant at the beginning, she spent time thinking, writing, and erasing her writings, before she finally was sure about what she was writing. On the first day, her map was not as busy compared to the rest; she had few notions that she wanted to add and talk about (see Appendix 4D for photos of Shamma's concept map). However, in the second session she wrote more on her map.

Table 16: Shamma's concept map analysis

Session I
<p>In the first participant-observation session, Shamma wrote/illustrated the following: Jumeirah. Prayer call. Albath Almubasher [radio programme]. [She created an illustration of the UAE flag, and wrote beside it]: I feel proud about each small detail within this shape [UAE flag]. My dialect. It is not just the 2nd of Dec. Two drawings of the flag.</p>
Session II
<p>New additions: Friday= family- [indicated with an arrow]: sort of identity. Friday's atmosphere social and political discussions. I feel it when Friday comes. INNER FEELING! A thank you to all to policemen, makes the feeling of national identity grows inside me. It's US not just me. Feeling my national identity is like feeling safe. My national identity is a prayer for my country to keep it safe.</p>

Table 16 includes a content analysis of Shamma's concept map (see Chapter 3 for data analysis). In the first session, Shamma focused on the role of culture on her national identity experience, almost everything she wrote or discussed in that session was related to culture (see Table 16). She spent time talking about the fact that she grew up in an extended family that respects culture, the thing that affected her national identity. Even when she spoke about a popular radio programme she listens to almost every day, and although this programme is famous for

discussing important national topics, Shamma listens to this programme because elder Emiratis appear in the show, and she likes to listen to them.

Shamma also made two drawings of the UAE flag, and marked Jumeirah (the name of the district she used to reside in with her family before moving to a new one) location in the map. Jumeirah is one of the oldest places in Dubai, near the sea, and most of the families - similar to Shamma's family - who live there come from a strong background of sea heritage and culture. Shamma misses Jumeirah a lot. The UAE flag appeared through the discussions as an important symbol in her experience of national identity; she explained that she takes a small object that includes the colours of the flag with her everywhere to remind her of the UAE.

In the second session, Shamma added more details to her map, mostly to do with her cultural experience (see Table 16); for example, she spent time talking about her family's gathering on Friday and its impact on her national identity. Shamma also added more than one point related to security; she explained that living in a secure country and thinking about it create experiences of her national identity. In addition, she expressed that a national identity is an inner feeling, and part of it is praying silently for the safety of the UAE. Because of these strong sentiments, this indicates that perhaps her experience of her national identity includes more sentiments and thoughts.

4.1.4.2 Shamma's narrative analysis

The largest context in Shamma's experience of national identity is everyday encounters (see Table 17, for a complete table of Shamma's narrative analysis see Appendix 8D). The second one is college life interactions, and the third is cultural attachments. Compared to the rest of the students, Shamma has the smallest percentage in political understanding (20%).

Table 17: Shamma's contextual distribution of the elements

Elements	Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions	Elements- overall
Sentiments	64% (9)	36% (5)	64% (9)	43% (6)	52% (29)
Thoughts	44% (16)	17% (6)	75% (27)	61% (22)	49% (71)
Actions	42% (21)	18% (9)	46% (23)	42% (21)	37% (74)
Overall by contexts	46% (46)	20% (20)	59% (59)	49% (49)	

*The number in brackets indicates the number of elements found in that category.

In cultural attachments Shamma's experience includes more sentiments (64%) than thoughts (44%) or actions (42%). It was obvious from the beginning that Shamma has a sentimental bond with Emirati culture, as she spent a long time talking about her attachments to Emirati culture, which she learnt from her family; her family is an importance source of culture:

I grew up in an extended family. Elder family members like my grandmother taught me about culture and that made me confident of who I am. The cultural knowledge I gained from my family will always protect me from falling into emulating others, will remind me of my identity, and will present myself appropriately.

The significance of cultural attachments here is not that they are important to national identity only; Shamma is discussing an important notion related to the importance of understanding culture in order to grow healthy identities. Without this knowledge, she could have built a conflicted identity with no connections to any important resources. Another important cultural symbol in Shamma's experience is modest Emirati clothing; although traditional clothing is important for her, what is more important is what traditional clothing symbolises. Shamma believes it symbolises modesty, which is originally part of Islam and has become part of Emirati culture. Shamma takes extra care to make sure that she represents her national identity by wearing traditional clothing such as the abaya (traditional Emirati female black robe). She likes her abayas and believes they are very important for experiencing her national identity, mostly because traditional and modest clothing makes her appear as a true Emirati lady.

Another cultural symbol is the call to prayer. In the diverse community of Dubai, Shamma feels safe when she hears it since it reminds her of the peaceful Muslim country she grew up in. It also reminds her of the tolerance and respect that characterise Dubai regardless of diversity. Shamma feels that she is responsible for representing her Emirati national identity to the rest of society, which makes her miss Emiratis in the past and their simpler lives; they were not concerned about their national identity. The situation has changed now, as Shamma feels that there is pressure from everywhere for Emiratis to be aware of this responsibility, and believes that this is due to the many challenges facing national identity, such as the increase in foreign workforce in the UAE. Hence, although she is happy to represent her national identity, this also makes her experience some negative sentiments.

Finally, the last cultural symbol in Shamma's experience is the local Emirati dialect. She experiences her national identity when she listens to Emirati elders communicating in this dialect, and she is grateful that she learnt it from her family. Shamma cannot imagine herself speaking differently, she believes that removing this dialect from her means damaging her national identity. It is part of who she is, and part of what she wants to represent to people.

In the context of political understanding, Shamma's experience includes more sentiments (36%) than thoughts or actions (see Table 17). Shamma is not interested in politics, and explains that she does not keep up with political news. Regardless, there are few political symbols that are significant in her experience, such as Emirati history. Shamma believes that history is full of important lessons that are not fully grasped by most Emiratis. Reflecting on the federation motivates her to work harder on her studies, she believes that this is an underrated topic in the history of the UAE, and people should learn more from it:

The federation of the UAE is an important concept about change, cooperation and sharing experiences. It is part of us, and it is even associated with the name of our country. We should make sure that we learn from it and share what we learn with others.

Thinking about the federation always reminds Shamma of her objective to contribute to the UAE in the future. Emirati leadership figures are also important political symbols in Shamma's experience of national identity. She is proud to have leaders that are involved in people's lives:

they attend social gatherings and cultural celebrations, and participate in prayers and charity projects; they are humble and always there for the people: “We love our leaders. They are humble, and close to us, and I want to emulate them”.

Although Shamma does not keep up with political news, she reads about leaders, and tries to keep up with what they are doing. In her experience of national identity, Emirati leaders are role models who teach the rest of the people respect, love, working together, and even things like being environmentally aware. The last political symbol in Shamma’s experience is the national flag of the UAE. In her experience, the flag is more than a flag, it is a symbol of national belonging, pride and a motivation to work hard:

I always take an object with me that has the colours of the flag anywhere I go, especially when I’m travelling. Whenever I feel tired and pressured from my studies I look at [this object]. Looking at it makes me feel comfortable, and reminds me of my objective to study and work hard in order to take part in the development of the UAE, and to make the UAE proud of me.

The context of everyday encounters is the largest in Shamma’s experience of national identity: it includes more thoughts (75%) than sentiments (64%) or actions (46%) (see Table 17). Daily routines and interactions with her family such as driving to college, greeting her parents and listening to national radio programmes on her way to college are all experiences of national identity. They all remind her of her objective: to work hard to contribute to the UAE. Obeying her parents in particular is an important aspect of her everyday experience because obeying them

means that she is doing what is expected of her as an Emirati lady, and therefore she will be more able to present her national identity.

When she observes the busy life in Dubai, Shamma misses the simple life people used to live in the past. It concerns her that people in Dubai have become increasingly very busy and materialistic, and as a result have lost some important connections with their culture and values. When she visits other places in the UAE, she observes that there are some places where people are still living a simple life, and she wishes she could live like this in Dubai. She believes if people live simple lives they will be more connected to their national identity.

Shamma regularly reflects on the impact of the everyday decisions and choices she makes about her national identity. For instance, her higher education is mostly in English, which has affected her Arabic-language skills, but she makes sure to use Arabic whenever she can, because as an Emirati she has to speak in Arabic. Part of her everyday experience is also reflecting on the decisions she makes as a citizen. In addition, all the cultural symbols discussed previously are part of her everyday experience of national identity. In fact, what makes everyday encounters significant in Shamma's experience is the fact that cultural attachments have a profound role in her experience of national identity.

College life interactions are the second largest context in Shamma's experience of national identity: they include thoughts (61%) more than sentiments (43%) or actions (42%) (see Table 17). The most important aspect of her national identity experience in this context is giving back to the UAE through working hard and excelling in academic work. If she does not do so, she is

not representing her national identity properly. Shamma is passionate about her education; she appreciates and respects everything she learns and every learning opportunity that is provided to her. She always thinks that she is responsible for her education and she uses it to fulfil her role in contributing to the country in the future: “My national identity taught me to respect and appreciate everything I learnt from my university. If I do not do so, I will not be able to give something in the future”.

Experiencing her national identity collectively is an important aspect of her experience in this context. During her first year she spent a long time with her friends and participated in many university activities with them. This provided her with opportunities to experience national identity collectively with her friends. It included talking about their objectives and aspirations, and their participation in university activities as ways of giving back. When their schedules changed because of joining different academic programmes, these opportunities became limited, and Shamma misses that collective experience.

Thinking about her academic choices, such as choosing her major or choosing a topic for an assignment, is all an experience of national identity. Shamma always thinks about what she can do for the UAE, hence even making these decisions turn into experiences of national identity. For instance, she thought a lot before deciding on her major: “I wanted to make sure that whatever I chose would enable me to serve my country.” In addition, some cultural symbols are also part of her college life interactions, such as family and clothing. Her family members support her and encourage her to work harder, and she makes sure that her clothes are presenting her as an Emirati lady.

4.2 Summary of the findings

After discussing the findings of every story, this section summarises the results of the research study. It first summarises the findings of the elements of the experiences of national identity, and then the findings in the context of the experiences of national identity from all four participants. Charts that show the quantitative analysis are used in this section to make comparisons between the four participants. The definitions of elements and contexts were reached after examining the elements and contexts of each participant.

4.2.1 Elements of the experiences of national identity

The stories show that there were three types of elements included in the students' experiences of national identity. The students were engaged in processing some notions related to being Emirati, or being overwhelmed with emotions, or engaged in actions related to their national identity. Results showed that students sometimes had similar percentages of elements, and in others the variations were slightly larger (see Figure 4). In addition, variations existed between the three types of elements for every participant. In most experiences, students experience more than one type of element: the significance of the experience varies according to the type or the numbers of elements involved in the experience.

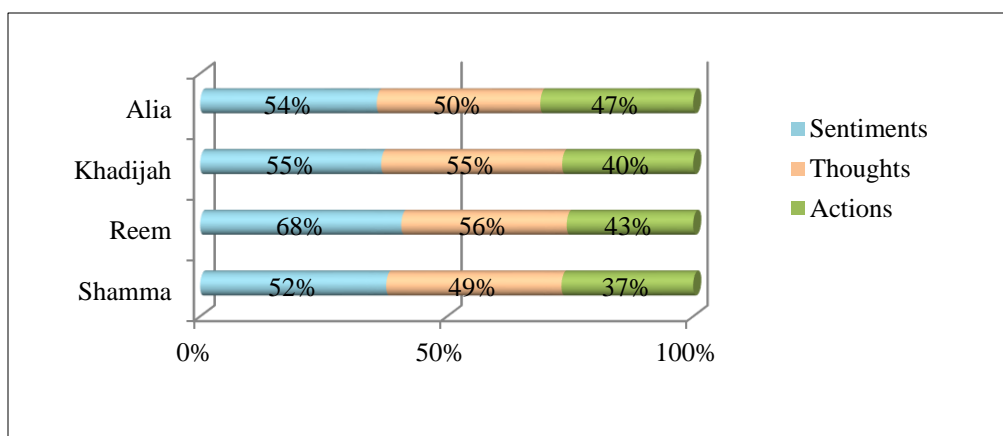


Figure 4: Distribution of the elements of the experiences of national identity

The first type of element is sentiments, the narrative analysis of all students showed that the number of identified sentiments is the smallest compared to actions or thoughts (see Appendix 8). Most of the students have similar proportions of experiencing sentiments in their overall experience of national identity. Reem has the largest proportion of sentiments in her experience; compared to the rest, Reem was the most excited to talk about her experience of national identity. The types of sentiments vary between positive and negative sentiments, and therefore they were categorised as four types (see Table 18).

Throughout the stories, students are proud to be Emirati and to live in the UAE: this is one of the important sentiments they always feel. As part of being proud to be Emirati, they also feel strong sentiments of belonging and loving the UAE, these sentiments, in addition to feeling proud, always motivate them to give back to the UAE, and work harder as students. Hence, the second sub-type is sentiments of duty and loyalty; these sentiments strengthen their sense of responsibility, and make them confident and enthusiastic to give back.

Table 18: Elements of national identity

Type of elements	Definition
Sentiments	Sentiments participants feel while experiencing their national identities
Sub-types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National pride (feeling proud and humble) • Sentiments of belonging (belonging, loving) • Sentiments of duty and loyalty (feeling responsible, confident and enthusiastic) • Sentiments of estrangement (feeling lonely, sad, uncomfortable and unsafe) 	
Thoughts	Thoughts participants think about or make sense of while experiencing their national identities
Sub-types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning (setting objectives, making decisions and choices) • Reflecting on behaviour and attitudes • Remembering • Self-identification 	
Actions	Actions participants are engaged in, while experiencing their national identities
Sub-types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual actions and behaviours • Collective actions and behaviours 	

The last sub-type is sentiments of estrangement; regardless of all the positive sentiments they feel while experiencing their national identity, some situations make them feel sad, lonely, uncomfortable and unsafe. Often, they experience these sentiments when they are feeling that they are being detached from their connection or ties with the UAE. In these experiences, it is the location or the nature of the location that triggers the students to feel such sentiments, or sometimes it is things students observe in the context.

The second type of element is thoughts. The proportion of thoughts varies among the participants (see Figure 4); Khadijah and Reem have similar proportions of thoughts included in their experiences of national identity, while Shamma and Alia have similar proportions of thoughts, and their proportions of thoughts are less than the other two. Similar to sentiments, there are also several types of thought found in the stories (see Table 18).

In their experiences of national identity, the students interact with objects and symbols around them and receive information. As a result, they process the received information and make their decisions. Thinking nationally in these experiences involves planning and setting their future objectives; they all believe that their objectives should include giving back to the UAE. At many points in their stories they consistently refer to the concept of giving back and returning the favour. At the same time, they reflect on their behaviours and attitudes; this is important for all of them because it is related to how they represent themselves as Emirati ladies.

Thinking nationally also includes remembering important memories, which allows them to experience their national identity. These memories vary from remembering important figures, personal narratives of national identity, or remembering things they have read or seen before that made them experience their national identity. Finally, the last sub-type is self-identifying themselves. This includes processing the different meanings in their experiences of national identity, and identifying themselves with some of them. In other words, in their experiences of national identity students make choices based on the things they identify themselves with.

The third type of element found is actions. Results demonstrate that when the four students are engaged in thinking about their national identity and what it means for them, and are experiencing different national sentiments at the same time, both sentiments and thoughts direct students towards adopting certain attitudes and taking certain actions, such as being on time, having objectives, and respecting people from all nationalities. There were more actions identified in the findings of these stories compared to the numbers of sentiments and thoughts (see Appendix 8 for the full tables of narrative analysis). These identified actions were analysed into two types – individual actions and collective actions - (see Table 18), both types occur in response to experiencing national identity.

The stories present situations where the four students have to exhibit certain types of behaviour or react in specific ways as part of the national identity experience. Alia and Reem are more engaged in actions than Khadijah and Shamma (see Figure 4). The stories indicate that the four students have their national identities with them all the time, which means that in one way or another they are involved in different actions in relation to their national identity almost on a daily basis. In addition, these actions are sometimes collective, involving family members or friends.

4.2.2 The contexts of national identity experiences

The stories showed that the four students experience their national identities in different locations, situations and places. Sometimes they are with close family and friends, sometimes they are walking in shopping malls or watching TV. They experience them on their way to college, while working on assignments, or even when they are outside the UAE. In other words,

these contexts explain when, where, and whom or with it the students experience their national identities.

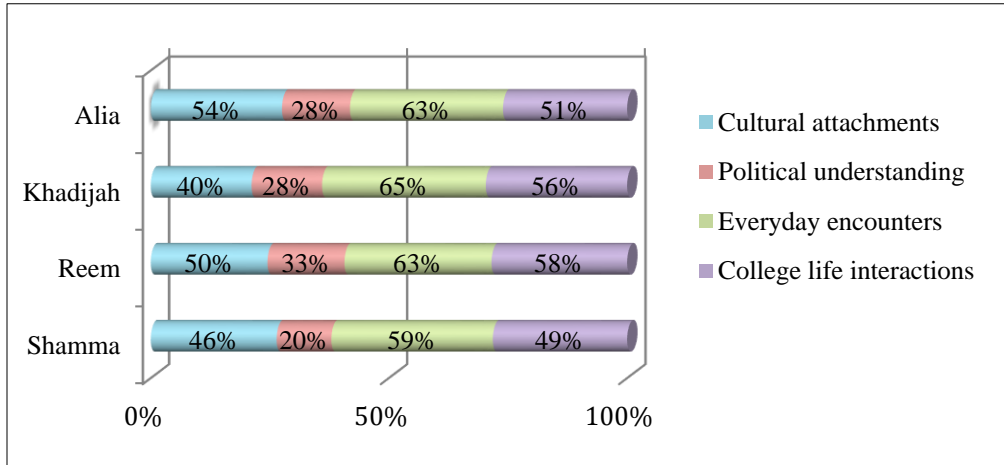


Figure 5: Distribution of the contexts of the experience of national identity

A context might include one situation or more such as being in class and discussing something related to the UAE, or a context might include a specific location or specific settings: for example, a shopping mall or the sea. Findings showed that there are four contexts that make students experience or create experiences of national identity (see Table 19). Similar to the elements, there are some variations between the percentages of the contexts among the students. The experience of national identity for every participant is strongly linked to some of the contexts in particular (see Figure 5). Table 19 defines every context and lists any-sub-context or symbols identified in each one.

Table 19: Contexts of national identity experiences

Context	Definition	Sub-contexts/symbols
Cultural attachments	Bonds created from regular social interaction with cultural symbols, aspects and patterns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic culture • Celebrations • Mass media
Political understanding	Awareness or attitudes created from interacting with political and historical symbols and aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emirati leaders • The significance of the national flag • Recalling historical events
Everyday encounters	Social interactions with personal and social everyday occurrences and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal life • Daily social interactions
College life interactions	All interactions in and about college life and career aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College activities • Academic objectives • Class work

4.2.2.1 Cultural attachments

This context is the third largest for Khadijah, Reem and Shamma, and the second largest for Alia. From all the types of elements included in the context of cultural attachments, ethnic culture had a wide range, varying from attachments to customs and traditions, such as clothing, to values and morals such as obeying parents, to sentiments of being proud of belonging, and to attachments to the Arabic language and Islam. It is clear that the four students carry strong attachments towards their ethnic culture: they want to live it and practise it every day, talk about it to others, and most importantly to always present it in their attitude and appearance. For instance, all of the students pointed out that clothing is a very important aspect not only in their experience of national identity, but also in their lives in general. They want to make sure that

they always appear in a modest Emirati and Islamic appearance. By doing so, they were showing their bond with both ethnic culture and Islam.

Students also discussed cultural celebrations as another part of their cultural attachments: for instance, students identified National Day as a very important day in their lives. They spoke about participating in National Day's celebrations, and the sentiments they experience on that day. Alia, Khadijah and Reem indicate that celebrating National Day with everyone else in society has become an important aspect of their experience of national identity. In addition, some of the students spoke about other cultural occasions such as Eid's celebrations and other occasional family and social gatherings. These events include practising cultural traditions and customs, being with family members and being engaged with them in these celebrations in cultural practices, creating experiences of national identity.

4.2.2.2 Political understanding

In their experience of national identity, the students come across symbols that remind them of the UAE as a state, and remind them of their membership of this political community and as a result create experiences of national identity. Some of the symbols and aspects are political, such as those related to leadership, and some of them are related to the history of the UAE (see Table 19). Compared to the rest of the contexts, political understanding is the smallest context for all participants. In their experiences of national identity, the four students have social interactions with political symbols that made them understand their roles as Emirati citizens. This included realising their roles in society, understanding their attributes as Emirati citizens, their rights and duties, and the way they should present themselves to others. The four students confirmed that

living in the diverse context of the UAE, interacting with people from different nationalities, influences them and assists them in understanding their attributes as Emirati citizens. The diverse context of the UAE makes them also feel that they should always present themselves as Emiratis.

Results show that figures of Emirati leaders are strongly associated with their political experience of national identity. The four students are often engaged in reading about leaders and their latest decisions and visits. They closely observe their behaviour and reflect on their actions whenever possible. They trust them completely, feel loyal and proud of having them as leaders. As a result, they want to learn from them and emulate their actions and attitudes. In their stories, they all describe different examples that show the impact of Emirati leaders on their thinking, attitudes and decisions, and on their experience of national identity.

Emulating leaders in their actions and attitudes was an important aspect for everyone; they all visualised their lives as a continuum of their leaders (both former and current). They considered their leaders as the resources that guide them in their actions, thinking and behaviour. In this aspect in particular, all of them brought up the memory of Sheikh Zayed. They consider him the father of all Emiratis and the creator of their national identity. They regard him very highly as the role model of all Emiratis: they know that they would always remember Sheikh Zayed and they would continue to live his dream of building the nation in the UAE in their lives.

In the stories, the students romanticise history; some of them miss the simple life of the past and sometimes long for certain aspects of that life. The one thing they have learned is that, similar to their forefathers and ancestors, who faced many challenges in the past, in order to provide them

with a better life, they also could face challenges and aspire to achieve great achievements that would make their families and the UAE proud of them. They consider history and everything it includes from aspects of daily life, culture, traditions and others, a source of knowledge they should go back to whenever they have questions.

The last symbol is the national flag of the UAE: it appears in Khadijah's, Reem's and Shamma's stories. The three of them describe it in their stories as more than just a national flag; it is a sign of identity, belonging, love and pride. Seeing the flag makes them think about their national identity, their roles as Emiratis, and their contribution to their society and their country.

4.2.2.3 Everyday encounters

A major theme that emerged from the stories is experiencing national identity in everyday life. In several aspects of their experience of national identity, the four students confirmed that their experience of national identity is an everyday encounter - it is not something they experience on certain days, occasions or times, and it is not only related to certain occasions or situations.

Findings of the narrative analysis indicate that this is the largest context for all students. There are some special occasions when they experience their national identity more intensely, such as on National Day, but overall they believe it is embedded in their daily lives and interactions with family and friends, and it is something that they cannot separate from their everyday lives. The students confirmed that, as much as they love their experience of national identity on National Day, they strongly believe that experiencing national identity is not only about celebrating National Day. They believe that the experience of national identity involves having a certain way of thinking and behaving, and should be part of their daily life experiences.

The everyday encounters or practices that were identified here varied between aspects of personal life and daily social interactions. Some include daily interactions with family members and close friends, and some include interactions with the outside community. This context is one of the largest contexts for experiencing national identity for all the students (see Figure 5). The four students have more thoughts involved in their experience of national identity in this context. In their experience of national identity as part of their everyday encounters, social interaction is an important factor in constructing the experiences.

Interactions with family include different types of social experiences. Sometimes it is discussing with or observing family members; in other situations it is family rituals, and social interactions in all of these social experiences create everyday experiences of national identity. In general, the four students consider their families as one of the important sources for learning about culture and understanding their national identity. It is important for all of them to make sure that they act according to their families' expectations; hence, they all consider obeying their parents an important aspect of their lives. They trust their parents' guidance and judgment, and know that obeying their parents means representing their national identity appropriately.

Interacting with friends in and outside college is another context for creating everyday experiences of national identity. In their social interactions with their friends, they create social experiences for thinking and comprehending meanings of national identity, for sharing feelings about belonging and pride, and for acting collectively in actions or roles that represent national identity. Even when they are out shopping, walking or on their way to college they experience

national identity. In these situations, they observe different signs or interact with symbols that make them think about the UAE, or about belonging to the UAE, and as a result they experience their national identity.

4.2.2.4 College life interactions

The results of this research study showed that many elements of college life interactions are associated with the experience of national identity. For Khadijah, Reem and Shamma, college life interactions are the second context that creates most of their experiences of national identity; in Alia's experience this context was the third largest. In college activities students interact with different symbols, which varied from being cultural, political or both; some of the symbols they interacted with were also involved in their regular everyday lives. Through their social interaction with the different symbols or others in such activities the students experience national identity. Of course, the most popular activity for all of them was National Day's celebrations. As mentioned before, this was an important day for all of them.

There are other kinds of activities that also create experiences of national identity. Overall, the students link their participation in different college activities with their sense of duty as Emirati citizens, and they use such activities as opportunities for giving back. In these situations, interacting with their colleagues and working with them on the different tasks made them recall their desire to give something back to the UAE or representing the UAE in the right way.

A major aspect of experiencing national identity through college life interactions is deciding on and evaluating academic and personal objectives. All of the students link their academic and

personal objectives with their sense of giving back to UAE. They want to graduate, succeed and later become active citizens who contribute to the prosperity of their country. They want to make both their families and the UAE proud. The different types of classwork the students work on and produce as part of their academic programmes at college also create experiences of national identity. This includes assignments, projects, presentations and classroom discussions.

In addition to experiences of national identity that motivate them to work harder and make them feel proud, there are some unpleasant experiences of national identity in college life interactions. These experiences vary from one participant to another: for instance, some feel upset when they see some of the other students at college not wearing modest clothing; they believe that those students are offending themselves and offending the Emirati national identity.

Before discussing the findings in the next chapter, it is important to highlight a major element emerging from the findings. In the four stories, the participants appeared to be mostly positive and in agreement with their national identity, there were very few situations when they were not. Chapter 2 explains how concerns are raised about Emirati youth's national identity, and yet the four participants showed a strong national identity, congruent with what is expected from them as family members and Emiratis. This demonstrates that perhaps their understanding of their national identity is limited or they might have felt responsible to convey a positive story. For instance, Khadijah, as an abroad student, was always positive and shared only a few negative experiences mainly related to her interaction with others. Her case might be odd if compared with literature on international students' experiences in adapting to their new lives and the

challenges they face. Khadijah, on the other hand, demonstrated a strong sense of her national identity, and described how it assisted her in adapting to her new life as an international student:

I consider my national identity the guidance that I follow, it protects me, and it will not make me do something that might harm me in the end.

She seems in her story to be aware of the challenges she would face in her life in Dublin, even though she did not elaborate on them, and maintained a positive perspective:

The decision I made to study abroad means that I will face many challenges, but my national identity encourages me to work harder and prepares me to face what is ahead in order to achieve what I aspire to.

The other participants also maintained positive stories and expressed their love, gratitude and pride more than talking about what they fear or what created unpleasant experiences. The positive nature of the stories is further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the research study in relation to the theoretical framework and literature review. This chapter will first discuss the main findings, which are the elements and the contexts of the national identity experiences. The rest of the findings are discussed according to the research questions. However, the findings of the first sub-question will be discussed the last, after discussing the findings of the rest of the questions. The reason for that is because the first sub-question, which investigates youth definition of national identity, can only be answered through discussing the elements and concepts emerging from the findings of the rest of the sub-questions. This chapter also discusses the limitations of the study, which is included at the end of the chapter.

The previous discussion of the history of the UAE indicates that there were several phases of nationalism in the UAE that affected Emiratis, their national identities and their sense of national belonging (see Table 1). An analysis of these phases demonstrates that because of them, Emirati national identity can be characterised by three attributes: Emiratis are conscious of the importance of defining and representing their national identities; they are keen on contributing to the UAE; and finally they are maintaining their connections with their culture and heritage. Findings of the research questions in this chapter will also be linked to these attributes of the Emirati national identity.

As seen from the findings in the previous chapter, each story has its own character that defines the experience of every student. Given these differences between the stories, this chapter will

focus on discussing the general themes emerging from all the stories; at the same time, examples from the stories will be provided across the sections to support the discussion and to show differences and similarities.

5.1 Main findings: elements and contexts of national identities

This section examines the main findings, which are the elements and the contexts of the experiences of national identity. The elements of the experience of national identity indicate that when the students experience their national identities they are engaged in experiencing sentiments, thinking about the UAE and their roles as citizens, or acting in attitudes or behaviours that represent them as Emirati ladies (see Table 18 in Chapter 4). This shows that national identity experiences are not static experiences, but active ones in which the students are involved in feeling, thinking and taking action. At the same time they are also comprehending and reflecting on their sentiments, thoughts and actions; their reflections vary from one situation to another as will be discussed later.

In their experiences the students use these three elements either to sense the reality of their national identity (symbolic interactionism), or to represent their national identity to the outer world (social representation). This indicates that the elements of the experience of national identity are in fact elements of symbolic systems the students interact with and use to make sense of their experiences. Interactions with symbolic systems result in making the students understand their national identities, and refocus or redeploy themselves according to the experience.

Sentiments, thoughts and actions are in general part of human experiences (Bruner, 1990; Elliott,

2005; Lynch, 1997), however, in the context of national identity experiences, the students used them also to make sense of and represent their national identities.

Most identity studies focus on investigating the material explanations of identity more than the symbolic explanations: only a few ethnographic studies went beyond that to explore the symbolic systems associated with identity experiences, such as studies carried out by Alba (1990), Keogan (2002) and Lynch (1997). For instance, in his study of symbolic construction of identity in immigrants, Keogan (2002) argues that most studies in collective identity construction in dynamic contexts focus on material explanations and factors, and he suggests that adopting an approach that integrates material and symbolic explanations will present better results. The difference between exploring material and symbolic explanations is that exploring the former type results in a limited understanding of the experience, in which material factors are explored in segments. In this situation, links and relationships between the factors and their impact might not be fully understood. On the other hand, when elements that create the experiences are perceived as part of symbolic systems, this results in identifying meanings, connections and relationships, and understanding their significance and impact on the human experience.

Keogan (2002) identifies a number of symbolic elements such as social meanings and language that are ignored in other studies. In his investigation of identity construction of immigrants in the US, his results show that their political and cultural activities and practices evolve to include symbols and symbolic manifestations. His findings are similar to those of this study, as the results here demonstrate that the symbolic manifestations are in fact the basis for the identity experience, and, without them, students' experiences would have been static experiences that

bring no significance to their lives. Their experiences of national identity as engaged in experiencing sentiments, thinking or deciding on taking an action are the symbolic systems or manifestations that create their experiences of national identity.

Sentiments are studied in national identity more than other types of elements (e.g., Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011; Dekker, Malova & Hoogendoorn, 2003; Li & Brewer, 2004). Perhaps, because compared to thoughts and actions sentiments are the most obvious element in national identity, and because strong national sentiments can affect individuals more than thoughts and actions (Gilbert, 1998; Smith, 1991). National sentiments might also affect thoughts and actions and motivate individuals to adopt particular kind of attitude or take some kind of action. Even those studies that examined national sentiments in national identity experiences, such as Barrett and Oppenheimer's (2011) study about national identities of European children, and Dekker, Malova and Hoogendoorn's (2003) study about secondary school students' national attitudes, mainly focus on identifying sentiments and analysing their impact on participants' attitudes, but fail to link these elements to their roles as students. Studying sentiments is important, but only by examining their impact on students' choices and decisions can one fully grasp the complexity of national identities and their significance in students' lives. In other words, elements cannot be examined separately without linking them to the other elements: thoughts and actions. As will be discussed later in students' choices and decisions (see Section 5.5), the sentiments that the four students experienced, combined with their thoughts and actions, affected their choices and decisions as students.

The second main finding was that students experience their national identity in four contexts: cultural attachments, political understanding, everyday encounters, and college life interactions (see Table 19 in Chapter 4). Similar to the elements, the contexts appear to be symbolic; each incorporates a number of symbols and sometimes sub-contexts that students socially interact with and experience their national identities through. The symbols that are included in each context vary from one student to another; however, there are also some common symbols: for example, the Arabic language in cultural attachments. The reason why symbols included in the contexts are different from one student to another is because the percentages of the contexts are different from one student to another (see Figure 5 in Chapter 4). Therefore, it is these contexts that give the experiences of national identity their personal characteristics: in other words, the contexts not only explain how, when or what happens in an experience, but also emphasise who is experiencing it.

There are other studies that also demonstrate that experiences of collective identities, such as national and cultural identities, are context-related. For example, in his study of ethnic identity of white Americans, Alba (1990) demonstrates that collective identity construction is context-specific. He shows that his participants experience an interplay between two contexts: their personal ethnic identity and their collective identity; as a result, they identify themselves with elements from both. In addition, Keogan's (2002) study showed that there are symbolic contexts which were created as a result of immigrants interacting with material and symbolic aspects in their social worlds. This study is significant because in his examination of symbolic contexts he was able to conclude that they could be either cultural or political. In the same manner, two of the contexts identified in the stories were cultural attachment, where students interact with

cultural symbols, and political understanding, where students interact with political symbols. Even in the other two contexts, everyday encounters and college life interactions, students interact with cultural and political symbols. Hence, the findings here are similar to Keogan's (2002).

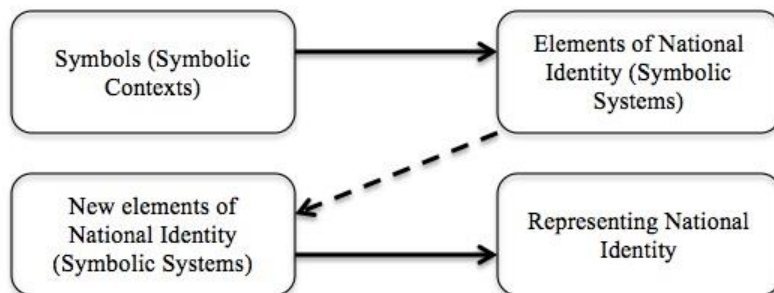


Figure 6: Symbolic systems and symbolic contexts

The findings indicate that the relation between symbolic systems and symbolic contexts is of an active and interlinked, and sometimes interdependent nature. Each context includes a number of symbols that distinguish that context. Symbols, on the other hand, are interlinked with the symbolic systems (see Figure 6). As seen in the stories, students experience national sentiments, build thoughts and understandings or take action when interacting with a symbol, producing a social interaction that results in reproducing new elements from the symbolic systems. For example, if a student felt proud while noticing the UAE flag on a house on her way to the university, she might continue to feel proud, and this might motivate her to work harder in her studies. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the symbolic systems create the social meanings the students receive from social interaction, and at the same time they assist the students in representing themselves after comprehending the meanings. More examples of symbols and their interaction with symbolic systems are discussed in the next sections.

5.2 The role of cultural symbols

This section will discuss findings of the second research sub-question, which explores the role of cultural symbols in creating experiences of national identity. The context of cultural attachments was the largest context for three of the students. Findings show that the four students regard culture as an important source of national identity, if not the most important source, and abandoning it results in severely damaging their national identities. Consequently, the cultural symbols the students identified have a significant impact on their experiences of their national identities and on the decisions they make as a result. In their stories, each student identifies more than one cultural symbol as important for creating several experiences of her national identity. The cultural symbols the students identify in their stories are mostly symbols from ethnic culture; they have also identified cultural and national celebrations as an abstract symbol and a sub-context for experiencing Emirati culture. At the same time, the students also discussed the impact of the media as a sub-context in experiencing national identity.

5.2.1 Ethnic culture

Apart from all the symbols that emerged in the stories, symbols from ethnic culture appeared as the most important for the students, and these symbols included: modest clothing, the Arabic language and Emirati dialect, Islam and family. They represent cultural attachments and bonds that connect them to their national identity on different social levels, from friends, family, the rest of Emiratis, to their history and their leaders. Several ethnographic studies explored the importance of ethnic culture on identity experiences (e.g., Alonso, 1994; Eliasoph & Lichterman,

2003; Kellas, 1994). For example, in their study with a group of undergraduate students from a number of cultural backgrounds, Taylor and Osborne (2010) demonstrate that when students are more aware of their cultural identities, such as ethnic identities, they build better social connections which strengthen their self-esteem. Taylor and Osborne (2010) also showed that ethnic culture has a profound role in creating self-concept clarity, in which an individual knows oneself and his/her self-beliefs are clearly defined. In this case, personal objectives and attitudes are clear, and individuals understand their roles within their group.

Taylor and Osborne's (2010) findings are similar to those of this study: the four students report that attachments to ethnic culture educate them about their national identities, and they all seek opportunities to strengthen these attachments. However, one of the most significant findings that was absent in Taylor and Osborne's (2010) study is that the students also connect their cultural attachments to the history of the UAE and to their ancestors, and emphasise that these attachments connect them to a period that they did not experience. The findings here emphasise two important concepts: continuity in ethno-symbolism and the historical nation in perennialism. According to Smith (1991; 2010), individuals experience their national identity when they feel that they are part of the nation and they continue what their ancestors have started; hence one meaning the students receive when they interact with cultural meanings is continuity. At the same time, perennialism views nations as always existing in history. Hence, ethnic cultural symbols are the medium that connects the students not only to the community around them, but also to the beginning of Emirati nationalism.

Despite the fact that ethnic attachments and affiliations have changed in the postmodern era because of all the changes affecting societies globally (Alonso, 1994; Castells, 1997; Sanders, 2004), ethnic attachments and affiliations remain one of the most important aspects in how people define themselves (Castells, 1997; Jenkins, 1997). In fact, in societies that have been heavily influenced by globalisation and immigration, people show multiple and more complex ethnic affiliations (Sanders, 2004). In the same manner, although the UAE has experienced and is still experiencing phases of change that affected the demographics of the country, the findings here demonstrate that ethnic culture is still of importance to the people, including young Emirati females. Perhaps what made the impact of ethnic culture significant is the fact that the UAE has a rich ethnic culture that is embedded in everyday life (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). Jenkins (1997) and Cohen (2004) argue that in communities or countries with a rich ethnic culture, people develop cultural sets of complex repertoires that affect daily patterns of lives, patterns of thinking and decision-making at the same time that these sets reproduce attachments to traditions, language and religion. Hence, the impact of ethnic cultural symbols is expected to be more profound in countries like the UAE where ethnic culture is practised and celebrated in everyday life.

Traditional clothing, language, religion and family were discussed as important cultural symbols in many studies (e.g., Attfield, 2000; Cohen, 2004; Sanders, 2004). Trivedi (2007) presents an extensive profile of traditional clothing in India, showing that its significance goes beyond reminding people of their culture - it symbolises the shared ways of living and common habits which people define, and how they affect their national identities. Attfield (2000) also explains that clothing creates sensual experiences that affect people and determine the way they approach

the social world, and determine how they signify things around them. Similarly, the students' stories present modest Emirati clothing as part of a symbolic context that connects them with several aspects of their lives. In their discussions of everyday nationalism, both Billig (1995) and Edensor (2002) consider clothing as the most obvious material object that is associated with national identity. This makes it a common symbol of national identity that might exist in more than one symbolic context. This is found in the stories, as the students interact with clothing in more than one context. It is both part of their cultural attachments and an everyday symbol; it represents different meanings in Emirati culture: modesty, embracing Islamic values and the reserved nature of Emirati culture. At the same time, it is a symbol which creates both pleasant and unpleasant experiences of national identity: pleasant when they are proud of it, and unpleasant when they see their peers being diverting from it. From the perspective of Moscovici (1984) material culture such as clothing represents cultural values; for instance, in this study modest clothing is a symbol of ethnic culture, which is a bond that brings the group together, and through which the students self-identify.

Perhaps what makes modesty a significant symbol is the fact that clothing is one of the first signs that represent the diverse context of a country (Edensor, 2002); therefore, it is one that makes the students feel that they are a minority in their own country. In another unpleasant experience of national identity, some of the students explained that they feel estranged and insecure when they visit some places in the UAE, and then realise that they are the only Emiratis in that place – because they are the only ones wearing Emirati clothing.

The second symbol of ethnic culture appearing in the stories is the Arabic language and Emirati dialect. The students respect the Arabic language and their Emirati dialect as part not only of their national identities, but also of their personal identities. These are their means for expressing themselves, and for communicating their ideas and thoughts; therefore, the two symbols convey meanings of connection and the ability to communicate. Several identity studies demonstrate how language is an important aspect in identity development and experiences (e.g., Hilaire, 2009; Sanders, 2004; Searle, 2010). At the same time, political scientists such as Smith (1991) and Anderson (2006) discuss the vibrant role of language in spreading national awareness and in strengthening national identity. However, in countries where people fear the loss of their mother tongue language, such as the UAE, people fear losing their sense of national belonging and their national identity because of weak attachments to mother tongue language (Hilaire, 2009; Said, 1979). This is what is happening in the cases of the four students: because of the changes happening in the UAE, and the excessive use of the English language, the students become more connected and concerned at the same time about the Arabic language. Applying Anderson's (2006) perspective in this case means that the students' imagination of their nation is incomplete; they might be able to imagine other aspects that constitute their national identities; however, the part related to the Arabic language will be missing.

Moscovici (1988) explains that in social representation theory, when individuals are prevented from using a key aspect of their shared collective culture, it affects their representation of their social identities. This explains what students feel when they are prevented from using the Arabic language; in such experiences they are prevented from using the language that connects them to their culture, to the UAE, their families, friends and almost everything that constitutes their

social worlds. Hence, losing an important part of their identity might prevent them from representing it in the way they expect.

Similar to clothing and the Arabic language, Islam is also part of the everyday experience of national identity. In several studies, religion emerges as an important force in societies and collective identity development, especially in contexts with strong religious affiliations, where religious understanding affects people's attitudes towards many aspects in their social worlds (e.g., Atron, 2007; Collet, 2007; Small, 2009; Smith & Woodberry, 2001). Sanders (2004) shows that Jews identify religious Jewish symbols not only as part of religion, but also as symbols that remind them of their nation. Similarly, Collet (2007) studied Somali secondary schools in Toronto, and how they resisted secular movements by the Government, and viewed Islam as an important aspect of their national identity. Similar to the participants of these studies, the students, too, consider Islam as an important aspect of their personal and collective identities: they link it to other symbols such as clothing, and were excited to see it as something embedded in their lives. The students viewed Islam as more than a symbol that conveyed meanings to the students; it also made them feel secure to belong to a country where people can practise Islam freely, and similar to the Arabic language and the Emirati dialect it made them feel connected with the rest of the community.

From the perspective of social representation theory, Islam is another type of shared and collective knowledge, and at the same time it is a bond through which all group members share and develop their social identities through. Islam in this perspective is also the guidance framework that group members use to understand their social experiences and to guide them in

their in-group relations and encounters. This is how students perceive it: Islam is an abstract symbol and complex system of shared values, practices and beliefs that is embodied in several aspects of their lives, and while interacting with these aspects and symbols from this system, they understand their roles and social expectations. The students appear in their stories to be less concerned about losing attachments to Islam compared to Emirati clothing and the Arabic language; perhaps this is because, as discussed above, Islam remains an abstract symbol that includes a wide range of meanings, practices, values and concepts, while clothing and language are more tangible, and it is easier for them to observe and examine the impact of those two symbols.

The last symbol in ethnic culture is family, particularly significant family members such as parents. Herzburn's (1993) study of Jewish families presented them as part of the shared symbolic context: they symbolise belonging, and at the same time they influence their children's ethnicity, religion and education. As a result they play a critical role in nurturing their children's sense of self, and their sense in relation to their social context (Herzburn, 1993; see also La Guardia, 2009). In the same manner, parents in this study were presented in the stories as always making the choices to talk to their daughters about their national identities, guiding them in learning their cultural attachments, and encouraging them to contribute to the UAE. This results in making their daughters conscious about their national identities and their roles as Emirati citizens. In the stories, the families played an active role in emphasising meanings of connection to the community, loyalty, pride and national belonging.

The significance of family as a cultural symbol is that it shows that the students are in fact seeking a collective experience of national identity, or attempting to link what they experience personally with their collective experience of national identity. First of all, they interact with their families and learn about their national identities through this interaction, and then they apply what they learnt in other collective contexts such as college. This practice is similar to the ethno-symbolist nationalism, which views individuals as part of small and big families: the small family is their actual family (parents and siblings), and the big family is the nation and all external communities: for example, college (Smith, 1991; 2010). In this concept, individuals interactively use meanings they learn from both to reflect their understandings of their national identity in the two contexts (Smith, 1991; 1996a). The relationship between the small family and the big family can be explained using Mead's (1934) perspective of symbolic interactionism. For instance, consider Alia's description of her parents in the following:

I learnt morals and values from my parents. I often discuss with them different things, I ask them questions about my education and career aspirations, and they always guide me. They also teach me about my national identity; in fact I believe that I received my national identity from my parents.

Alia processes what she receives from her parents through her inner self, 'I': she internalises what they teach her about morals and values, and what they advise her on her educational and career aspirations. She uses what she learns and processes through her inner self to present her national identity. In Mead's (1934) and Goffman's (1959) perspectives of symbolic interactionism, individuals use what they learn from social experiences: they internalise it, and then use it to present their identities. Hence, Alia takes what she learns from her small family -

her parents - and uses it to guide her in her experience with her big family, the UAE. The relationship between collective and individual experiences of national identity is analysed and discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.

Throughout the stories, the students maintained their fondness of ethnic culture, Emirati traditions and heritage. Even in discussing history, two students romanticised the past in the UAE, and how people used to live simple lives without fearing the loss of ethnic culture. Although the students were proud in discussing their interactions in the diverse society of the UAE, and how it taught them to be tolerant, respectful and welcoming of others, they were still concerned about the impact of this diverse community on their cultural attachments. Therefore, the outside diverse community of the UAE is a context that could create positive and negative experiences of national identity involving cultural symbols. The students considered being respectful, tolerant and welcoming as part of their identity, however, in other situations they questioned whether this openness to others might negatively affect identity. This point indicates in this type of the experience of national identity the students are receiving conflicting meanings. Multiple meanings and their impact are discussed further in Section 5.5.

To conclude, symbols from ethnic culture create a vibrant symbolic context, which allows the students to experience several elements from their symbolic systems. Mostly, it creates experiences of national identity that influence students' sentiments and sense of belonging. The findings in this section were similar to other studies; however, given the rich, complex culture of the UAE, the findings presented significant explanations that are different from other studies at the same time as discussed above.

5.2.2 Celebrations

In the stories, the students consider cultural and national celebrations as sometimes sub-contexts for experiencing national identity, and sometimes they describe them as abstract symbols that create several experiences of national identity. National Day's celebrations were the main type that all students discuss in their stories. In addition, one student mentioned other celebrations such as Eid, and all of them provided examples of common Emirati social gatherings that are not considered celebrations, but they include some cultural practices that are usually practised during cultural celebrations.

Several researchers define cultural ceremonies and celebrations as important events in which a nation celebrates its ethnic culture, values, history and figures, and uses them to convey renewed national messages to people (e.g., Finell & Liebkind, 2010; Podeh, 2011; Smith, 1996b).

Edensor (2002) argues that perhaps “the most obvious and recognisable ways in which national identity is performed are at those nationalist ceremonies and celebrations” (p. 72). He also provides examples of how such events include marching bands, performances of soldiers and forces, competitions, concerts, and public participations of officials, public figures and members of royal families, and that recently, some of these national celebrations have become large-scale ceremonies that are staged and broadcast globally. In the same manner, National Day's celebrations in the UAE are large-scale ceremonies in which a variety of events are planned. The entire community, including leaders, are expected to participate, and they are broadcast through several media channels (Al Qassemi, 2008). Schools and universities organise big celebrations every year, ensuring that all students celebrate and participate in the cultural

activities arranged on that day (Al Qassemi, 2009). Because of all the attention paid to National Day's celebrations in the UAE, all the students regard National Day in their stories as important event in their experiences of their national identities. Celebrating ethnic culture is one of the most common patterns observed in the UAE's National Day's celebrations; such celebrations are used not only to celebrate the union of the Emirates, but also to create opportunities for them to engage in ethnic cultural practices (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). In fact, it was this link between national celebrations becoming cultural that the students also emphasised in their stories.

In his study of the impact of such celebrations, Uzelac (2010) explains that the significance of national or cultural celebrations is that they create shared experiences in which the audience is transformed into participants. He describes how audiences feel that they are part of the celebrations because, together with the performers, they are celebrating one nation; this was also discussed by Edensor (2002). However, Uzelac (2010) stresses that such celebrations are only temporary experiences: even if they were successful in creating shared national or cultural experiences, the gathering dissolves at the end of the performance. On this note, Uzelac (2010) describes such celebrations as having a temporary significance. This was not the case in the stories: the four students describe National Day in particular as the most important day in their national identity, when they become reconnected with their national sentiments, cultural symbols, history and leadership figures. At the same time, they view themselves as active citizens playing active roles in making these celebrations successful. They recall previous celebrations, and also anticipate future celebrations. Although they are temporary events, their significance is not as temporary as Uzelac (2010) concludes in his study. They are of a profound impact, and the students use them as opportunities to redefine their national identity and national

attachments. Perhaps the reason why they are very important and not only temporary experiences with limited impact is because of the extra attention and efforts the Government in the UAE puts towards making the celebrations grander each year (Al Qassemi, 2009). At the same time, leaders in the UAE contribute significantly to these celebrations by participating in and initiating new projects especially during these celebrations (WAM, 2012a), which makes them more special.

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the students are interacting with many symbols in these experiences, some of which remind them of their roles as citizens, and some of which remind them of their attachments to culture. Another interesting aspect here is that although researchers emphasise that national and cultural celebrations are used by nation-states to rekindle the collective identity of the nation, which includes people participating together in cultural events and celebrations (Podeh, 2011; Smith, 1994b), the students, on the other hand, focus here on their individual experiences of their national identities more than on their collective experiences, and find them more important. For instance, the students linked participating in National Day's celebrations to their duty as students and citizens, and what can they do to take an active role in these celebrations.

Podeh's (2011) study of national celebrations in Saudi Arabia shows that Islamic and cultural celebrations such as Eid and Hajj are used as national celebrations "to consolidate the legitimacy of the kingdom and to strengthen it" (p. 256). Although such Eid celebrations emerge as important events in the stories, the students do not consider Eid and other social Emirati gatherings as national celebrations; they clearly differentiate between them and national

celebrations and consider them as shared experiences of national identity that connect them with their ethnic culture more than anything else. In other words, although such events might evoke sentiments of national belonging, such as the findings in Podeh's (2011) study, the students consider them as more of a cultural and religious celebration.

Chiu and Hong (2006), Denzin (2003) and Moscovici (1984) argue that both symbolic interactionism and the social representation theory emphasise that culture is dynamic and fluid; it is reproduced through generations, and sometimes it is transformed while being reproduced in different forms. Because culture is reproduced and transformed, individuals might redefine their attachments to culture in this process. What might have been considered important before might not be considered the same for another generation. This indicates that the cultural symbols which the students identify as part of their national identity experiences are not limited to the ones they addressed in this study. As they move from one phase to another they keep defining their cultural attachments and redefining their significance: hence, cultural symbols are subject to change.

5.2.3 The impact of the mass media

In discussing cultural symbols, it is important to explain the role of the mass media as students interpreted it in their stories. The relationship between media or means of communication and national identity was examined in several studies (e.g., Schlesinger, 1991; Shor & Yonay, 2010). Wheeler (2000) studied the impact of the mass media on national identity in Kuwait and concluded that regardless of the spread of the international mass media, such as Western television programmes, national identity in Kuwait remains a strong one. Wang (2008) also examined the representation of culture in the Indian mass media and its role in maintaining

national identity. Although more research has been conducted in this field, most of these studies still focus on examining the impact of media or means of communication on national identity, and overlook individuals' views and understandings of this relationship or its role in creating experiences of national identity.

Among the only two models of nationalism that emphasise the role of culture in experiencing national identity, ethno-symbolism and everyday nationalism, it is the latter that acknowledges and addresses the role of the mass media (Edensor, 2002). According to Storey (1993), the mass media has changed to become part of popular culture, which is embedded in everyday life, and it could include any patterns of thinking or behaving, aspects, objects and symbols "that are wildly well known or favoured by many people" (p. 7); it is considered a culture that originates in people. Edensor (2002) describes it as dynamic: it changes from one generation to another. In other words, the mass media could transfer to people common aspects from popular culture, but there might also be some aspects that are more popular to some people than others.

One student identified a popular radio show and its role in reminding her of her national identity, and another identified a popular song that also reminds her of her national identity. Apart from these very few pleasant experiences with the mass media, all of the students regarded television programmes and channels as having a negative impact on their national identities and their peers' national identities as well. They expressed their concern for local television programmes and channels and the messages they send to young Emiratis. The students explained that mass media such as TV channels should play an active role in promoting national identity or important national messages, however, what they experience is that the mass media in the UAE do not

support the case of national identity; instead they do the opposite by promoting notions and topics that conflict with Emirati cultural values. In his study of the impact of global media on cultures, Wang (2008) explains that because of the globalisation and internationalisation of the media, national cultures might be undermined. Other studies also describe similar concerns (e.g., Schlesinger, 1991; Shor & Yonay, 2010; Wheeler, 2000), findings here are similar to those from other contexts. What makes the impact of the mass media so profound is that, as Edensor (2002) argues, the mass media is part of everyday experiences; therefore, even if people avoid it, it can still transmit messages that might affect people's shared values, their everyday culture and understanding of national identity. In the same manner, the students view television programmes and channels as something unavoidable that will affect the national identity of young Emiratis.

The concerns of the students are not unexpected; in fact, they share their concerns with others surfacing more lately across the UAE, especially those raised by Emirati scholars, as more of them are now voicing their concerns of the impact of the globalised mass media and its effect on Emirati cultural values (Salama, 2013). Those scholars are concerned that more TV channels and other media means are promoting cultural notions that conflict with Emirati ethnic and Islamic values (Salama, 2013; Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). Therefore, the mass media appears in the stories as one of the sub-contexts for affecting students' cultural attachments and interaction with cultural symbols and creating unpleasant experiences of national identity.

In conclusion, cultural symbols play an active role in creating several experiences of national identity. The students appear to have built sentimental bonds with culture; in fact, in the stories of three of the students, the proportions of sentiments were the largest compared to the other two

elements in their context of cultural attachments. In most cases, cultural symbols convey several meanings that affect the students' understanding of their roles towards their culture and as Emirati citizens. Across the stories, the students appear concerned about losing attachments to culture and identified this as negatively influencing their national identity, and if it continues it would damage all their connections and understandings of their national identities. In this case, the students were not only concerned about themselves, but also about their peers. Smith (1991; 2010) explains that having a common culture is a feature of nations, a feature that provides people with social and psychological functions. It provides them with sentiments of belonging and at the same time provides them opportunities for socialisation and experiencing social membership in the national community. Therefore, when the students fear losing their cultural attachments, they fear the loss of what connects them psychologically and socially to the UAE.

5.3 The role of political symbols

In addition to the cultural symbols, findings show that the four students experience their national identities through interacting with political symbols such as Emirati leadership figures, history and the national flag of the UAE. Compared to the rest of the contexts, the context of political understanding had the smallest percentages in all the stories. Results demonstrate that the students' political understanding is limited to specific political symbols, and their discussions in the stories do not go beyond that. For instance, none of the students recalled or brought up anything about the UAE Federal National Council, whose members are responsible for reviewing the Constitution of the UAE, reviewing and approving new federal policies, and advising the Ministers (FNC, 2011). In the past, members of the Federal National Council were

selected by the Government; however, in 2006 the UAE experienced a major political and civic change when the first elections were held and people were invited to elect and vote for the first time (Salem, 2013). Despite the importance of this change, the students did not mention it or refer to it in their stories. Findlow's (2000) study of Emiratis' nationalism and national identity included similar conclusions: she found that the students she interviewed were not able to explain their citizenship responsibilities from a political perspective, and that their explanations were limited to describing them culturally.

In the history of the UAE, Emiratis' involvement in civic roles began after the federation, mainly when the Government invited them to take part in the development of the new country through education and employment opportunities (Al Qassemi, 2009). However, their involvement in political roles was absent until the first elections of the Federal National Council in 2006. Prior to that, the only political responsibility required from Emiratis was to be loyal citizens (Al Qassemi, 2009; Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). Therefore, perhaps because of their limited exposure to political roles, the students' political understanding appears limited in their stories. Regardless of that, the few political symbols the students identified are significant in their experiences of national identity, and have a major impact on their understanding of themselves as citizens. The next sections will discuss the symbols in detail.

5.3.1 Emirati leadership figures

The first type of political symbol all the students identified is the figure of Emirati leadership. The students describe their leadership figures as their role models who guide them in representing their national identity, making decisions and adhering to their culture. The

significance of the findings here is that each student has a personal attachment to one or more Emirati leader figures, including former leaders such as Sheikh Zayed, or current ones such as Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid and Mohammed bin Zayed. This is not the case in other studies: for instance, Hawkins (2010) presented an extensive study of Tunisian leadership figures: he discussed how they were featured in Tunisian currency for a long time, and how this assisted in making people, especially the younger generation, aware of their former and current leaders. However, his findings showed that, unlike the four students' attachment to Emirati leaders, the undergraduate students in Hawkins's (2010) study could not relate to their leaders on a personal level, and their connections did not go beyond knowing who they were by name.

There is an important difference between the four students and the undergraduate students in Hawkins's (2010) study. Hawkins (2010) selected students who completed many history classes prior to participating in his study and were able to recall extensive details about the Tunisian leadership figures. The four students, on the other hand, did not do any history classes, and apart from the history they learned in schools, read about or learned from discussions with family members and friends, they did not appear to have detailed knowledge of Emirati leaders, Emirati history or its political context. Nevertheless, unlike the Tunisian students, they were able to relate personally to their leaders. Other reasons that could affect this include the fact the Tunisia is larger and older than the UAE, and has been experiencing political changes recently. In this case there might be many leadership figures, and although undergraduate students might relate to some leaders, this attachment will not be similar to strong attachment in this research study.

The most important finding in relation to the political symbols is the personal attachment the students built with figures of leadership. There are so many reasons that could explain this: first of all, Emirati leaders have always adopted an approach of connecting themselves to people. It is common to see Emirati leaders reaching out to the people on many occasions and in different places. Emirati leaders are observed in schools, universities, agencies from both the Government and the private sectors, and even in shopping malls (Al Qassemi, 2009). Since the early years of the federation, leaders in the UAE have worked on building a relationship with people and ensured that people see them not only as leaders but also as partners (Al Nahyan, 2009). Emirati leaders use national and cultural occasions to convey messages to people about being proud citizens who are willing to work hard for the UAE and, as in other countries with similar contexts, always to be proud of their culture and national identities (Al Nahyan, 2009). They communicate with people through different means: for instance, several Emirati leaders interact with the community through social media. Just recently it was announced that Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid, the Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has reached more than two million followers on his Twitter account, and has become one of the world's most active leadership figures on social media (Al Khaleej, 2013; Sambidge, 2012).

Three students have described how reading what Emirati leaders share and discuss in social media such as Twitter and Facebook affects their national identities, and encourages them to work harder and think about their roles as Emirati citizens. In this case, social media is another form for imagining the nation and experiencing Anderson's (2006) imagined communities. In his research of social media in the Arab World, Ghannam (2011) describes that when leaders interact with citizens in social media this increases transparency, and creates a more "vibrant

civic life built around a clear understanding of rights and duties” (p. 7). This was the case in this study: not only did the students imagine their nation through interacting with leaders in social media, but also they become more aware of their roles, rights and duties and what is expected from them.

In addition to communicating to the community through social media, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid and Sheikh Sultan Al Qassemi, ruler of Sharjah, have also reached to the community through publishing books about the past and the future of the UAE. Two students have identified their books, in addition to books written by other Emirati authors, as a means for experiencing their national identity. While reading these books, they learn more about their national identity, imagine the UAE, and think about their roles as Emirati citizens. This is similar to how Anderson (2006) describes the role of printed language: a method for making people imagine their nations and their national identity. Thus, these books not only teach them about their national identity, but also create opportunities for them to experience sentiments of belonging and national pride.

The impact of this model of leadership, of reaching out to people on the students’ experiences of national identity, can be explained using Ibn Khaldun’s (1967) description of the tribal model of leadership and Smith’s (1991) ethno-symbolism. First of all, Ibn Khaldun (1967) explains that reaching out to masses and engaging with them in face-to-face communication are common characteristics in tribal societies where building a group feeling is important for the continuity of the society. He also demonstrates that in tribal models of leadership tribal obligations become personal obligations. In their stories, the four students have become heavily influenced by their leaders’ expectations, and they consider them as personal expectations at the same time; hence,

following these expectations has become an everyday reality. It is important to highlight here that the small population of Emiratis in the country has facilitated this leadership approach, and it made it easier for Emirati leaders to reach out to people. According to Colomer (2007), in small nations leaders are more capable of reaching out to people and spreading nationalism. Perhaps this would not have happened if the population of Emiratis were larger.

In Smith's (1991) ethno-symbolist nationalism, leaders use different national and political symbols to unite people's national thinking and sentiments, and to make sure that people are working collectively on building the nation. Leaders in the UAE follow this approach by inviting Emiratis to be part of nation-building and providing them with opportunities to do so. This was also evident in the stories; the four students aspire to obtain future positions that allow them to be part of the development of the UAE and to serve the UAE effectively. Smith (1991; 2010) emphasises the role of people as active, not passive, members in the process of nation-building; he stresses that nations that do not create opportunities for people to experience that and realise their roles are at risk of ceasing to exist as nations. In fact, both Smith (1991) and Ibn Khaldun (1967) emphasise that members of societies need to be provided with opportunities to practise being members and to experience their sense of belonging.

From a symbolic interactionism perspective, the four students receive meanings of national identity from their interactions with leaders or from any symbols that represent Emirati leadership figures. These interactions convey national meanings to students: they make them view Emirati leaders not only as political leaders, but also as role models and partners in the process of nation-building. The UAE Vision 2021 stresses that building a society in the UAE is

done through allowing Emiratis to take part in the process of development and plan for their own progress (UAE Cabinet, 2010; UAE Interact, 2010). In addition, the Emirati code of conduct and values states that Emiratis should obtain education and then contribute to the UAE through working with competence and proficiency (UAE Cabinet, 2013).

It is important to highlight that among the Emirati sheikhs, it was Sheikh Zayed who the students felt attached to more than the others. They spoke of him with love, gratitude, respect and pride, and regarded him as the father of the UAE and of all the Emiratis. It is expected for the students to make this connection with Sheikh Zayed; as discussed in the literature review it was Sheikh Zayed who initiated the federation and who was behind ensuring that all the sheikhs agreed to the federation (Al Qassemi, 2009). Because of that as well as his significant role in building the modern UAE and his contribution to the Arab and Islamic worlds and internationally, he is considered one of the most important leadership figures in the history of the modern Arab world (ECSSR, 2004). Therefore, the students consider him as the creator of the Emirati national identity, and emphasise on the importance to follow his steps in achievements and contributions.

The students' accounts and descriptions of Emirati leaders were mostly positive; the stories did not include any negative aspects such as unpleasant sentiments or conflicts with Emirati leaders or leadership approach. Even in the cases of negative experiences of national identity, none of the students linked them or even attempted to link them to Emirati leaders or their leadership approaches. In addition, only two students mentioned the recent political incident in the UAE of arrest of members of a secret regime. Earlier this year, the Government of the UAE announced the arrest of members of a secret regime in the UAE, which demanded political reforms in the

country (Al Muaini, 2013). Globally, this news was faced with negative perceptions, and the Government of the UAE was publicly criticised for that (Minegar, 2013); however, the only two students who mentioned it expressed their deepest support for whatever decision the Government in the UAE makes on this matter.

There are three factors that could explain the positive attitudes of the four students towards leadership in the UAE. First of all, since the federation, the Government of the UAE has adopted several projects and modifications to provide Emiratis with better life opportunities (Al Qassemi, 2009; Asaeed & Sharab, 2012; Findlow, 2000; Peck, 1997). One of the major changes that influenced Emiratis as an impact of the federation was the expansion of education in the UAE. Hence, the number of Emirati students seeking higher education opportunities has been increasing over the years in the UAE. For instance, since 2008, the number of Emirati students enrolling in higher education programmes has increased by 10% (KHDA, 2013b). This change in particular has affected the four students personally; it was evident in the stories that the four students were grateful for their education opportunities, they appreciate these opportunities and value their education. As undergraduate students, this is one of the major reasons why they have developed a positive attitude towards leadership. Some of them kept referring in their stories to the fact that students in other countries might not have similar opportunities. Another related factor is that the students did not experience the earlier stages of the UAE before the federation: during this phase there some political conflicts because of the British colonisation and because of some disputes between some Emirati sheikhs; in some cases, some of these conflicts and disputes were violent (Al Qassemi, 2009; Rugh, 2007). The students, on the other hand, grew up

through a phase of union, solidarity and rapid changes that affected their lives and their families' lives positively. This must have affected their attitudes towards their leaders.

The last factor that could be attributed to their positive attitude is the nature of the tribal context in the UAE and its impact on the students. As explained earlier, in tribal societies, leaders spent time strengthening the group spirit and the group alliance; in order to do that they engaged in face-to-face communication and they increased people's opportunities to take an active role in ensuring the continuity of their society (Ibn Khaldun, 1967). In such contexts, like the UAE, people build strong alliances to their group, and they value their group relationships; therefore, even when experiencing political changes or conflicts, they assume supportive attitudes of their leaders, and believe that following the group and the group leader is important for the public good. Rugh (2007) explains that accepting membership in tribal societies means accepting obligations of reciprocal support: members support their rulers, and rulers provide members with the resources they need in their lives. When members of such societies feel that their resources are being threatened, only in these cases might some of them question their loyalty to and alliance with rulers (Rugh, 2007). Therefore, because the students did not experience such incidents of their education or of other aspects of their daily lives being threatened, they did not question the leadership approach in the UAE in any aspect. Ibn Khaldun (1967) highlights that even in cases of members of tribal societies feeling challenged by their rulers, the strong group relationships and group spirit in these contexts that underline most political affairs will affect most people and push them to support their leaders.

Because of this strong positive attitude towards Emirati leaders, the students saw themselves continuing what they started; they did not in any part of their stories view themselves as detached from their leaders. In fact, their attitude towards their leaders, which affected their personal objectives profoundly, was embedded in their everyday life. The leader figures not only created strong experiences of national identity, but also affected their academic and educational choices, which will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.5.

5.3.2 History of the UAE

History for the students was the national story that tells them about the rise of the UAE as a political community and a nation: they consider it a set of lessons all Emiratis should learn from and reflect on while thinking of their future objectives. They learn not only about the civic and political development of the UAE from history, but also about cultural heritage and traditions, and all aspects of their ancestors' ways of living. The importance of historical knowledge in restoring national belonging and memories, and in strengthening national thinking have been discussed in several research studies (e.g., Andrews, McGlynn & Mycock, 2009; Alkhozai, 2008; Khalaf, 2008; Trofanenko, 2008a; 2008b). Such studies suggest that historical knowledge and narratives connect people with various political, societal and cultural factors and create experiences of national identity. In these experiences, individuals process these factors, and as a result they redefine their national attachments and self-identify themselves with their national identity (Trofanenko, 2008b). In the same manner, the students discuss historical knowledge as an important tool that not only helps them in their national identity, but also assists them in having a secure personal identity. From the social representation theory perspective, history is another shared knowledge that connects the four students with the UAE: it allows them to

receive various national meanings, which in return make them feel that they are more connected to the UAE and want to continue the hard work their forefathers started.

According to Smith (1991; 2010) history is a feature of the nation that provides students with social and psychological functions. In fact, Both ethno-symbolism and perennialism as models of nationalism emphasise the role of historical collective memories in making individuals understand their destiny and their continuity as a nation (Hobsbawm, 1994; Smith, 2010).

Continuity, in particular, is an important national meaning that history as a political symbol conveys. This meaning also emerges in discussing leadership figures and in the previous discussion of cultural symbols. The significance of this meaning is that when processing it, the students link the political symbols of leaders with history; they see that the current leaders are continuing what the former leaders started, and then it is their turn to assist the current leaders in continuing the work. In this interaction, the students process two symbols at the same time, link them together and absorb meanings of national continuity, a concept related to their roles as Emirati citizens.

Although the students discussed history as an important political symbol, they did not demonstrate detailed historical knowledge. This finding is similar to Findlow's (2000) study of Emirati national identity: the undergraduate students involved in her study also did not demonstrate a detailed knowledge of history and the political development of the UAE. In their stories, the four students discussed history in general, and referred only to very few main historical events such as the federation of the UAE, and some events prior to the announcement of the federation. Also, as mentioned before, two students also discussed some cultural and

heritage practices as part of history, practices which people do not practise anymore. Regardless of their limited historical knowledge, the students were not confused or did not confuse historical events: their limited historical knowledge was generally realistic.

There are two reasons that could explain the limited historical knowledge of the students. One reason is perhaps due to their limited political knowledge. As mentioned earlier, Emiratis in general appear to have limited political roles; therefore, young Emiratis do not develop a deep historical understanding of the development of the UAE, and their opportunities to link such historical understanding with the political development of the UAE are limited (Findlow, 2000). In addition, in their discussion of cultural revival in the UAE, Asaeed and Sharab (2012) point out that there are no youth programmes in place that support youth's understanding of historical, political and civic development in the UAE. This might result in Emirati youth's not understanding how to reconnect with their national history. Although the students in this research study did not demonstrate detailed historical knowledge, they were able to relate to important historical events, such as the announcement of the federation and its impact on their lives. In this regard, they all explain that the story of the federation includes lots of lessons that should be shared with all parts of the community; they point out that this historical event reminds them of who they are, what their objectives are, and what they have to do to achieve them.

In their discussion of the federation the students move from describing a historical event to interpreting the impact of this event on their lives and its links with their personal objectives. Rusen (1989) explains that individuals build a historical consciousness by moving from simply accepting historical facts to being able to select historical events, place them in contexts, and

understand their moral reasoning. In the stories the students were able to reflect on the federation as an important historical event in Emirati history and think about its importance in their personal lives. They did this by interpreting not only historical facts they learn in school, but also what they learn from family and from listening to leaders. In their study of Irish students' historical consciousness, Barton and McCully (2005) point out that, as students grow, they start building their historical consciousness by drawing selective resources. Similar results were also discussed in Trofanenko's (2008a) study of American students' historical consciousness.

5.3.3 The national flag of the UAE

The students' experiences of national identity include interacting with the national flag of the country, not only as a political and national symbol, but also as a popular symbol from their everyday experiences. The role of national flags as more than political and national symbols has been investigated in political sciences (e.g. Billig, 1995; Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999).

According to Eriksen (2007), although flags are rich symbols with political connotations, and are commonly perceived as national symbols that represent the abstract notion of a nation, they can be perceived as more than political symbols, to represent not only nations, but sometimes also political standpoints. Billig (1995) and Edensor (2002), on the other hand, explain that flags create experiences of national identity in the everyday life. This is how the four students perceive the national flag of the UAE in their experience of national identity: it changes from a political symbol to a popular symbol that reminds them of the UAE in their everyday life. In their stories, they describe it as an object that mediates the relationship between them and the UAE.

Ibn Khaldun (1967) describes the impact of national banners such as flags as significant not only in presenting the concept of nationalism, but also in affecting people's representations of their roles as members of the nations. He explains that observing national banners reminds people of their roles in the community they belong to. Similarly, Eriksen (2007) explains that flags are political symbols that represent identity and national belonging: when people interact with them they experience national sentiments. Both Ibn Khaldun (1967) and Erikson (2007) provide an explanation for students' descriptions of their daily encounters with the UAE flag. They recall their sense of national identity when they interact with the national flag of the UAE: it reminds them of their roles, and also of their membership of the UAE. In most cases, interacting with the flag overwhelms them with sentiments of happiness, pride and gratitude. In other cases, it reminds them of their roles in giving back to the UAE, and being part of its continuous development.

Although political symbols in this study appear to be less complex than the cultural symbols, their impact in so many situations can be far more significant. In their research into political symbols, Schatz and Lavine (2007) and Pyszczynski et al. (2004) argue that such symbols connect individuals to far larger meanings and purposes: they represent the concept of belonging to a nation in a more direct way than other symbols. They also contain more powerful sentiments than other symbols, because, unlike other symbols, political symbols are clearly connected to the political community of the nation. Hence, they awaken strong sentiments of loyalty, national security and existence (Pyszczynski et al, 2004). As mentioned before, the students' political understanding appears limited compared to their cultural symbols, and their cultural attachments appear in the stories more strongly than their attachments to political symbols; however, the

meanings they receive from the political symbols (e.g. continuity, national determination, belonging, giving back, loyalty, pride and unity) appear to be more powerful in their experiences of national identity. Pyszczynski et al. (2004) explain that political symbols sometimes cause a blind patriotism - individuals being positive in talking about their nation and not allowing any kind of criticism, especially when individuals draw on selective knowledge of such symbols or on common perception. This is the case with the four students, as they are almost positive in discussing their attachments to their political symbols, and, apart from some unpleasant experiences, which were mainly with cultural symbols, the students did not have any negative unpleasant encounter in their experiences with political symbols.

It is important to note here that both the symbolic contexts of cultural attachments and political understanding sometimes interlink symbols, causing one to be both cultural and political at the same time. An example of this is an Emirati leader participating in a cultural celebration. In other experiences, one symbol could be cultural, political and an everyday symbol: in this case, it is part of three symbolic contexts, and hence it takes on more than one symbolic meaning. This process of symbols with more than one meaning occurs according to the experience and its significance to the student. In this regard, Andrews et al. (2009) explain that an influence of national identity is more prevalent in some experiences based on the meanings the individuals are receiving from the symbols, which was the case in the findings of this study. Therefore, the influence of experiences that combined symbols of more than one meaning was found to have a greater impact on their national identity. More examples of symbols with more than one meaning are discussed in Section 5.5.

5.4 The role of social interaction

This section discusses the findings of the fourth research sub-question about the role of social interaction in creating experiences of national identity. Social interaction emerges in the stories as the means the students use to experience their national identity. Apart from some individual types of experiences that mostly include the students and symbols that require little social interaction, such as noticing the flag, the majority of the experiences regardless of their symbolic contexts require social interactions. Results show that national identity experiences are social experiences in general that involve the individuals socially interacting with several symbols, and then receiving social meanings as a result.

One significant finding in the role of social interaction in creating experiences of national identity is that results also demonstrate that the role social interaction plays differs sometimes because of the type of the experience: some experiences were collective experiences, in which the students are engaged in interacting with others and experience their national identity with them collectively, and some were individual experiences that mostly included the students' interacting with symbols individually. In such individual experiences, students might be socially interacting with others; however, they experience their national identity alone.

Collective experiences are shared experiences, in which more than one individual is engaged in socially interacting with the same symbols in the same contexts, and each individual involved receives similar meanings and experiences similar sentiments and thoughts, and perhaps they all

decide together on a collective action (Sandstrom et al, 2010). The results of the research study showed that in such experiences, where the students are experiencing their national identities collectively with others (e.g. family members or peers), they might receive the same common meanings others are receiving as well, or they might receive meanings different from the meanings others are receiving. Sandstrom et al. (2010) explain that not all meanings in collective experiences are common across all members, most of them are shared meanings, but some members might recall meanings that are specific to them and to their personal lives.

Individual experiences on the other hand, are personal experiences, in which students are experiencing them alone even if they are socially interacting with others. In such experiences, an individual receives meanings from symbols, however, even if others who are involved with her/him in the same experience interact with the same symbols, the symbols might not have the same impact on them. Therefore, one individual encounters an individual experience (Mead, 1934; Sandstrom et al, 2010). In the stories, the students describe incidents of experiencing their national identities in class discussion or while walking in a shopping mall. Although these experiences are also social experiences in which others were there, and might have interacted with the same symbols, the level of interaction between the students and others was limited and allowed the students only to experience their national identities personally. For instance, in experiencing her national identity in classroom discussion, although Shamma was interacting with her peers and shared her thoughts about her national identity with them, it was what she was internalising personally that affected her mostly and created her experience of national identity. According to Jenkins (2008), the difference between the two types of experiences is that in the collective experience individuals develop a collective identification: they all find something

common among them, it might be real or imagined, but it bonds them together and leads to encountering experiences collectively. In the previous example of Shamma, even if some of her peers experienced the same, she did not interact with them to know if they had identified the same thing: hence this was not a collective experience.

The stories show that the students not only enjoy the collective experiences on national identity, but also seek them, and create them deliberately sometimes: for example, seeking the advice of parents or talking to friends about objectives and aspirations. In Shamma's story, she stresses the fact that her experiences of national identity changed drastically when she became separated from her friends. In general, according to Weber (1968) and Mead (1934), humans are primarily social actors who seek social experiences; moreover, research in political sciences demonstrates that the collective experiences of national identity are more common and have greater impact on people's national sentiments (Adler, 2012; Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Kedourie, 1994; Parekh, 2008; Wendt, 1994). In this regard, Hofstede (2001) divides societies into two types: a society in which individuals are expected to look after themselves and their families, and societies in which individuals are expected to be parts of groups, are loyal to them, and expected to work cohesively and collectively with group members.

Being raised as Emiratis in the tribal society of the UAE means that the four students were encouraged since childhood to act collectively with others. Therefore, despite the individual experiences of national identity that have affected them profoundly on a personal level, they always seek collective experiences that tie them to the rest of the UAE. In fact, in some experiences, although the students were describing individual experiences, it seems that they

have unconsciously removed the distinction between the individual and the collective experience. This was obvious in describing their role in giving back to the UAE. They were describing their individual roles; however, they viewed them as completing a collective duty. As Ibn Khaldun (1976) explained in tribal societies, the group boundaries become personal boundaries; hence, although the students are aware of the individual roles that link them to their collective national identity, they sometimes remove the distinction and experience their national identity as one collective experience.

The significance of experiencing both collective and individual experiences of national identity is that the students appear in their stories to be recalling meanings and symbolic representations they have learnt from other experiences, in other words, while experiencing national identity, students internalise the meanings they are receiving from the experience, but at the same time connect their new internalisations with old internalisations they have already learnt. This means that students reflect on their individual and collective experiences using previous internalisations. For example, the students were always thinking about what they experienced with their families or friends and the meanings they received from these collective experiences, and reflecting them on their personal objectives. Both Goffman (1959) and Mead (1934) emphasise that individuals as social actors are always engaged in internalising meanings from several social experiences: they use old internalisations to make sense of the new internalisations. In another study, Hogg et al. (2007) demonstrate that collective identities enable individuals to understand their individual roles and personal objectives, and to enable them to locate themselves in their social worlds. They explain that collective identities “provide individuals with validation they need to understand who they are, what they should do and what to believe” (p. 98). The same finding is

also discussed in McAdams's (2006) study of white Americans' identity: he shows that the personal stories of the participants include more than their personal stories. They actually reflect the collective contexts that affect their experiences, such as cultural backgrounds. Similar to the stories of the four students, those two studies also demonstrate that in certain contexts collective experiences are always linked with individual experiences.

In addition, Taylor (1997) explains that in certain contexts collective knowledge is so natural, and individuals do not consciously think about it. According to him, because the collective knowledge is embedded in the everyday life of the individual on a natural level, the individual experiences of national identity will have a more significant impact. Taylor (1997) shows that the vast majority of cultural and national experiences are more significant on the individual and personal level. The difference between Taylor's (1997) findings and the findings in this study is that, although the collective knowledge is strongly embedded in the students' lives, they were conscious about it, and aware that it connects them to the rest of the UAE. Even in some situations where they were experiencing their national identities individually, they linked their identities to their collective experiences as discussed above.

Another significance of the relationship between the students' collective and individual experiences of national identity, it is that it stresses that nationalism in the UAE is in fact not limited to interaction with political and cultural symbols, but is also strongly connected to a level of personal nationalism. Smith (1991; 2010) and Edensor (2002) explain that nationalism is linked to the roles individuals adopt and their view of themselves as active citizens, contributing to their nation in their everyday life. In the same manner, the stories describe the students as

living their national identity every day through thinking of their roles as citizens, family members and Emirati ladies.

One interesting example for understanding the relationship between collective and individual experiences of national identity is Khadijah's collective experience of national identity with her Emirati friends:

I experience my national identity with my Emirati friends. For instance, we sometimes go through some pressures from assignments and studying. In these situations, we remind ourselves of our objectives of working hard and giving back to the UAE and of our reasons for studying abroad.

Using Mead's (1934) and Goffman's (1959) perspectives in symbolic interactionism, one could view Khadijah's internalisation of meanings as related to her reasons for deciding to study abroad, and for choosing a difficult career path. She is processing the meanings she received from this collective experience to think about her own experiences of national identity as a student and as a citizen. Another example is in this short extract from Reem's story: "They encourage me to work harder and make sure that I meet my objectives," referring to her parents and their role in supporting her in her education to become a lawyer. She views her collective experiences with her parents as affecting her in her individual experience of national identity, which includes thinking about her objectives. Hence, the meanings she receives from her collective experiences of national identity with her parents are important: they are assisting her in self-presenting through her objective to become a lawyer.

To conclude, social interaction plays an important role in facilitating between the individual and collective experiences in the stories of the four students. The relationship between the collective and the individual experiences is a dynamic relationship in which each influences the other in social meaning construction and makes the students more aware of their national identities and their significance in their lives. The students use what they learn in their collective experiences to reflect on their individual experiences: by doing so, they connect their personal objectives with their collective experience of national identity.

5.5 Educational and career choices

The previous discussions show that national identity is connected to different aspects of the students' lives and is significant on different levels. At the same time, findings show that college life interaction constructs a symbolic context that includes many symbols and symbolic systems which create experiences of national identity. This section discusses the findings of the fifth research sub-question; it explores the impact of students' understanding of national identity on their educational and career choices.

There are many studies that explored undergraduate students' national identities and sense of citizenship (e.g., Andrews et al, 2009; Bruch, Higbee & Siaka, 2007; Collet, 2007; Hansen & Pedersen, 2012; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994; Phillion, 2008; Schatz & Lavine, 2007). These studies link the nature of the undergraduate college phase, which involves having to make important life decisions, to challenges students normally face in this phase, such as challenging their cultural or

national values. For example, Andrews et al. (2009) found that students' sense of citizenship and interaction with civic symbols inspire their sense of reasonability towards the welfare of their nations. Similarly, Lottes and Kuriloff (1994) concluded that college is an important phase in students' lives since it exposes them to experiences that shape their national values, attitudes and beliefs as young adults. Similar to these studies, the findings of this study demonstrate that the students were conscious about their national identity when making educational and career choices such as choosing an undergraduate major or thinking about a place for employment; hence, that their experiences of national identity have affected their decisions.

There are three aspects in symbolic interactionism that can explain the impact of national identity experiences on students' career and educational choices. The first one is the nature of the social context, where the social experiences take place: from a symbolic interactionist perspective, college life as context can be defined as an interactive context that includes multiple interactions and also involves playing several interactive roles. McCall and Simmons (1966) explain that interactions individuals are engaged in and the roles they play in their everyday lives change according to the nature of the contexts; in some contexts interactions are more complex and require interacting with several symbols. According to Kinney, Rosier and Harger (2003), what makes contexts like educational institutions complex is because in such contexts students are influenced by the interactive process of communication and interaction that takes place in these contexts. Choices, decisions students make and even their outcomes are not just a result of this context; instead they are a result of students' active interaction with aspects from their knowledge, understandings, values and beliefs which they gained from other contexts and use in their interactive roles and multiple interaction in this context (Kinney et al, 2003; McCall &

Simmons, 1966; Sandstrom et al, 2010). In their study of examining how undergraduate students make decisions in the UK, Moogan and Baron (2003) have described similar conclusions. They explained that undergraduate students examine expectations from the community, parents and peers when they make choices and decisions; therefore, when they are in college they make their choices based not only on what they see or interact with in college, but also on knowledge they have gained elsewhere.

One example to describe the complexity of this context is Reem's experience of national identity at college: there, Reem encountered both positive and negative experiences of national identity that involved several symbols. For instance, she was challenged because of choosing to wear traditional dresses, which was a negative experience. Also, Reem remembers her objectives to become a lawyer and serve the UAE whenever she glances at the flag on her college textbooks, which is a positive experience. The first experience connected her with her cultural attachments, and the other connected her with a sense of duty as a citizen. The two symbols in this example: traditional clothing and the flag, are both part from other contexts: cultural attachments and political understanding, but they also emerge in the context of college life interaction. Because college is an everyday experience for the students, it is expected that the students would interact with everyday symbols (e.g. clothing, flag). This makes college life interaction not only a complex context, but also a dynamic one that exposes students to several experiences which affect different aspects of their lives and their national identities. While many studies explored undergraduate students' national identities as seen above, most of these studies did not present college life interactions as an important symbolic context that is connected with other symbolic contexts to create more significant experiences of national identities.

The second aspect in symbolic interactionism that explains the impact of national identity experiences on students' educational and career choices is role-taking. As explained above, college life interactions as context are complex and dynamic and include the students playing several roles. In the literature review, role-taking was described as individuals interacting with symbols in social experience, and moving from playing one role to another based on the social rules and expectations of the experiences (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934). For instance, when Khadijah is interacting with family members in an Eid gathering (Eid is both a cultural and a religious celebration), it is expected of her to play the role of a family member and to show her ethnic identity: both roles are cultural roles. However, when Khadijah is in college interacting with other students from other parts of the world, she makes sure that she presents herself as an Emirati, adheres to culture, and shows seriousness and determination as a student. In this situation she is experiencing social meanings that are motivating her to play three roles: an Emirati citizen, a Muslim, and a hard-working student. Therefore, college life interactions emerge as a complex context with symbols and symbolic representations that affect the students' roles, and create experiences in which they play more than one role.

Symbolic interactionists explain that in dynamic contexts where individuals are directed to play more than one role, individuals "have the ability to respond to themselves in terms of how they think of themselves" (Sandstrom et al, 2010; pp. 117). According to Mead (1934), in such situations, individuals engage in a process of evaluating meanings of symbols and deciding on actions and choices. Therefore, when individuals receive multiple meanings from one symbol, or when they receive meanings from more than one symbol in the same social experience, they

evaluate the meanings and decide on which role to take. Here, symbolic interactionists emphasise the concept of identity salience; they consider every role to have a separate identity, and identities become active based on the level of their salience. For instance, in Alia's internship experience, she was offended when she saw that illustrations in Emirati children's stories did not represent Emiratis and Emirati culture properly; as a result, she decided that she would like to complete this project and change the illustrations to make them more appropriate. In this situation, Alia did not act as a regular student who is expected to focus on her assigned tasks; she changed from being a student to being a concerned Emirati citizen, which means her national identity had the greater salience in this experience.

Another example to understand the identity salience is Khadijah thinking about her undergraduate major in the medical school. She explains in her story that she spent time reading about some medical studies' choices to make sure that the choice she makes does not conflict with Islamic values. Similar to Alia, she changed from a student thinking about what to study at college, to an Emirati who adheres to cultural and Islamic values; thus, her national identity had the greater salience. There are other examples in the stories that demonstrate the impact of the national identity and its salience on students' career and educational choices. For instance, while choosing her undergraduate major, Reem had thought not only about her undergraduate studies, but also about her Master's study, and how it would enable her to better represent and serve the UAE. Shamma thought about areas of studies that lack Emiratis; she thought it important to show that Emiratis are skilful in several areas, and hence she chose to study a minor in psychology. This process of playing different roles and identity salience has influenced the students' experiences of national identity in college life interactions; as a result, the students

appear in their stories as being conscious about their national identities when making career and educational choices.

The third perspective is the process of defining symbols. Mead (1934) explains that in social experiences, in which individuals are interacting with several symbols, they engage in a process of redefining symbols in order to understand their meanings and organise their social process. For instance, when Alia reads a tweet by an Emirati sheikh about social solidarity, she experiences a sense of unity. But if Alia reads a tweet from the same sheikh about social solidarity and giving back to the UAE, she experiences a sense of giving back and working hard on her studies. In this situation, the same symbol (figure of leadership) conveyed two meanings, hence Alia redefined the meanings she received based on the situation, and connected the second meanings to her role as a student. Mead (1934) describes this as the process in which individuals make sense of the meanings they receive and think about what action to take. In their experiences of national identities the students redefine symbols, their meanings and their significance in order to understand what action or choices to take. Even when the students interacted with symbols of history (e.g. reading about a historical event in a book, or seeing a picture of one of the former leaders) and they experience a meaning of continuity, in some situations the students link this meaning to what they have to do as students: working hard, excelling and achieving objectives. Mead (1934) explains that this process depends on the significance of the symbols, because some symbols carry important meanings that are far more significant than others; even when individuals interact with them in different contexts they link them with their social experiences and in return receive profound meanings. Applying this to the previous discussion of the diverse community of the UAE points out that the conflicting

meanings the students sometimes receive in their experiences of their national identity is because of the significance of the cultural symbols.

Because they are undergraduate students, there were few career choices the students had to make in their stories. This mainly included choosing an undergraduate major in preparation for their future career, thinking about future employment options and internship choices. The educational choices they had to make were more varied: in addition to choosing an area of undergraduate study, the choices also included choosing a topic of an assignment, choosing what to answer in a classroom discussion, or participating in a college activity. Choosing to participate in activities in particular was one of the major choices that was influenced by their national identity experiences, as all of them appear in their stories eager to participate in activities that provide them with opportunities to present themselves as Emiratis (e.g. Reem choosing to participate in conferences), or that allow them to give back to the UAE (e.g. Alia using her creative skills in National Day's celebrations). In all of these experiences, the salience of their national identity was stronger: it influenced how they think and what to choose. Sandstrom et al. (2010) and Stryker (1980) emphasise that identity salience influences actions and choices individuals make in their daily lives; however, they also stress that some social contexts have greater implications because of the intensity of the communication and interaction they include.

Considering the meanings the students' receive from the cultural and political symbols, it seems that the meanings they receive from the latter type of symbols influence their choices more than what they receive from the former type. Across most of their experiences in college life interactions, meanings of loyalty, duty and continuity affected the students' choices significantly.

This finding is to be expected, especially that the findings of Section 5.3 demonstrate that, although the students' political understanding was limited, the meanings the students receive from the few political symbols they have identified were significant in their experiences of national identity. In addition, this finding demonstrates how the students were able to link their personal objectives with their nation's objectives following Ibn Khaldun's (1967) descriptions of nationalism in tribal communities. One important finding, however, with regard to the cultural symbols is that the students appear to be conscious about their representation as Emirati ladies adhering to culture even in college. Therefore, although the impact of cultural symbols on their choices was less significant, they did influence other choices such as clothing choices; this indicates that even in such minor choices the students' national identities were salient.

From the perspective of the social representation theory, the students made their choices through examining the meanings they received in relation to their common consciousness, which they share with other Emiratis. As discussed in the literature review, in the social representation theory individuals develop socially and psychologically in groups by building their understanding on their common and collective consciousness (Moscovici, 1984; 1988; 2000). The students examined their choices against meanings they received from some political and cultural symbols, which are both part of their collective knowledge and common consciousness, and they chose what they expected was acceptable in their group. The theory of social representation also shows that one reason why the national identity was salient while the students were making their choices is because, as discussed earlier, it is collective identity that links the students with the rest of the Emiratis and with their understanding of the nation in the UAE.

To conclude, students' understanding of national identity affects their educational and career choices, not only major choices such as choosing an undergraduate major, but also minor ones such as topics of assignments to write about and choosing a reference book. In their experiences of national identity in college life interactions, the students link their national understanding to their educational and career choices and personal objectives. Political symbols were found to affect students' educational and career choices directly; however, cultural symbols have a less direct role.

5.6 Definition of national identity

Using the previous discussions, this section explores the results of the first research sub-question: how Emirati female undergraduate students define their national identity. The findings of the previous research sub-questions indicate that the four students define their national identities through aspects of their everyday encounters and cultural attachments, and also from their political and civic understandings. In most of their experiences they were conscious of their national identity: it was salient mainly in their experiences at college, and it affected their choices.

Exploring youth's definition or understanding of national identity is hardly a new topic: it has been investigated for some time now, mostly because the fear of youth losing their cultural attachments and their connection with their national identities has been increasing because of the impact of globalisation (Blum, 2007). Examples of these studies are Li and Brewer's (2004) study of American national identity after 9/11, Hilaire's (2009) study of the impact of post-

colonisation on youth's national identity in Saint Lucia, and Greenwalt's (2009) study of French youth's national identities. These studies show that, although there are key aspects that youth use in defining their national identities, the significance of these aspects varies from one place to another. In addition, in certain places, youth might use other contextual factors to define their national identities. For instance, Hilaire (2009) found that language was an important key aspect in her study, Collet (2007) on the other hand has found that religious principles were important in Somali schools in Canada, where other studies (e.g., Hilaire, 2009; Li & Brewer, 2004) did not find that religious affiliations were important in youth's national identities. Therefore, giving the contextual factors, beliefs and the history of the country, key aspects defining youth national identity (e.g. religious values, language, cultural traits) could vary from one context to another.

The previous discussions demonstrate that students define their national identity using a complex model of symbolic systems and symbolic contexts, which vary from cultural attachments and values, beliefs, aspects of political understanding, and connections with personal objectives. Based on that, it can be summarised that the four Emirati undergraduate students define their national identity as shown in Table 20.

The first concept in their definition is that they define their national identities as both an individual and a collective identity. As discussed earlier, the students are aware that the Emirati national identity they carry is sometimes linked to what they do as individuals, planning their personal objectives, and sometimes as members of the nation in the UAE. These two types of experiences are inseparable from each other. The second concept in their definition is that their national identity is an everyday experience; the finding showed earlier that the students'

understanding of their national identity follows Edensor's (2002) and Billig's (1995) everyday nationalism, in which people are aware of their national identities as an everyday occurrence, and they experience them through interacting with symbols which they define as symbols from their everyday lives. It is important to note here that the historical development of nationalism in the UAE and current leadership initiatives emphasise that leaders in the UAE play a significant role in establishing national identity as an everyday experience.

Table 20: Definition of national identity

<p>It is an individual and a collective identity that is experienced every day through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holding onto cultural attachments that are rooted in Emirati ethnic culture and Islamic values and beliefs;• Acting and representing oneself as an Emirati citizen who adheres to duties, is loyal, and trusts Emirati leadership;• Setting academic and career objectives, working towards achieving them, and excelling professionally;• Believing in unity and working in harmony with other Emiratis with one spirit and with aspirations that aim to make the UAE a successful country and a long-standing nation.
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The third concept of their definition of national identity is holding onto cultural attachments: this concept is also similar to the third concept in the attributes of the Emirati national identity discussed earlier in the literature review (see Table 2 in Chapter 2). As seen from the findings, the students establish culture in their stories as an important source for their national identities.

The Government of the UAE has encouraged Emiratis to reconnect with Emirati culture and values through including them as major areas in both Vision 2021 and the Emirati code of conduct and values (Al Bayan, 2013; UAE Cabinet, 2013; UAE Interact, 2010). The fourth concept of their definition of their national identity is presenting themselves as Emirati citizens who live up to the expectations of others in ways such as showing loyalty, trusting leadership and fulfilling civic duties. The findings demonstrate that across the different symbolic contexts the students are conscious about representing themselves in the expected way. This concept is similar to the first concept in the attributes of Emirati national identity (see Table 2), and is also supported by Vision 2021 and the Emirati code of conduct and values; both documents also stress civic and political aspects, and the necessity for Emiratis to live up to the expectations of the community (UAE Cabinet, 2013; UAE Interact, 2010).

In another study of citizenship in the UAE by Kanna (2010), he also found that young people, mainly from Dubai, define their national identity as being extracted from both their cultural and their civic understandings. It is important to note that the only two models of nationalism that emphasise the necessity of the three aspects (cultural, civic and political aspects) in national identity are ethno-symbolism and everyday nationalism. Even though the analysis of the previous historical development of nationalism in the UAE (Table 1) shows that nationalism in the UAE includes traces from the five models, it is clear that the current phase of nationalism in the UAE is mostly ethno-symbolist and everyday nationalism.

The fifth concept of their definition deals with their role as students; as discussed earlier, students' experiences of their national identities affect their roles as students. The sixth concept,

on the other hand, highlights their roles as members of the nation in the UAE; this concept is similar to the second concept in the attributes of the Emirati national identity (see Table 2). Those two concepts, and also the fourth concept, explain the different roles the students play in their experiences of their national identities. The categorisations and conceptualisations the students make in their social interactions assist them in alternating between the roles that are expected from them. The concept of role-taking demonstrates that the national identity of the four students is a fluid type of identity: the students connect and reconnect with aspects in their everyday experiences at different levels and in different ways based on their preferences.

Another reason for building a fluid national identity is because there is no one type of nationalism in the UAE; nationalism in the UAE includes aspects of modernism, ethno-symbolism, perennialism, everyday nationalism, and even traces of primordialism. This diverse context of nationalism in the UAE has made the students' national identities fluid identities that allow them to shift from one type of experience to another, or from one role to another in a dynamic approach. In their study of the fluidity of Irish national identity, Todd et al. (2006) define fluidity in national identity as being able to transfer from one role to another in national identity, and the ability to make one role take over the whole identity when needed. Onorato and Turner (2004) also explain that in social experiences individuals have the ability to form their roles at different levels of abstractions and fluidity; they can shift from personal roles to social roles, and they can shift the focus of their roles based on the context. In the same manner, the students freely transfer throughout the day from one role to another in their everyday experiences and they are conscious about what is expected from them.

The concept of fluidity in social experiences that involve interacting with several symbols and in the interactive process of role-taking is not new (Sandstrom et al, 2010). However, the significance of the finding here is that it is not only the dynamic process of transferring from one role to another or the symbolic interactionist process of interacting with symbols that establishes the fluidity of the students' national identities, but also the everyday nature of the students' national identity. The reason for that is because the everyday experience of national identity as seen from the results is embedded in different aspects of the students' lives and reflects a wide spread of their understanding of their identities, social expectations, national values and their roles in all of that. Thus, when role-taking and interacting with symbols are combined in everyday experiences of national identity, and in a dynamic context of nationalism such as the UAE, the fluidity of the national identities of the students becomes richer and stronger. Findings of other studies that examined youth national identity such as Kanna's (2010) and Findlow's (2000) studies have dealt with the experience of national identity as a process that occurs in segments, not as a dynamic and everyday process as in the findings of this study.

Because the findings support the three attributes of Emirati national identity, this indicates that the students are carrying meanings of national identity that have been transferred to them from their families and people around them, and perhaps from previous generations and from Emirati leaders. However, although the students appear content and happy with leaders in the UAE, and with the several initiatives they took recently, the four of them are also extremely concerned about the impact of the changes occurring in the UAE on their national identities, and also about Emirati youth national identity in general. For instance, Alia talked about the changes that are occurring in the UAE:

Our life has changed completely, and there are so many factors that influence our values and our national identity.

As discussed above, although, Khadijah maintained a positive story regardless of the challenges she might have faced as international student, she also pointed out how she has to be aware of what is happening around her:

I make sure that I'm aware of everything around me, and that I do not get influenced by strange customs.

Shamma also compared modern Dubai with other places in the UAE, expressing her concern for the materialistic life many Emirati youth are living in Dubai. Such examples indicate that, regardless of the overall positive experiences of national identities which the stories describe, there is also a general concern about what is going to happen to national identity in the UAE. Therefore, the students attempted to build positive overall stories of their identities; occasionally they let go of some negative experiences, which perhaps they planned to conceal. According to Goffman (1959), individuals often engage in putting performances that convey what they think others want them to do. Sandstrom et al. (2010) agree with Goffman (1959) and explain that individuals have many reasons for trying to put in such performances. It is perhaps due to their sense of national identity that the students attempted to build such positive stories; as seen from their results the students are conscious about their responsibility to present their national identity in the expected way. Therefore, they might have felt the need to maintain positive stories, thinking that sharing negative experiences might show them as ungrateful or irresponsible.

Recent research done by the United Nations identified the UAE to be the happiest country in the Arab world (WAM, 2013). Similarly, another research done by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai indicated that 15-year-old students in Dubai were the happiest compared to their peers globally (KHDA, 2013a). These findings point out that perhaps the students in this research study demonstrated having a positive national identity because they are in fact happy and content with being citizens in the UAE. Moreover, as identified by OECD (2011), wealth and well-being, in addition to feeling safe and secure are all important measures for happiness and developing a healthy self-concept and positive civic attitudes. Therefore, living in a wealthy country such as the UAE and having a high level of well-being, safety and security (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012; Mustafa, 2012), will also affect their self-concept and contribute to being happy and having a positive national identity.

5.7 Limitations

There are four limitations in this research study. The first limitation is methodological, the second one is related to the scope of the research, and the last two are related to the findings. The first methodological limitation is concerned with the participant selection technique. Because they were selected through a snowballing technique, some of them knew each other and had similar collegial experiences. This perhaps resulted in causing some common patterns in their experiences of their national identities. Therefore, the findings are limited to the choice of the participants and the higher education institutions they come from. In addition, at certain parts of the study, the students were only sharing selective knowledge and perception, which also limited further analysis.

Secondly, the data collection methods were not designed to explore students' cultural and political experiences. The purpose of using them was to investigate how they experienced national identity culturally and politically; both political and cultural aspects of the experience were approached in relation to the experience of national identity only. Therefore, only cultural and political symbols, attitudes and understandings related to national identity, and which the students were conscious of, were addressed and explored. In certain parts of the study, addressing these elements might be limited because they were only discussed within the context of national identity.

Thirdly, the limitation of the participants' choices affects the study's potential to make generalisations, although findings showed that there were several common themes across the stories, especially in the key findings that ethnographic methods have been developed to produce (Brewer, 2000). Despite that, opportunities of generalisation in this type of study remain limited because of the participant's choice. In addition, because the experience of national identity was explored here with four participants using narrative inquiry design, this limited the potential of the research study to make an overall theory of the experience of national identity in the UAE. Further investigation is need to successfully build a theory.

Finally, given the process and the technique of selecting the participants, it is important to emphasise that the findings of the research study, and particularly the definition of national identity, are limited to the experiences of national identity of the four students. In addition, as mentioned above, because of the research design, purposes and methodology, it cannot be

generalised to all young Emirati females in the UAE. There were some similar patterns among the stories; however, there might have been other factors that made the experiences similar which perhaps were not explored in this study, such as family background and university choice.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, and then addresses four recommendations. The first recommendation discusses the theoretical implications in identity studies in the UAE. The second one suggests improving higher education curricula, and the third addresses the lack of cultural strategy in the UAE. Finally, the last recommendation discusses the need for further research in Emirati youth national identity, and links it with international research in identity studies.

6.1 Summary of findings

The main research question aimed to explore social interaction and its role in experiencing national identity among female Emirati undergraduate students. Results showed that social interaction was the means for communicating the meanings of national identity, without social interaction, the experiences of the students would have been limited. They would not have been this significant in connecting several aspects from the students' lives, and would not have affected their sentiments, thoughts and actions. Social interaction is the medium that facilitates the experience, and provides opportunities for them to think about their actions within the situations or attitudes they build for the future. It conveys meanings of culture and political

understanding, and it is through social interaction that the students imagine the nation and realise their role in the larger community of the UAE.

The second and third sub-research questions examined cultural and political symbols, and their roles in experiencing national identity. Findings show that students experience their national identities through interacting with a number of cultural and political symbols. The cultural symbols are very significant in the experience of national identity, as they convey important meanings such as modesty, belonging and pride. The political symbols which the students identified in their stories also convey important meanings such as loyalty, pride and continuity. Both types of symbols play an active role in making the students understand their roles as students, family members and citizens. Compared to the cultural symbols they identified, the students identified lesser number of political symbols, however, the impact of the political symbols on their experiences was found significant. In general, the students linked these symbols and their understanding of their national identity with several aspects of their everyday lives.

The last sub-question investigates the relation between experiencing national identity and its impact on what educational and career choices the students make. As students, the participants link their national identities with several aspects of their college experience, and one of the most important is linking their personal objectives with their duty as Emirati citizens. Hence, when making educational and career choices the students are usually thinking about the UAE, and whether they can give back to the UAE in whatever they are doing.

In light of the above, it can be concluded that the students define their national identity as an everyday experience that ranges from individual to collective experiences, and that involves holding onto cultural attachments and representing oneself as an Emirati citizen in all cases. Their definition also includes planning objectives, pursuing them and excelling professionally. In addition, it states the importance of working in harmony with rest of the people in the UAE. The student experiences of national identity connect students' past with their present and future, which allows them to define their roles and understand social expectations. The students' definition was found to include the attributes of the Emirati national identity, which means that meanings of national identity have reached the students from several resources and parts of the community.

Finally, findings demonstrate that, in their experiences of national identity, students relate to aspects from ethno-symbolism and everyday nationalism more than other types of nationalism. In some parts of the stories, they relate to other types such as modernism and perennialism; however, they mainly interact with cultural and political aspects in their experiences, which are emphasised from ethno-symbolism and everyday nationalism. The historical development of nationalism in the UAE also shows that ethno-symbolism plays an active role in developing Emirati national identity.

6.2 Theoretical implications

The findings of this study show that the synthesis of symbolic interactionism and social representation theory is a better model for exploring Emirati female undergraduate students' national identity experiences. It assisted in linking individual and collective experiences together in the four contexts. Both perspectives assisted also in linking the symbolic systems with the symbolic contexts and their impact on the social representation of national identity. As discussed previously, since cultural and collective attachments are very important in the UAE, this is expected to affect Emiratis and their identity development. The stories showed that the students were thinking about the UAE and their contribution as members most of the time: they identified their personal sense of nationalism through their collective understanding, formed their national identity based on that, and linked it with their individual experiences.

The above discussion indicates that in contexts like the UAE, where the collective experience of national identity has a significant impact on individual experience, and both are synchronised most of the time, a theoretical model that recognises this strong relationship between the two experiences is needed. This model should be holistic and address the complexity of national identity. It is holistic because it should combine both types of experiences, and it should address the complex systems of symbols that create rich experiences of national identity and generate profound social meanings.

Table 21: Suggested theoretical model

- Individuals experience their social identities through individual and collective experiences;
- Collective and individual identity experiences are inseparable and integrated, they occur in parallel and they influence each other;
- Collective experiences occur when individuals socially interact with significant aspects from their collective culture and shared knowledge;
- Internalisations generated from collective experiences influence individual identity experiences.

As shown in Table 21, this suggested model should emphasise that both collective and individual experiences are always connected, and affect each other. This model also focuses on individuals' ability to draw on aspects from both experiences whenever needed and use this to feed their social experiences. It is a dynamic model that acknowledges the several aspects affecting social identities in contexts with rich collective and shared knowledge such as the UAE. Using other common social psychological theories such as symbolic interactionism and social representation theory was a great asset in this study; however, if the combination of these theories is not further developed to create enhanced models that address the uniqueness of societies like the UAE, this might limit future research potential to understand other aspects that affect national identity development and the experiences of Emirati youth.

6.3 Higher education curricula

As discussed in the literature review, one of the government initiatives to support youth national identity is offering an Emirati studies course as a mandatory in undergraduate programmes. The findings of this research suggest that the framework of the Emirati studies should incorporate both political and cultural dimensions of Emirati national identity. In order to maximise Emirati youth, including young Emirati females and males' opportunities to better understand their national identity and their sense of citizenship, Emirati studies should be designed as a comprehensive educational programme that emphasises all significant factors affecting Emirati national identity, and should not only focus on some of them.

Such incorporations are not limited to Emirati studies; in fact, all undergraduate curricular and extra-curricular programmes should be reviewed to ensure that cultural and political themes that are essential to youth national identity development are incorporated. Higher education leaders in the UAE should emphasise the inclusion of curricular aspects that respond to Emirati students' needs, academic programmes that are dismissive of the Emirati students and their needs should be revised. Having higher education programmes that meet the social developmental needs of Emirati students and focus on national identity would be effective if such programmes were to run in alignment with the current national governmental initiatives.

The results of this study also complement the Emirati code of conduct. If the Government in the UAE is planning to put the Emirati code of conduct to better use, then higher education leaders in the UAE should ensure that a more comprehensive framework is designed to guide faculty members in the UAE in order to use it more effectively. Otherwise, this code of conduct remains

a stand-alone document that only lists expectations, without clear guidance of milestones, action plans and monitoring plans that assist in achieving and meeting these expectations.

What is important to highlight here is that complementing higher education curricula and youth programmes in the UAE with the code of conduct, and building better means for applying them to meet the needs of Emirati youth is in fact very challenging and complicated. The main reason for that is that research studies on higher education programmes in the UAE show that such programmes are yet to fulfil their roles in preparing young Emiratis with strong understanding of their identity, and capable of competing in competitive world (Fox, 2007; Wagie & Fox, 2005). The second reason is that research on Emirati youth remains limited, which means that such new initiatives might not be evidence-based.

6.4 An Emirati cultural strategy

Despite several cultural programmes initiated and conducted by government agencies across the UAE, there is no clear cultural strategy or cultural policy in the UAE that promotes national identity or addresses cultural needs, which disadvantages youth in the UAE, and limits the potential of such programmes (Asaeed & Sharab, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to initiate a cultural strategy in the UAE that governs cultural programmes and initiatives, and ensures that they meet the needs of Emirati youth. This strategy should be designed to meet the needs of young Emirati females and males. In addition, it should be a comprehensive one that focuses on Emirati values, incorporated from Emirati culture, societal and social features. Learning from cultural strategies of similar countries might help in planning; however, if the chosen cultural strategy is not determined by Emirati values as core themes, this strategy might fail to nurture a

healthy national identity among young Emirati females and males and their families. Designing and implementing such a strategy will be challenging, because similar to what was noted in the previous recommendation research in this area is limited.

6.5 Further research

The scope of this research was limited to the female students; if there were more students from different contexts, there could have been more variations in the results. It was important to begin this research study following a qualitative approach in order to understand the topics and themes that are associated with experiencing national identity. These themes and topics can be utilised to design an instrument to be used in exploratory studies of Emirati youth experience of national identity involving more students. Designing such studies would have been impossible without first understanding the related topics and themes. Therefore, in order to take this study further the next step is to use the findings in designing more quantitative and qualitative instruments that target focused areas in national identity, and use them with more Emirati undergraduate students from a wide choice of universities from all the Emirates, and from both genders.

It is important also that future studies address the factor of the Emirate as an important aspect in experiencing national identity. The students of the study were all from Dubai; however, Emiratis from other Emirates could have emphasised other aspects in their experience of national identity. National identity and youth civic understanding have become major concerns for many countries around the world. In fact, there are now large-scale international assessments that examine youth civic understanding (Amadeo, 2002).

In the stories, the four students seem to have been on their personal quests for imagining and experiencing their national identity. The image of the UAE and their sense of national belonging are things they carry with them everywhere they go. It is something they cannot be separated from, and they experience it with several people around them. It could be said that they are making what Sheikh Zayed once said an everyday reality: 'I have given you identity, now it is your time to face the challenges and put your fingerprints on the global map' (Al Menshawi, 2012, p.40).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Informed consent form

Dear Student

The purpose of this research study is to explore how you experience your national identity. This will involve studying cultural and political symbols and meanings and their impact on your national identity. The research study will include interviews and participant-observations.

In the participant-observation you will be asked to work on producing a concept map of your national identity. Here, you will list important aspects related to experiencing your national identity, and address connections and links between them. In this session, I will be asking for some clarifications whenever needed. There will be two participant-observation sessions (one hour each). Upon your request, a pilot session with the concept map could be arranged.

Interviews will follow the participant-observation sessions. There will be three interviews (one hour each). The purpose of the interview is to review aspects emerged in the participant-observation sessions, discuss them, clarify them and emphasise significant elements. The first interview will focus on the experience of national identity in general, the second one will focus on cultural and political experience of national identity, and the third will focus on the impact of your national identity on your experience as a college student.

Only your first name will be used in the research to identify you, you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without any penalty. All research sessions be recorded using an MP3 recorder. Data will be kept confidential, and will only be used for the research purposes. The research study will start in January 2012.

If you agree to participate please sign below confirming your participation.

Participant's name:.....University:.....
Major:..... Year:..... Age:.....

I agree to participate in this research project

Signature:..... Date.....

Appendix 2: Self-reflection report

Before conducting this research, I wrote this report to outline all the bias I might bring to the study. This report explains what I think and believe should be part of the Emirati national identity.

Self-orientation

Building an understanding of how they stand as nationals between past, present and future. They should understand how the vision of leadership in the UAE is rooted in the history of the country, give examples of how the Founding Fathers established the base for development, examples of important events in the history of the UAE, and reflect this understanding on their roles as members of the community and on their roles in the future.

Culture

Understanding that the UAE's culture is founded on Islamic values, Arabic language and a rich heritage. Islamic values and principles guide them as individuals in facing challenges, and finding solutions to social and economic problems. Understanding the importance of maintaining Arabic language as part of the nation's values. Celebrating the richness of the Emirati heritage, understanding the importance of keeping a link, and giving examples of figures in literature, arts and poetry.

Political contextual understanding

Understanding the role of the GCC, and the brotherly and strong relationships that link the UAE with the rest of the GCC countries. Understanding the international standing of the UAE, giving examples of international achievements and international events in the UAE. Appreciating the role of diversity and multiculturalism in enriching their experiences and their understanding as global citizens.

Active citizenship

Displaying an understanding of being citizens, belonging to a nation, sharing rights and duties, adhering to ethics, respecting laws and displaying loyalty, linking these aspects at the same time to their roles as students, family members and individuals belonging to a community. Displaying an understanding of the sense of belonging to other groups, having a social awareness, and a sense of responsibility. Linking their understanding of being active citizens with the role of the UAE in supporting other countries.

Appendix 3: Interview guides and descriptions

Appendix 3A: Interview I guide and description

	Question	Type of question	Description
1	What comes to your mind when you think about national identity (images, symbols, memories, words)?	Typical grand tour question	To explore the mental manifestations of national identity in general and to collect patterns of aspects and elements related to national identity experience.
2	What creates your national identity?	Typical grand tour question	To describe all aspects that create national identity.
3	What does it mean to have a national identity?	Typical grand tour question	To explore meanings and significance of having a national identity.
4	When do you experience our national identity?	Experience question	To discuss occasions that create experiences of national identity.
5	Can you give me an example of special occasions where you experienced your national identity?	Example question	To discuss examples of specific occasions that create experiences of national identity.
6	Where do you experience your national identity? Can you give me examples of places where you experience your national identity?	Experience question	To discuss locations that stimulate experiencing national identity.

7	From all of these places and times, where/when is your experience of national identity strongest?	Example question	To discuss specific locations that stimulate experiencing national identity.
8	Who/what makes you experience your national identity?	Experience question	To discuss figures that influence experiences of national identity.
9	In locations and occasions when you experience your national identity, how can you describe this occurrence? What do you feel and think? Do you share your thoughts with others?	Experience question/ typical grand tour question	To explore the experience of national identity, with all its related aspects.
10	How do you represent your national identity?	Typical grand tour question	To explore how students present their national identity in social contexts.

Appendix 3B: Interview II guide and description

	Question	Type	Description
1	What kind of cultural symbols are linked with your national identity?	Mini-tour question	To identify cultural symbols and their role in experiencing national identity.
2	How do they influence your national identity?	Mini-tour question	To identify cultural symbols and their role in experiencing national identity.

3	Are they important to your national identity?	Mini-tour question	To explore the significance of cultural symbols in experiencing national identity.
4	Are some of them more important than others?	Mini-tour question	To explore the significance of cultural symbols in experiencing national identity.
5	What kind of meanings do the symbols develop in your experience?		To explore meanings and representations of cultural symbols.
6	Can you experience your national identity without cultural symbols?	Specific-tour question	To investigate the significance of cultural symbols.
7	Is there any one or two symbols without which your identity would be seriously damaged?	Typical grand tour question	To investigate the significance of cultural symbols.
8	Is there a role for history in experiencing your national identity?	Specific grand tour question	To investigate the role and significance of history in experiencing national identity.
9	If I ask you to define the history of the UAE, how will you define it?	Typical grand tour question	To investigate the role and significance of history in experiencing national identity.
10	Do you think the political context of the UAE affects your national identity?	Specific grand tour question	To investigate the role and significance of the political context in experiencing national identity.

Appendix 3C: Interview III guide and description

	Question	Type of question	Description
1	How does your national identity affect you as a student?	Specific grand tour question	To explore the impact of national identity on students' experience.
2	Does your national identity affect your choices?	Mini grand tour question	To investigate the impact of national identity on choices students make.
3	Does it affect your decisions as a student?	Mini grand tour question	To investigate the impact of national identity on decisions students make.
4	Does your national identity motivate you to follow certain attitudes? What are they?	Mini grand tour question	To explore the impact of national identity on students' attitudes.
5	Do you feel strongly about some of these attitudes more than others?	Example question	To explore the impact of national identity on students' attitudes.
6	Does your national identity restrict you from following certain attitudes? What are they?	Mini grand tour question	To explore the impact of national identity on students' attitudes.
7	Aside from attitudes, does your national identity affect you in other aspects in your life? What are they?	Mini grand tour question	To explore the impact of national identity on other aspects of life.

8	If you don't experience a national identity, will you still make the same choices and decisions?	Experience question	To investigate the impact of national identity on decisions and choices students make.
9	Does your national identity influence your objectives?	Mini grand tour question	To investigate the impact of national identity on student objectives.
10	What about your future objectives?	Mini grand tour question	To investigate the impact of national identity on student objectives.
11	Does your national identity educate you about your rights as a citizen?	Mini grand tour question	To explore the impact of national identity on students' understanding of citizenship.
12	Does your national identity educate you about your duties as a citizen?	Mini grand tour question	To explore the impact of national identity on students' understanding of citizenship.

Appendix 4: Concept maps

Appendix 4A: Alia's concept map

Photo 1:

Date: 13-2-2012

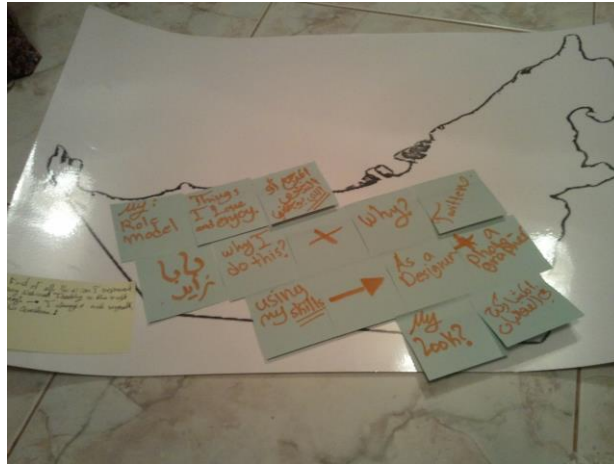
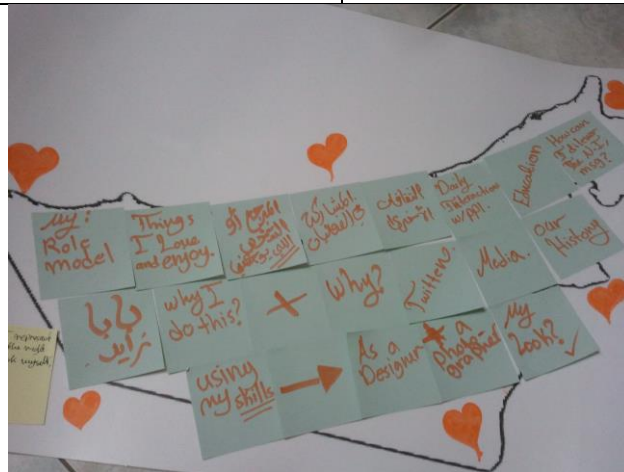




Photo 2:

Date: 25-2-2012



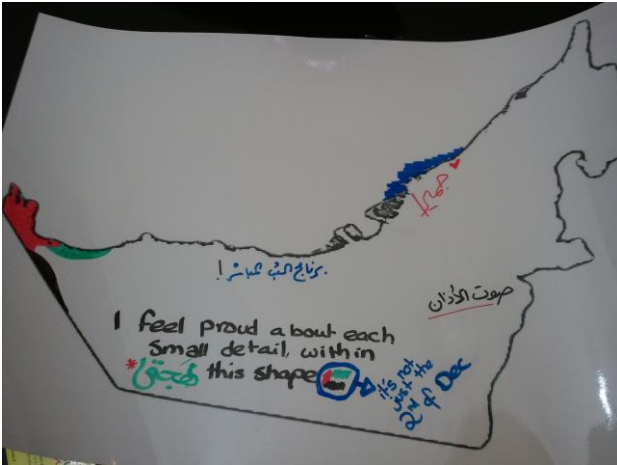

Appendix 4B: Khadijah's concept map

Photo 1:	Date: 15-6-2012
	
Photo 2:	Date: 29-6-2012
	

Appendix 4C: Reem's concept map

Photo 1:	Date: 10-2-2012
Photo 2:	Date: 19-2-2012

Appendix 4D: Shamma's concept map

Photo 1:	Date: 2-1-2012
	
Photo 2:	Date: 13-1-2012
	

Appendix 5: Samples from field notes

Appendix 5A: Samples from English field notes

<p>Sample 1: Participant-observation I (Khadijah)</p> <p>Khadijah started writing on the map immediately. She was writing at a normal speed. She did not stop to think, only a few times. Sometimes she would stop to correct something she had written. In general, she was ongoing and only stopped a few times.</p> <p>At the beginning, Khadijah made this list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteering• With friends in Ireland (Bahrain, China, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Ireland, Canada)• During studies• Sometimes on Twitter if I read something about the UAE or we had a discussion• Discussions with family• Presentations + attending national celebrations in Dublin• Figures remind me of my national identity:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Some of my friends (Fatma, Wafaa, Khulood)○ Yasser Hareb○ Jamal Al Shehhi○ Sheikh Zayed• A+ → proud• Reading <p>When she finished writing, she looked up and said: I'm ready to talk about what I have written. She started: the first point I wrote was volunteering. I think we should all do some kind of volunteering. I think we should all give something to the country without waiting for something in return. Of course, there will be something in return because if you volunteer you develop you skills, but I think it is important to be convinced that we should give something back to the country without waiting for something in return. I put it at the top of the list because it is one of the things I like.</p> <p>Do you mean that when you volunteer you feel that you are serving the country?</p> <p>Yes, I serve the country through volunteering, and I also feel loyal towards the UAE when I do that.</p> <p>Talk about the volunteering work which you have enjoyed the most.</p> <p>The volunteering work I have enjoyed the most was a blood donation event with a group of volunteers from Dubai. My job was to collect data about the people interested in donating their blood. I was collecting data from a guy, he was an elder man from Syria. It looked like</p>

he lived in the UAE for a long time, and he was about to go back home. I asked him if he had any surgery, and he said yes. I told him that we could not allow him to donate his blood if he had surgery. He said: but I'm going back to my country, and I want to give something back to the UAE. I worked and lived here 10 years, and I'm going back now. I want to leave something for the UAE. I loved his attitude and was touched by this person, who lived in the UAE for a long time and felt grateful.

Sample 2: Participant-observation II (Alia)

Alia started by reviewing her previous work. She spent some time observing, reflecting and revising her work. She was in deep thought and focused. Then she started working on her map, and she added these new points (in order):

- 1) Daily interaction w/people
- 2) Media
- 3) Our history
- 4) Other cultures
- 5) Education
- 6) How can I deliver the N.I. msg?

She spent some time adding these points on her map. She wrote the new thoughts on Post-it notes and organised them so that they were connected to each other and to the points she wrote before. Then, Alia stopped writing and said: I feel that I have written everything I want, and I'm ready to talk about what I have written.

I asked what she meant by the first point: daily interaction. She said: Through my daily interaction with people I represent my national identity, hence I live it and experience it. Maybe the interaction is short or simple, despite that I might represent my national identity and live it. I have to be aware of what I'm doing in my interaction with them, because they will learn about my country, about Emiratis and about my national identity through my interaction with them.

Do you remember a situation that you went through and felt that you were representing your national identity in your interaction with someone?

I do not remember a situation I went through personally, but we always hear about how someone interacts with another person from a different nationality, and this person does not treat him very well. This results in building a wrong impression about people from that nationality, and generalise it.

Sample 3: Interview I (Shamma)

- 4) When do you experience your national identity?

When I participate in university activities or when I present research projects, and different assignments. It is not necessary that they are linked to national identity, but when I do something similar and I feel that I have learnt something that could help me in the future in serving my country I experience my national identity.

Can you provide me with an example?

In a psychology class, I worked on a project which included distributing a survey. I collected the data within two days, wrote the results and submitted the project before the deadline and got an A. I learnt a lot from this project and it will benefit me in my life and in my work in the future.

Can I say that when you learn something good in your classes, this makes you think that you have learnt something that will help you in the future and make you more able to serve your country?

Yes. I love to do all of my assignments and to finish and complete them perfectly, even when I'm pressured because of so many deadlines. I love to live every assignment, and I work on all of its details, so that I can learn as much as I can, and benefit from it in the future.

Sample 4: Interview II (Khadijah)

3) Are they important to your national identity?

Yes, they are very important to my national identity. If we lose these things, we will lose the symbols that make us experience and express our national identity. Moral aspects could exist, but we need materialistic aspects also to live and express our national identity.

4) Are some of them more important than others?

I think clothing is the most important symbol because it is the thing that highlights national identity the most. I do not wear Abaya in Dublin, so the thing that affects my national identity and makes me live it every day is my Shaila.

5) What kind of meanings do the symbols develop in your experience?

Clothing and Shaila in particular are linked to Islam, when I wear them I feel that I belong to Islam, and Islam is the official religion of the UAE. Social gatherings plant inside the importance of communication and social attachment in the UAE's society. In the end, I feel that all these things show loyalty to the UAE. As for food, it might not have a big impact, but when I taste Emirati food, it reminds of life in the UAE.

6) Can you experience your national identity without cultural symbols?

I do not think so. As I mentioned, having them is important to live and show my national identity at the same time.

Sample 5: Interview III (Reem)

2) Does your national identity affect your choices?

Recently, I was asked to choose to participate in a conference that was held in GCC country and the other was in Korea. I chose to participate in the one in Korea, because there, I will be given a bigger role in representing the UAE, whereas if I choose the other one, my opportunity to represent the UAE will be big too, but I will not have a big role, since it is in a GCC country close to the UAE, and I assume most of the conference visitors there know about the Arabian Gulf and the UAE.

The second reason for choosing the conference in Korea is because there are still so many people who do not realise that Arab countries have developed a lot and made lots of achievements. There are still many stereotypes that Arab countries are not advanced, have not achieved anything, are not modern or civilised. I think my chances to meet such people in non-Arab countries will be more. There, I will have another big role in representing my country, educating people about the progress and the achievements we made. In general, I love to participate in such conferences.

This is in addition to what I mentioned before about my choice to wear traditional dress in Ramadan regardless of all the comments I receive, because I think the traditional dress is linked to my culture and affects my national identity.

Appendix 5B: Samples from Arabic field notes

Sample 6: participant-observation I (Khadijah)

بدأت خديجة بالكتابة عن الخريطة على الفور، كانت تكتب بسرعة معتدلة، و لم تتوقف للتفكير إلا قليلاً، كانت في بعض الأحيان تقف لتوصيب بعض ما كتبته، و لكنها لم تكن تتوقف كثيراً، بشكل عام كانت منطلقة في الكتابة في البداية، كونت هذه القائمة:

- Volunteering
- مع الأصدقاء في إيرلندا (البحرين، الصين، السعودية، عمان، الكويت، ايرلندا، كندا)
- أثناء الدراسة
- أحياناً في تويتر إذا قرئت شيء عن الامارات و لا تناقشنا
- حلقات نقاشية و يا الأهل
- البرزنتيشن + حضور المناسبات الوطنية في دبلن
- شخصيات تذكرنني بالهوية الوطنية
 - بعض صديقاتي (فاطمة، وفاء، خلود)
 - ياسر حارب
 - جمال الشحي
 - الشيخ زايد

- A+ → proud
- القراءة

بعد أن انتهت خديجة من الكتابة، التفتت و قالت أنا مستعدة الآن للحديث عن ما كتبته، و بدأت بالحديث و قالت: كانت أول نقطة كتبتها هي التطوع، أعتقد بأننا جميعاً يجب أن نقوم بنوع من التطوع، أعتقد بأننا جميعاً يجب أن نقدم شيء للوطن بدون أن ننتظر المقابل، طبعاً يكون هناك مقابل من ناحية أنك عندما تشارك في التطوع فإنك تطور مهاراتك، و لكن أعتقد بأنه من المهم أن يكون لدى الشخص القناعة بأنه يجب أن يقدم شيء للوطن بدون أن ينتظر المقابل، لقد وضعت في بداية القائمة لأنه من أكثر الأشياء التي أحبها.

هل تصدين بأنك تحبين التطوع لأنك تشعرين و أنتي تطوعين أنك تخدمين البلد؟

أجل أنا أقوم بخدمة البلد من خلال التطوع و كذلك أشعر بشعور الولاء تجاه البلد.

تحدثني عن أكثر عمل تطوعي استمتعت فيه.

أكثر عمل تطوعي استمتعت فيه كان المتعلق بالتبرع بالدم، مع مجموعة متطوعي دبي. كان دوري في هذا التطوع أن أجمع بيانات الأشخاص الراغبين بالتطوع بدمهم، و كنت مع أحدهم أجمع بياناته، كان رجل سوري كبير في السن، و يبدو أنه عاش في الامارات فترة طويلة و هو الآن على وشك العودة إلى بلده، سألته إن كان قد قام ببعض العمليات الجراحية سابقاً، فقال نعم، فقلت له لا نستطيع أن نسمح له بالتبرع إذا كان قد قام بعملية جراحية، فقال: و لكنني عائد إلى وطني، و أريد أن أقدم شيئاً لهذه الدولة، لقد عملت و عشت فيها عشر سنين و أنا الآن عائد إلى بلدي، أريد أن أقدم و أن أترك شيئاً لها، أحببت هذا الموقف كثيراً تأثرت كيف أن هذا الشخص الذي عاش في الامارات لفترة طويلة و يشعر بالامتنان لها.

Sample 7: Participant-observation II (Alia)

بدأت علياء هذه الجلسة بمراجعة ما كتبت سابقاً، و أستغرقت بعض الوقت في التأمل و المشاهدة و المراجعة، كان يبدو عليها التفكير العميق و التركيز، و بعدها بدأت بالعمل على خريطتها، و قامت بإضافة هذه النقاط الجديدة بالترتيب:

Daily interaction w/people (1)

Media (2)

Our history (3)

الثقافات الأخرى (4)

Education (5)

How can I deliver the N.I. msg? (6)

استغرقت علياء بعض الوقت في اضافة هذه النقاط على خريطتها، كتبت علياء النقاط الجديدة على الأوراق اللاصقة، و رتبته لتتصل مع بعضها البعض و مع ما كتبت سابقاً.

ثم توقفت عن الكتابة و قالت: أشعر بأنني كتبت كل ما عندي اليوم، و أنا مستعدة للحديث عما كتبت.

سألته عن الذي تقصده بالنقطة الأولى التي كتبتها: التفاعل اليومي مع الناس، قالت: خلال تعاملتي اليومي مع الناس، أنا أمثل هويتي و بالتالي أعيشها، و اختبرها، قد يكون التعامل قصيراً أو بسيطاً، و لكن بغض النظر عن بساطته أو قصره فقد أمثل فيه هويتي الوطنية و أعيشها، يجب أن أكون مدركة لما أقوم به خلال تعاملتي معهم، لأنهم سوف يتعلمون عن بلدي و عن أبناء شعبي خلال تعاملتي معهم، و سوف يتعلمون عن هويتي الوطنية من خلال تعاملتي معهم.

هل تذكرين موقفاً مررت به شعرت فيه من خلال تعاملك مع بعض الأشخاص أنك تمثلين هويتك الوطنية؟
أنا لا أذكر موقفاً مررت به شخصياً، و لكننا نسمع دائماً عن كيف يتعامل أحدهم مع شخص من جنسية ما مختلفة عنه، و لا يعامله هذا الشخص بأسلوب جيد، الشيء الذي قد يجعل البعض أن يبني صورة غير جيدة عن الأفراد من هذه الجنسية، و يقومون بتعميم ذلك.

Sample 8: Interview I (Shamma)

4 متى تعيش هويتك الوطنية؟

عند مشاركتي في أنشطة في الجامعة أو عند تقديمي لبحوث أو مهام دراسية مختلفة، ليس من الشرط أن تكون مرتبطة بالوطن، و لكنني كلما أقوم بشيء مشابه و أشعر بأنني قد تعلمت شيئاً قد يساعدني في المستقبل في خدمة بلدي فأشعر بهويتي الوطنية.

هل من الإمكان أن تشاركي بمثال؟

في مساق علم النفس، قدمت مشروعاً دراسياً بنيته على استبيان قمت بتوزيعه و جميع بياناته خلال يومين و كتبت النتائج و سلمت المشروع في وقت قياسي للاستاذة و نلت عليه درجة امتياز، أحسست أن هذا المشروع علمني الكثير و سيفيدني في المستقبل في حياتي و عملي.

هل بإمكانني أن أقول: بأنك عندما تتعلمين شيئاً جديداً و في مسافاتك المختلفة، فإن هذا يجعلك تفكرين بإنك قد تعلمت شيئاً سوف يفيدك في المستقبل و سوف جعلك قادرة أكثر على خدمة بلدك؟
أجل، أحب أن أقوم بكل أعمالتي الدراسية و أن أنجزها باتقان، حتى عندما أكون تحت ضغط كبير بسبب تراكم الأعمال، و لكنني أحب أن أعيش كل مهمة دراسية و أعمل على إنجازها لكل تفاصيلها، حتى أتعلم بأكثر قدر مستطاع و بالتالي أستفيد منها مستقبلاً.

Sample 9: Interview II (Khadijah)

3 هل تعتبر هذه الرموز الثقافية مهمة؟
أجل مهمة لهويتي الوطنية، أشعر أنه إذا فقدنا هذه الأمور، فأنا سنفتقر إلى الرموز التي تجعلنا نعيش هويتنا الوطنية و نعبر عنها في نفس الوقت، قد توجد الرموز المعنوية، و لكننا نحتاج إلى الرموز المادية كذلك لكي نعيش و نعبر عن هويتنا الوطنية.

4 هل بعض هذه الرموز أهم من غيرها؟
أعتقد بأن اللباس هو أهمها، لأنه أكثر شيء يبرز الهوية الوطنية، بالنسبة لي لأنني لا أرثدي العباءة في دبلن، فإن أكثر هذه الرموز التي تؤثر في هويتي الوطنية و تجعلني أعيشها بشكل يومي هو الشيلة.

5 ما هي المعاني التي تطورها هذه الرموز الثقافية خلال اختبارك للهوية الوطنية؟
اللباس و الشيلة على وجه الخصوص مرتبطة بالدين الاسلامي، فأنا أشعر عند ارتدائها بانتمائي للدين الاسلامي و الدين الاسلامي هو الديانة الرسمية لدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة، بالنسبة للمناسبات و التجمعات العائلية، فإنهم يغرسون في داخلي أهمية التواصل و الارتباط الاجتماعي في مجتمع دولة الامارات، في النهاية أشعر بأن كل هذه الأمور تعبر عن ولاء الفرد لدولة الامارات، بالنسبة للطعام قد لا يكون أثره كبير، و لكني أشعر بأنه حتى عند تناولي للطعام الاماراتي فإنه يذكرني بالحياة في الامارات.

6 هل تستطيع أن تختبر هويتك الوطنية من غير هذه الرموز الثقافية؟
لا أعتقد ذلك، كما ذكرت فإن وجودها مهم لكي أعيش هويتي الوطنية و أظهرها في نفس الوقت.

Sample 10: Interview III (Reem)

2 هل تؤثر على اختيارك؟
أجل تؤثر، عرض علي مؤخراً أن أختار بين المشاركة في مؤتمر في كوريا و مؤتمر في دولة خليجية، اخترت أن أشارك في المؤتمر الذي سيكون في كوريا، لأنني في كوريا سأحظى بفرصة مقابلة بعض الأشخاص البعديين عن الامارات و ربما لا يدرون عنها شيئاً، هنا سيكون لدي دور كبير في تمثيل الامارات، بينما إذا شاركت في المؤتمر الذي سيكون في دولة خليجية، فرصي في تمثيل بلدي ستكون كبيرة كذلك و لكن لن يكون لدي الدور الكبير، بحكم أن المؤتمر في دولة خليجية مجاورة للامارات، و أتوقع أن يكون معظم زوار المؤتمر على علم و معرفة بالخليج العربي و بالامارات.
السبب الثاني الذي يدفعني لاختيار المؤتمر الذي سيكون في كوريا هو أنه مازال هناك الكثير من الناس لا يدركون أن بعض دول الوطن العربي تطورت، و بأنها حققت الكثير من الانجازات، مازال هناك الكثير من التفكير النمطي عن دول الوطن العربي بأنها دول متخلفة لم تحقق شيئاً و لم تلحق بركب الحضارة و المدنية، أعتقد بأن فرصي لمقابلة مثل هؤلاء الأشخاص في مؤتمر يحدث في دولة غير عربية ستكون أكثر، و هنا يكون لدي دور كبير آخر في تمثيل دولتي و تعريف الناس بالتقدم و الانجازات التي حققتها، بشكل عام أحب المشاركة في مثل هذه المؤتمرات.

هذا بالإضافة إلى المثال الذي ذكرته سابقاً عن اختاري أن أرثدي ملابس تقليدية في رمضان رغم جميع التعليقات التي كانت تصلني، لأنني أعتقد بأنها مرتبطة بثقافتي و تؤثر على هويتي الوطنية.

Appendix 6: Story notes sample (Alia's story notes)

Activity	Time/ places	People	Society	Culture	Politics/ leadership	Symbols	Feelings/ thoughts	My life as a student
PO1	My NI is not linked to National Day celebrations only, but we live and experience our NI in different aspects of our lives. We demonstrate our NI in the way we behave, interact and deal with other people, in our actions and attitudes	<p>I think that everyone is now talking about NI because everyone is noticing that there is a problem with NI. But I think little action has been taken to address this issue.</p> <p>I think change starts from oneself, it is true that entities have a role to fulfil in maintaining NI,</p>		<p>It is important to have guidance in life, I consider my parents my source of guidance which I can't let go. They guide me in everything including my NI.</p> <p>I also consider some books I read as sources for my NI: My Vision, Sard Althat.</p>	<p>Sheikh Zayed is my role model, he taught us to love the country, and protect it.</p> <p>His quotes about working hard for the UAE's sake always impact me.</p> <p>The two books I read influence me a lot, because I learnt how important figures of leadership regardless of all</p>		<p>First of all how can I represent my national identity in the right way? I always ask myself this question when I see other people being influenced by external factors and do not know anything about their culture. I ask myself: why do I participate in</p>	<p>I can represent my NI from doing the things that I like, my hobbies. I like social network websites, I like discussing topics about our NI. I like graphic design & photography and I like to</p>

		but change starts from the inside.		<p>When I face a situation which makes me question some stuff, I consult with my parents looking for their guidance. If I don't do this, I might understand things differently, and they might be wrong.</p> <p>The way I look is very important for my NI, I think I should always look like an Emirati lady. I want people when they look at</p>	<p>the prosperity and progress they work for, they did not lose their attachment with the past and heritage, they didn't lose their attachment to their identity, and they want us to work for prosperity and progress but to never lose our attachment with our NI.</p> <p>Many leadership and society figures use social networks, now we started to know them better,</p>		<p>social media and designing posters? I remind myself that everything I do is to contribute to the development of the UAE.</p> <p>When I work on something related to NI I push myself to be convinced and aware of what I'm doing, I have to be sincere in what I'm doing. I don't do this because everyone is</p>	<p>work on designing posters for the university in the different activities that are related to our NI.</p> <p>Some students are aware of the issue in NI, some are not. Some instructors are aware and they point this out to students.</p> <p>My actions and</p>
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				<p>me to realise that I'm Emirati.</p> <p>Emirati ladies should always look a decent way that represents their culture and NI.</p> <p>Although we have become an open society, until now Emiratis do not fully accept Emirati ladies that are wearing indecent clothing, they look at them as offending their culture. I don't want to offend my culture.</p>	<p>we knew them from far before.</p> <p>I know Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed more, he started talking to people and sharing this thoughts, I like him more, all the different topics he discusses affects my NI, I now know him from a different perspective.</p>		<p>now talking about NI, but because I want to be sincere.</p>	<p>behaviour in the university, they way I deal with instructors and students reflects my NI.</p> <p>My interaction and participation in activities reflects my NI. Being an active student and an active member in the university reflects my NI, everything I</p>
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								<p>do in the university reflects my university.</p> <p>I feel I can be a role model in the university. Every little thing I do affects (design story).</p> <p>My studies are very important for my NI, it makes me experience and live my NI, and it will help me</p>
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								<p>to succeed in the future, which means it will provide me with better means to represent my NI, I think it will help me later to live my NI in its true meaning.</p> <p>My studies will help to give back to the UAE, giving back is very important. It is like it is a responsibility I carry and I</p>
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								want to fulfil it.
PO 2		<p>In my daily interaction with people I represent and experience my NI. Even if the interaction is short, but I might be representing my NI even in short interactions, and they might learn about my NI from this interaction.</p> <p>Some people leave negative impressions because of not</p>	<p>Media is important in promoting NI, I can see that most of our channels now talk about NI, we can send important messages there, but at the same time, sometimes I feel it is just talking with no action happening. I think responsible entities should adopt what is</p>	<p>The values I grew up learning from my family and culture protect my NI. We live in an open society with mixed cultures, interacting with people from different cultures made me understand myself more and understand my NI, all of this assists me in protecting my NI.</p> <p>I grew up in a multi cultural</p>	<p>History is important, knowing who we are and where we come from, who our ancestors were, if we know all of this we will know our identity, and we will live it deeply.</p>		<p>I get shocked when I see girls talking about NI and then doing something that is against our NI. In these situations I feel that I want to do something to change it. If they are friends or someone I know, I would talk to them.</p> <p>I can't say that I won't get affected, we are from the</p>	<p>My experience as a school student was different, we worked in representing our NI regardless of the occasion or the event. My friends and I participated in a photography exhibition, we decided that the theme of our exhibition</p>

		<p>interacting with people appropriately.</p> <p>Some girls talk about NI, but they don't speak in Arabic. I get surprised when see a girl dressed up in traditional clothing, but she doesn't speak a word in Arabic.</p> <p>It looks like they are used to not speaking Arabic.</p> <p>When I see some girls talking about NI, and then they do something that is</p>	<p>being said in the media.</p> <p>It should not be just talk, but a reality that we live.</p> <p>Sometimes the same channels that talk about NI promote ideas that disagree with our NI, they send wrong messages, especially to young people who spend a long time watching TV. This might create conflicts</p>	<p>society, the schools I went to had students from different nationalities. As Emiratis we learn to accept everyone, this became part of my NI.</p> <p>Education is important in promoting NI, I read that school textbooks in the UAE promote other cultures, especially in English textbooks. People talk about promoting NI from a young</p>			<p>same generation and we experience the same factors, but I try to protect my NI.</p> <p>The message of NI is important, it is the base for everything we are going to build ourselves on in the future. Other stuff also depends on it, so we have to convey it in the right way.</p>	<p>was to be about the UAE.</p> <p>The situation is different in the university, we became open to the world around us, and our thinking has changed somehow.</p> <p>We participate in different events in the university but not all of them are about the</p>
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		<p>against NI, I can see that there is a conflict.</p> <p>Young people get affected by the impact of the group, they end up imitating each other.</p> <p>I need to be aware of my NI, aware of my role in conveying it, because I might have to convey it to others like children in my family or to my peers.</p>	<p>within the family.</p> <p>There are many external factors that are challenging our NI: open society, media and social media.</p> <p>In the past people used to live a very simple life in the UAE, but they were proud of their religion, culture and identity. We live the opposite, we have everything</p>	<p>age, and textbooks and curriculum promote other cultures more than our culture. There is no problem in promoting other culture, as long as our culture is promoted too, and there is a balance.</p>			<p>Having to convey this message is part of my NI, I want to convey sincerely and faithfully (my younger siblings seek me when they face something or see something, and I have to guide them).</p>	<p>UAE, or our NI.</p> <p>I feel that our university doesn't promote heritage and culture that much, only on National Day.</p> <p>All my experiences of NI at school were positive, but it might not be the same in the university, because there are only a</p>
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			<p>but we don't feel the same.</p> <p>People from other cultures that live in the UAE affect us negatively and positively. We could learn from them by observing how they maintain their NI, and how they live it. It could affect us negatively if young people imitate behaviours that are strange to us and our culture.</p>					<p>few experiences.</p> <p>Not being able to have more activities about NI in the university is making me sad.</p> <p>The topics we work on are usually very universal. When we work on our assignments our instructors encourage us to use</p>
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								<p>western resources and stay away from Arabic resources. This upsets me because there are so many good Arabic and Emirati resources.</p> <p>University has an active role in building our NI, we learn there about having an open mind, and being aware of what is</p>
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							<p>happening in the world around us. But we don't engage in experiences that reinforce our heritage and NI in the university. Universities should create a balance between the two.</p> <p>In school we used to live our NI every day, in the university only on National Day.</p>
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<p>Interview 1</p>	<p>I experience my NI when I'm in places with many people from different cultures, and few Emiratis.</p> <p>I feel my NI very strongly on National Day, I feel happy enthusiastic, and the desire to work harder and raise the name of the UAE high.</p> <p>When I'm the only Emirati I don't feel very comfortable.</p> <p>When there are so many Emiratis I feel a sense of cohesiveness and</p>	<p>Lately, with all the political chaos around us, the UAE was verbally attacked. I felt so sad, because it was those who didn't live in the UAE, didn't see or experience what we did. This made me experience my NI.</p>	<p>There is some sort of shared spirit and understanding across the society, such as loving the UAE, and wanting to give back. When we interact with each other, we learn from other aspects related to NI.</p>	<p>Morals and the way we deal with people create my NI.</p> <p>Clothes and appearance create my NI.</p> <p>I learn morals and values from my parents and from the society.</p> <p>My parents make me experience my NI when they guide me, I consult with them on everything even when I know the answer. I received from them my first NI,</p>	<p>Having a leader as a role model creates my NI.</p> <p>Mohammed Bin Zayed makes me experience my NI, he is humble and loving when he deals with people. He is like a regular person, he makes me experience my NI, and makes me think how I want to interact with people in the same way.</p>	<p>There is a song that is played every morning on one of the local radio stations, I love it, it talks about how all Emiratis should serve their country regardless of their job or what they do, it makes me experience my NI intensely, makes me enthusiastic and want to work hard.</p>	<p>When I think about my NI, I think about the alumni project and other projects I'm involved in. I'm proud to work on such projects.</p> <p>When I think about my NI, I see pictures from the past, I see old people and children living in a neighbourhood.</p> <p>When I have a NI I can</p>	<p>Alumni experience: working on a project about reinforcing NI. I had to work hard to get accepted as one of the designers. I'm so happy and proud to be involved in this project. I will learn a lot, and would give back to the UAE.</p> <p>I experience my NI when I want to</p>
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	<p>belonging, even if I'm just there doing nothing.</p> <p>I felt my NI intensely on the 40th National Day, because I was the one who designed the posters and the invitation cards, which were sent to Sheikhs and other VIPs, and to so many different people and places. This made me happy and proud.</p> <p>At the same time I felt my NI so intensely during the 40th National Day because it was so</p>			<p>other things I learned later or other experiences might have deepened my understanding of my NI, but my parents remain the first source.</p>			<p>represent my country.</p> <p>Having a NI is important to guide me in my life behaviour, NI is everywhere and I can't remove it.</p> <p>Maybe when I'm in a place with few Emiratis I will need more guidance from NI, in these contexts I will experience my NI more intensely.</p>	<p>achieve something, or when I'm working on something, or when I want to reach something.</p> <p>I experience my NI when I face a challenge in my work.</p> <p>Internship experience: Stories project, I felt strongly that I should work on that project.</p>
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	<p>special and because everyone was celebrating at the same time, all members of the community, including non-Emiratis.</p> <p>I represent my NI when I interact with people.</p> <p>I have to be aware that I carry my NI with me all the time, I can't remove it.</p>						<p>When I experience my NI positively I feel happy, motivated to work and give, and think how I can do my work perfectly.</p> <p>When I experience my NI negatively I feel uncomfortable, unsafe, strange, upset and hopeless. I talk to my parents about my negative experience more than</p>	<p>I experience my NI at the university when we are discussing something about the UAE. When instructors ask, I talk to them about the UAE and explain to them.</p>
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							positive, I feel that in general we share the negative more than positive, and that we sometimes take the positive experiences for granted.	
Interview 2				<p>Clothing and local dialect, heritage, all heritage symbols make me experience my NI.</p> <p>If I wear something that is strange to my culture I don't</p>	<p>I didn't study history properly in school, when I joined the university I started reading about it, I started understanding UAE history more.</p> <p>History is important</p>	<p>Heritage symbols which we might see only in books make me experience my NI.</p> <p>Heritage symbols tell us the story of the past, and how Emirati culture</p>	<p>Knowing our heritage will make us know ourselves more, and will guide us in planning for the future.</p> <p>If I don't have heritage as a resource I refer to, I won't be</p>	

				<p>think that I can represent my NI.</p> <p>It is important that my clothing doesn't offend my culture and NI.</p> <p>When I speak in Arabic and in Emirati dialect I can represent my NI better.</p> <p>I care for Arabic, I believe that preserving Arabic is important for my culture and ID. If we don't preserve it, it will affect us negatively. I</p>	<p>because it teaches me about the different phases of development the UAE went through; challenges the UAE, its leaders and its people faced; and it also teaches me that heritage and history is an important source for NI, and it is a resource for learning about my history, present and future.</p> <p>The political changes around us make me feel that I want to</p>	<p>was founded. Heritage is a cultural treasure, we have to go back to it and study, it is part of our history, we can't leave and start from zero, it is our starting point. Sheikh Zayed said: if you don't have a past you don't have a present or a future. I believe in this saying, and believe it is important to hold onto heritage, it reinforces our NI. I'm proud of</p>	<p>confident, I will refer to sources that won't help me in anything.</p>	
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				<p>don't think I can convey something about my culture and ID in another language.</p> <p>Arabic and dialect make me proud of my culture, country, NI, they make me closer to my NI, they reinforce the sense of belonging in me.</p> <p>Clothing is the most important cultural symbol because it is linked to Islam, the importance of clothing comes</p>	<p>work harder to raise the name of the UAE higher, and make me realise that I live in a country that is ruled by wise leaders.</p> <p>In the UAE we love our leaders and are linked with them. Some, like Mohammed Bin Rashid and Mohammed Bin Zayed, are so loved by the people, that is why they affect them and their NI.</p>	<p>my heritage, and this makes me proud of NI.</p> <p>Heritage makes me love to know about the past, plants the importance of experience inside me. Heritage is collection of experiences our ancestors lived, they are important for our future. Heritage makes me understand that experiencing is important to know and learn. We can't achieve without going</p>		
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				<p>from more than one source.</p> <p>Clothing makes me feel responsible, I'm responsible for wearing something that will represent my NI and country in the right way.</p>	<p>Sheikh Mohammed Zayed influences me and my NI a lot, I'm affected by his words, I follow him on Twitter, he makes me feel enthusiastic and want to work harder.</p> <p>Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed mentioned once on Twitter that the UAE government wants to make Emiratis some of the happiest people in the</p>	<p>back to this source, which will make us understand life more. Heritage is not only what our ancestors used to do and practice, it is a collection of experiences we should benefit from.</p> <p>Heritage, language and dialect are all important symbols, I can't experience my NI without them.</p>		
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					world. Lately, a study on the happiest people on the earth was published and Emiratis were among them. I was affected and I realised how our leaders work for us, and it made me want to work harder and to present the UAE in the best way.			
Interview 3			<p>We live in a multi cultural society, my NI pushes me to protect my NI.</p> <p>My NI pushes me to accept</p>	<p>I choose clothes that represent my culture. I choose words that represent my NI.</p> <p>My NI makes me proud of my</p>			<p>Decisions I make have to agree with NI, I can't make decisions that will conflict with my NI.</p>	<p>In the university I try to be aware of my NI, and my responsibility for presenting my NI and</p>

			<p>other people and to care for the environment.</p> <p>My NI stops me from being unfriendly with people from other cultures and from not being social, I need to learn from others and allow them to learn from me. If I follow such attitudes they will affect my NI negatively.</p> <p>My NI pushes me to use social networking, I'm</p>	<p>culture, and to make sure that I present my culture in the different occasions.</p> <p>My NI pushes me to be extra cautious with clothing. There has to be a dress code in educational institutions.</p> <p>Clothing is the most important attitude.</p>			<p>I disagree with people saying that the issue of NI is overrated in the UAE, it is an important and serious issue.</p> <p>If I don't experience my NI in the same way I do now, I will be a different person. NI has a huge impact on my life, so I won't be the same.</p> <p>My NI emphasises my</p>	<p>the UAE.</p> <p>This is important so that I know how to interact in the different occasions.</p> <p>I go through negative and positive experiences in the university, I try to learn from the negative too, and to be more persistent on presenting the UAE in the best way.</p>
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			<p>a heavy user, and I have noticed that whenever NI is mentioned I get affected.</p>				<p>sense of belonging and loyalty, it pushes me to work harder, to have big objectives, and to work hard on achieving them.</p> <p>It will affect my future goals, I want to work on projects that encourage youth NI.</p> <p>My NI teaches me about my rights sometimes, for instance if I</p>	<p>In the career fair I preferred the booths that had more Emiratis, it is better for me to work in a place with more people who share my NI and values. In my internship I realised that this was not necessary.</p> <p>At the university, if I was given the option I would choose</p>
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							<p>choose to speak in Arabic this is my right.</p> <p>My NI makes me more open minded, makes me more aware, and pushes me to organise my priorities, therefore, it makes me more aware of things I have to do for the UAE, how I can serve the UAE better, and my NI will assist me to reach my objectives.</p>	<p>to do my projects on topics about the UAE, but the university does not encourage us to do so, often choices about the UAE are limited or very few.</p> <p>In my internship I chose to work on projects related to the UAE culture and NI.</p>
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								<p>Story project: I want to take over.</p> <p>My NI stops me from being lazy, it pushes me to work hard and to keep a fingerprint.</p> <p>I will graduate soon and this makes me think about my duty towards my country and my duty to word hard.</p>
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Appendix 7: the stories

Appendix 7A: Conveying the unspoken messages (Alia's story)

I have always felt that I'm responsible for conveying and sharing a national identity message. For instance, as an Emirati, I'm responsible for conveying messages to people around me about the UAE, Emiratis and our national identity, it is not necessarily that people hear these messages, sometimes I demonstrate them in my actions or attitudes. But first, in order to do that, I have to understand my national identity. I often ask myself how I can represent it in the right way, this is very important for me, because I strongly believe that part of having a national identity is representing it in the right way. I keep thinking about that all the time, especially when I see some of my friends diverting from their national identities. Sometimes I wonder if I might end behaving in the same way [diverting from my national identity]. Our life has changed completely, and there are so many factors that influence our values and our national identity. I can see that some girls and boys at my age have been affected by such factors, it made them divert from their cultural attachments, and adopt attitudes or even wear clothes that are not part of our Emirati culture.

Appearance, morals, interactions with people and having role models are all important parts of my national identity. My appearance should always tell people that I'm Emirati, it is one of the most important parts of my national identity. I always want to look like the modest Emirati lady who respects her reserved culture. I learnt morals and values from my parents, I often discuss with them different things, I ask them questions about my education and career aspirations, and they always guide me. They also teach me about my national identity, in fact I believe that I received my national identity from my parents.

In addition to my parents, I also learn about values from interacting in society. In every society, there is a common understanding and a shared spirit among individuals. For instance, in the UAE, we always talk about loving the country, and the desire to work hard for it. Therefore, through our interactions we learn from each other and acquire a common understanding that is linked to our national identity. In our society, we interact with people from different places and backgrounds, I'm responsible for presenting myself as an Emirati lady when I interact with those people. In these situations, I'm responsible for teaching them about the UAE and about Emiratis, I live and experience my national identity when I'm involved in doing so. Although globalisation has made some Emirati youth divert from their

Emirati culture, living in a diverse society taught me to accept all people, this has become part of my national identity.

When I go to some places and I'm the only Emirati there, although in such experiences I feel proud for being an Emirati, it does not make me comfortable sometimes. It is strange to be in your country, but feel lonely at the same time. I also experience my national identity when there are so many Emiratis, in these experiences I feel the cohesion and the sense of belonging.

Emirati leaders are role models who guide me in understanding my national identity. Sheikh Zayed is the one who taught us about loving the UAE, the importance of contributing to the country and protecting it. I recently read two books: 'Sard Althat', written by Sheikh Sultan Al Qassemi, and 'My Vision', written by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid. Those two books have taught me a lot about my national identity and made me experience it, I saw through their eyes how our leaders, despite all the modernisation and prosperity they aspire to, did not lose their connection with the history and heritage, thus, they did not lose their connections with national identity. I felt that they want to encourage us to always aspire higher but at the same time, keep connected with national identity.

One of the people I experience my national identity with is Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed. He represents his national identity when he interacts with people so naturally and humbly, it is like he is one of the public. I always think about the way I interact with people and how I can be like him. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed once mentioned that the UAE's government is determined to make Emiratis among the happiest people in the world. This happened later when an international study on the happiest people in the world was published, and it included Emiratis amongst the happiest. This has affected me a lot, because I realised the efforts our leaders put in order to make us live peaceful and happy lives. I do not keep up with political news a lot, but whenever I do I feel that I belong to a country that has wise leadership. I experience my national identity by feeling grateful and wanting to give more to the UAE.

Clothing, local dialect and cultural heritage are important cultural symbols in my experience of national identity, everything that is linked to cultural heritage, the things that still exist and we use them, or the things that have disappeared, and we only see them in books, they all make me experience my national identity. I feel proud and comfortable when I wear a traditional dress and speak in my Emirati dialect, I show and experience my national identity

through them. Clothing in particular is one of the most important cultural symbols because it is linked to Emirati culture and Islam at the same time.

Cultural heritage symbols tell us the story of the past and the beginning of the original Emirati culture, they are a part of our lives and our history; we cannot abandon them. Sheikh Zayed once said: if someone does not have a past, he does not have a future. I strongly believe in this saying, and I see how important it is to hold onto our cultural heritage, it strengthens our national identity and overwhelms us with pride. The more we understand our cultural heritage, the more we understand ourselves, and in return plan for a better future. The closer I am to my culture, the more I feel I'm part of the UAE, culture makes me feel that I belong to my nation.

I consider cultural heritage a collection of experiences lived by our ancestors, it is not only a collection of customs and traditions our ancestors passed on to us, it is a collection of experiences we should learn and benefit from. If I did not have this cultural heritage to refer to, I would not have been as confident and stable, I would have been hesitant and less confident. I might refer to a source, but it might not be linked to my national identity, thus, I would not receive proper guidance. Without cultural attachments such as Arabic, clothing and heritage, my national identity would be severely damaged, and I would not be as proud, in fact, in this case I would not care about my national identity.

In addition to cultural heritage, understanding history is important in my experience of national identity. The more I read about our history the more I understand myself, especially when I read about our ancestors and their simple life in the past. They lived a simple life, at the same time they were proud of their religion, their identity and their culture. We now live the opposite, we own everything, but we are not as proud of our religion and our identity

I'm also a regular user of social network sites, and I always make sure to include aspects about the UAE, or talk about the UAE in my networking. There are many leadership and society figures who are also regular users of social network websites. This made some Emirati leaders very close to the people, we used to know them from afar, but now we know them better. For instance, I did not know a lot about Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed, however, I now know him better because of his tweets, people interact with him, and he participates in different discussions. He often tweets about things we have to do as Emiratis, I know him in a different way, I feel that I belong to the UAE and experience my national identity through his tweets.

I think National Day is the biggest and the most important day for experiencing and living our national identity. The experiences I go through on this day overwhelm me with many emotions: I feel happy, enthusiastic, and I feel that I want to work harder and raise the name of the UAE high. At the same time, many people show their nationalism on National Day only. However, I think that national identity is an everyday experience, not experienced on National Day only. I experience my national identity when I interact with people, my behaviour, attitudes and actions are all linked to it. For instance, I represent my national identity through my interactions in the university, with students or professors, also through participating in the different activities and events, and through being an active member.

When I watch TV or read newspapers, I see that national identity has become a popular topic, people are talking about it and discussing its related concerns. But, I always feel that there is lots of talking but less action, I think that concerned entities should listen to the different messages sent through the media and try to make plans to support national identity. National identity should not remain as something we talk about, it should be a reality we live. What sometimes confuses me about the media, especially TV, is the fact that the same channels that host discussions about national identity are the same ones that air programmes that are in conflict with our national identity and Emirati values.

I recently read an article about education in the UAE, and that our textbooks promote other cultures more than promoting local culture, especially English language textbooks. Why do we not use Emirati culture and heritage topics as themes in these textbooks? I'm surprised how we talk about children's national identity and our textbooks at the same time promote other cultures more than Emirati culture. There is no problem in including other cultures and learning from them, but there has to be a balance between showcasing other cultures and our culture.

I disagree with people who say that the issue of national identity is overrated. I'm currently reading about Australia, which is a multicultural country. When someone receives Australian citizenship, he receives a document that explains to him all Australian values, and how he/she as a citizen can hold onto the Australian values that are attached to national identity. This made me realise that even other countries work on preserving their national identity. Therefore, the issue of national identity in the UAE is not overrated, instead it is an important topic.

Practicing my hobbies and doing what I like are ways of experiencing my national identity. For instance, I like graphic design and I always create designs that represent my nationalism. I enjoy creating posters for the different events related to national identity in the university. In the previous National Day celebrations I designed the advertising poster and the invitation card. I met some students who confirmed that they attended the celebrations because of the poster that attracted them. The card I designed was sent to some Sheikhs as well, which made me proud. When I work on such projects I make sure that I work hard and that I'm sincere in what I do. Currently I started working on a national identity initiative with one of the ministries. I'm happy that I'm participating in this initiative, it is a chance for gaining experience, at the same time I'm doing something for my country, especially that the selection of participants was difficult. The purpose of the project is to reinforce national identity positively through an interactive website. I have made seven designs in the selection period, and the seven have been selected. I felt happy, proud and honoured to participate in this project, I expect a lot from it, to learn and contribute to the UAE. Whenever I'm involved in such projects, I remind myself of the importance of what I do, and that my goal is to work for the UAE and present it to the world. I feel that everything I do is for the UAE, and this includes the different activities I participate in. I feel that with doing so, I'm a role model for others, even when I contribute in a small role.

I experience my national identity when I'm facing a challenge. In my internship, I was given a collection of short educational stories about the UAE. I was surprised to find that the illustrations in the stories do not truly symbolise the UAE or Emiratis, although it was aimed to do so. I spent a long time explaining this, I wished that this project was assigned to me, I would have fixed it and made it more appropriate.

Sometimes in class, our professors discuss concerns associated with national identity. I think that maintaining national identity starts from the individual him/herself, because change starts from the self. For instance, some of my classmates share their concerns about national identity, but they choose to speak in English most of the time. Arabic is our language, it is a very important part of our lives, and the least we could do is use it in our regular conversations. If we abandon Arabic language we will be abandoning an important part of our identity, and it will affect us negatively. Dialect and Arabic language are important, and I cannot imagine that I'm able to talk and convey my thoughts about our culture and national identity in a different language.

My experience at school was totally different from university, at school we always made sure that we represented our national identity regardless of the occasion or the nature of the activities we participated in. I remember when I participated with a group of friends in a school photo exhibition, we decided to make the exhibition theme about the UAE, which included photos that highlighted the UAE in different ways. The situation is different in the university, I think our minds became more open to the world and our thinking has changed somehow. We participate in many activities in the university, but only a few of them are about the UAE or involve national identity. Sometimes, I feel that the university does not care about showcasing Emirati heritage, except on National Day. My experience of national identity at school was a collection of positive experiences, but it is not the same at the university, because it is a collection of limited experiences.

When we work on our assignments, our instructors push us to use western resources, and avoid Arabic resources. This annoys me, because there are many Arabic resources that I could benefit from, in fact, I could find some Emirati resources that could enrich my work. I think that universities should create a balance between the two aspects: exposing students to the global world, and strengthening their attachments with their country.

My national identity affects my choices as a student, and I think it will continue to affect my career choices as well. For instance, I remember that when I visited the career fair there were so many representatives from different private and governmental entities. But I only went to the booths that had more Emirati representatives. I thought that it is better to choose places that have more Emiratis, whom I share my identity and values with.

My national identity encourages me to work hard, plan clear objectives and focus on obtaining a good education, as education will assist me in succeeding in my life later. My education is a major factor that will assist me in experiencing the true meaning of my national identity: contributing to the UAE. It is a responsibility that I want to carry in the future and work on fulfilling it. Right now, I might not fully understand what this responsibility includes, but I know that when I finish my education, I will understand this responsibility more. My national identity makes me understand how to be a loyal citizen and it teaches me about my rights and duties. I choose to speak in Arabic, because I have the right to do so. My national identity opens my mind more, makes me more aware, organises my priorities, and assists me in learning more about the things I can do for my country, and how can I serve it better.

On the radio I sometimes listen to a national song called 'I'm a Soldier', it is about how all Emiratis should serve their country, regardless of their ranks or positions. This song encourages me to work harder. It has become one of my special national identity experiences. I listen to it every morning, when I'm going to university. It reminds of my responsibility, and the messages that I have to share with people around me.

Appendix 7B: Visualising future and silent dreams (Khadijah's story)

Away from the UAE, I spend my days thinking about home, and dreaming of the day I will return as a doctor, with both my family and the UAE feeling proud of me. The decision I made to study abroad means that I will face many challenges, but my national identity encourages me to work harder and prepares me to face what is ahead in order to achieve what I aspire to.

I think that my national identity is composed of: thoughts, principles and values, which are shared among all the people who live in the UAE. If you remove those people, and put them in a different society or place, their identity will be obvious and does not change with changing the place. I consider my national identity the guidance that I follow, it protects me, and it will not make me do something that might harm me in the end. For instance, as an Emirati I learnt that I should accept all people, and do not treat them arrogantly.

My attachments with culture, traditions, Arabic and Islam create my experiences of national identity. Because I live away from home, I created a safe space, where I reconnect with these attachments with my friends. I became more insistent on holding onto Islamic and cultural values because I'm away from home. For instance, we cannot use Arabic here [Ireland], but we try to at least keep using it among ourselves. Islam in particular is very important in my national identity. From a young age I learnt that Islam is the basis of my life. I think that the principles I follow or all the actions I do will be directly or indirectly be linked to Islam.

I experience national identity when I'm celebrating Eid, Mid Sha'aban and other social gatherings with family and friends. In such gatherings, we wear traditional dresses, eat traditional food, and practice other cultural habits. Every cultural or traditional symbol or custom in such occasions strengthens my national identity. If we lose these cultural

attachments, we will lose the symbols that make us experience and express our national identity. I think clothing is the most important symbol because it makes us stand out as Emiratis. I do not wear Abaya in Dublin, so the thing that affects my national identity and makes me live it every day is my Shaila (head cover). Clothing and Shaila in particular are linked to Islam, when I wear them I feel that I belong to Islam and to the UAE. I cannot lose my Shaila or my modest clothing, abandoning them means abandoning Islam and my national identity.

My national identity also includes having objectives, I thought a lot about what I want to do, I first thought about studying genetic engineering, but then I received a scholarship for studying medicine, and I decided to go for it, this has become my objective and part of my national identity. By working hard and planning on reaching my objective I prove my loyalty to the UAE. Even when I was thinking about genetic engineering, I spent a long time reading about it, because working in genetic engineering requires working on genes and modifying, there are some religious opinions in this field. I read about that because I did not want to do something against Islam. Having objectives is an important part of my national identity, I always think about what I want to achieve, what I want to reach in the future, and what I want to give back to the UAE.

I'm grateful to my country for providing me with the opportunity to study abroad. I'm responsible for my education, which means I have to study hard and make my country proud. My national identity reminds me also that I'm responsible for my actions and attitudes, I do not have my family to guide me in Ireland, I'm responsible for myself and any decisions I make. This means that I have to be careful, because I'm representing the UAE there.

One of the happiest national identity experience moments is when I obtain high grades. In such moments, I feel happy, closer to my objective, and that I'm serving my country. I understand that I will face challenges in my profession in the future also, I will need my national identity and its support to continue to work hard. In the library, there is a picture of a student who has achieved the highest score ever in the history of the college. The college is a thousand years old, and no one except her has achieved that score. This student is Emirati, I felt proud when I learned about her, and I wished at that moment that I would obtain a similar score or higher and have my picture hung beside hers in the future.

I experience my national identity with my Emirati friends, for instance we sometimes go through some pressures from assignments and studying. In these situations, we remind ourselves of our objectives of working hard and giving back to the UAE and our reasons for

studying abroad. Our national identity motivates us to be focused and work harder. I communicate with my friends every day, every one of us has her personal experiences of national identity. In our communication and interaction with each other we affect each other, and end up experiencing our national identity together, even though this was not intentional.

I also experience it with my colleagues in discussions and classes. My classmates come from different parts of the world, I feel proud when I talk to them about the UAE, especially when I compare the UAE with other countries. I often work with my Emirati classmates on presentations about the UAE for our English classes. We work hard on these presentations, enjoy them and make sure that we present different things all the time.

As a student, I try to be careful of the choices and the decisions I make. I remember that when I first joined college, I heard that we would be doing anatomy on pigs. I was shocked at the beginning and I thought about it a lot. Then, I realised that it only involves anatomy and it would be for learning purposes, so it should be fine. Sometimes my colleagues invite me to parties in bars. I do not go with them because my national identity does not allow me to visit such places. In Ireland, I observe customs and actions that are different from what I'm used to in the UAE, some of them do not conflict with my national identity, but some of them do. For instance, some of my Emirati classmates choose to wear indecent clothing, it is normal in Dublin, but it is not acceptable in the UAE. I make sure that I'm aware of everything around me, and that I do not get influenced by strange customs. Some of my Emirati classmates are diverting from their Emirati culture, I observe them and realise that I do not want to lose what I believe in and my national identity because of living in a different country. Once I was asked about my Shaila, such conversations that involve speaking about what I believe strengthen my national identity. But, quite often I'm asked why I'm covering my head, but some of colleagues from the same country are not doing the same.

One of the most beautiful experiences of national identity is the UAE Embassy's National Day celebrations. The UAE Embassy always organises huge celebrations and invites us. I often invite my friends from other countries to these celebrations, they include different activities, we enjoy them together, and people from different parts of the world attend them. The 40th National Day celebration was exceptional; in fact I find National Day celebrations more exceptional in Dublin than National Day celebrations in the UAE. In the UAE everyone represents the UAE, but in Dublin, it is only us who represent the UAE. Also, in Dublin the more efforts we put into preparing the celebrations, the more opportunities we provide others with to learn about the UAE. The next day after the 40th National Day celebration, one of the staff members in our accommodation stopped me and told me that my photo was in the

newspaper. To celebrate National Day with the UAE's embassy in Dublin, and to have my photo published in an Irish newspaper the next day, all of this made my experience exceptional. I also sometimes attend National Day celebrations of my other colleagues.

Volunteering is strongly linked to my national identity, I always volunteer in different projects in the UAE, I consider it another way of giving back to the UAE. I remember one time I was volunteering in a blood donation activity. My task was to collect data from people interested in donating their blood. One of them was an elder Syrian guy, he was not eligible because of some health issues he had. When I informed him about that he became upset and said: 'but I worked and lived in the UAE for 10 years, and I'm going back home soon. I want to leave something for the UAE'. This has touched me, and I thought about how many people must be very grateful for living in the UAE.

The flag is an important symbol that reminds me of my national identity, when I see it, I remember everything about the UAE and Emirati culture. My friends and I consider having a flag very important, we all hang flags on our doors to represent the place we belong to. Emirati food is always a strong symbol, maybe because in Dublin we always make sure that we have traditional food in our cultural and national celebrations. I love sharing it with others and teaching them about Emirati culture through food.

I have special national identity memories from my high school days, I used to experience it strongly there through all the different activities and events I participated in, more than the way I have experienced it so far at college. If I'm invited to my high school, I would want to go because it reminds me of moments and memories of experiencing national identity.

As a hungry reader, I often read things that remind me of my national identity. For instance, I experience my national identity through Yasser Hareb's writings. In one section of his book 'Picasso and Starbucks', he discusses deciding on objectives, and how this could be linked to serving the country. I thought about what he wrote a lot, it helped in deciding on my objectives. I also feel my national identity with Jamal Al Shehhi, he often talks about the UAE and national identity in his tweets. Recently, Twitter has become active with discussions about the UAE, when I read these discussions I feel my national identity and I feel proud of being Emirati. I often use social media to communicate with some friends I have outside the UAE. My national identity affects my communication with them, and I always think about what I say. Another book that affected my national identity was: '10 Things I Wish I Knew Before Entering University'. It made me think about what I really want to do. I also made

sure to read a book about medicine to prepare myself. Both books helped in planning what I want to do, and to get ready for the upcoming challenge.

I prefer to read and write in Arabic. Many people associate language with identity, I think language is important, in the end Arabic language is important for our national identity. But, this does not mean that the person who speaks English does not have a national identity or is not loyal to the UAE. There are so many university students that now prefer English language, especially because many of them went to English schools and were not properly educated in Arabic language. This does not mean that they are less loyal than me, I feel that we are very much alike. Despite that, we have to protect our Arabic language because it is important to us. Having a proper Arabic language is important in preserving religion, customs and traditions. Perhaps losing Arabic as a language of communication does not have an impact like losing Arabic as culture and a sense of belonging.

I always experience my national identity with Sheikh Zayed. I have noticed that in Dublin, everyone talks about him and remembers his achievements – not only Emiratis, even others. I experience my national identity and I feel proud when I hear them talking about him. People always remember his kindness, how he dealt with Emiratis and others. I once heard my friends saying that if Sheikh Zayed was still alive, he would know how to help other Arab countries with their political problems. Sheikh Zayed is the person that created our national identity, mentioning him and reading about him strengthens national identity. I remember him talking to us about the importance of Islam, Arabic language, customs and traditions. I do not keep up with politics, and I do not think that it has an impact on my national identity. I'm just grateful that in the UAE we love our leaders, because they always work hard to provide us with what we need and more. If the strong attachment between people and leaders does not exist in the UAE, in this situation politics might have an important role, there will be a significant role for the elections for instance, and we will think a lot about whom to vote for. But in our situation now, we love our rulers, trust them and feel comfortable.

I think it is our duty to give something back to the country and our leaders in return for everything they have given us. Our roles should not be passive roles, but we have to work and return the kindness we received. There are so many things that we could do for the country. Unlike us, in other countries, people have to pay a lot of money to receive the services they need. Nevertheless, sometimes I see people from other countries giving back to their countries more than us, maybe because we are used to have everything we need.

I grew up in a family that raised me on national and cultural values, which I think should be shared among all Emirati families. For instance, all Emirati families should raise their children on Islam, customs, traditions, and having clear objectives. In my family, we always discuss what we want to do in the future, our ambitions, our roles in the society, and what we want to do for the country. We also discuss National Day and the activities that we will work on. These discussions have organised my priorities and my principles and made me understand my national identity more. For instance, my mother made us love volunteering, and now I always volunteer with three of my siblings.

History is important because history created our customs, traditions and built our society, if a person does not know his/ her history very well his/her identity will be negatively influenced. I think the UAE's history went through several main phases, one of the most important phases is the federation and the first years of the UAE, another important phase is the years that followed the federation, a phase we are still experiencing. I did not experience the first phase, but I think it is the phase that created the principles of national identity. Now, it is our turn in the phases after that to continue the work and strengthen our attachments to national identity. We are still living the UAE's history and it is still being written. The UAE's history includes important dates that are significantly linked to national identity such as 2nd December. This date is almost the most important date in our lives, it reminds us of previous events, what happened before the federation, and all the challenges that faced the country.

The concept of federation is not a simple concept, it is a big concept. It was not easy for the federation to succeed in light of all the circumstances the region was going through at that time. It makes me think about the reasons our leaders succeeded in one moment to change the situation and change from separated Emirates to a strong country. I believe this concept is important and we should always think about it. I think there are many Emiratis, especially Emirati youth, who have not yet grasped this concept and its impact. Maybe because we did not experience that phase and did not go through all the challenges and difficulties people and leadership faced at that time. We were born in a time where everything was available for us, such as education and health services. Therefore, our understanding of the difficulties that faced our ancestors is much lower. It is true that we study and read about all of these things, but because we did not live that phase, our understanding might not be the same.

Our media showcases leaders all the time talking about important things related to our national identity. But at the same time, often media in the UAE presents ideas or topics that are against our national identity, which might have a big impact on some people like children

and youth. Our media airs programmes that promote national identity, and at the same time airs programmes that clash with our national identity

My national identity teaches me about my rights and duties as a citizen, for instance education is one of my rights, and I was given an opportunity to study abroad. The fact that I belong to the UAE has granted me lots of rights. At the same time it makes me understand my duty towards my country, which is to work hard and contribute to its prosperity.

If I do not experience my national identity the way I do now, many things will change, for instance I might participate with my friends in their gatherings regardless of the place, I will not care that much about what I'm wearing, and I will not cover my hair. But I do not think that my studies will be influenced that much without experiencing national identity, because studying in the end is a personal desire.

I felt that my participation in this research made me organise all the thoughts related to my national identity. I have never thought about the things that create my national identity, and whether my decisions were based on it, but now I know that. Now, if I was asked about my national identity I can answer quickly with no hesitation.

Appendix 7C: Pursuing aspirations in the everyday (Reem's Story)

My experience of national identity starts the moment I glance at the UAE flag on my law textbooks, it reminds me of the UAE and of my objectives, which include studying law and representing the UAE as a successful lawyer. A simple thing like glancing at my law textbooks reminds me of my national identity. I spend most of the time in the university accommodation; which makes me experience sometimes there are university experiences that are at the same time are related to my national identity. I learned things there that made me more attached to my national identity. For instance, I used to read novels in English only, but because of my law studies I started reading in Arabic. I remember one of the professors who encouraged me to read in Arabic, and assisted me on improving my Arabic language skills. Because of him, I understood the importance of Arabic in my life. English is important, but we cannot ignore our language that represents us and represents everything else we belong to; the closer I am to Arabic, the closer I get to my national identity.

I love participating in conferences and activities, especially activities which involve representing the UAE. I have enjoyed organising some events in the university's National Day celebrations. In one of the events we texted all the girls on our lists inviting them to participate in singing the national anthem. I was overwhelmed by the large number of students who turned up and participated in singing the national anthem – it was a magnificent experience. In fact, what I miss most in my university experience is the national anthem. At school we used to sing it every day, but we do not do this anymore.

Recently, I was asked to choose between two conferences: a conference in a GCC country and another in Korea. I chose to participate in the one in Korea because people attending a conference in a GCC country should be very familiar with the UAE. Whereas in Korea people might be less familiar, which means my role in representing the UAE in the second conference will be more challenging. I experience my national identity in these situations where I talk about the UAE and Emiratis. I enjoy such experiences a lot.

Being committed to studies and respecting professors is all part of my national identity. I remember when I decided with my colleagues to send flowers to our sick professor. The professor was so touched, and mentioned that she has been teaching in the UAE for a long time, and never has someone done something like that for her. I believe that we have succeeded in changing a negative impression our professor might have had. I think it is important for Emiratis to change such negative impressions by showing their culture and values.

My national identity influenced my decision to study law. I plan to pursue my studies further and study international and political law. I do not want to work as a lawyer only, but I aim to raise my country's name higher, and my national identity encourages to study harder. It has affected my educational choices, and I think it will affect my career decisions in the future.

At college, I sometimes observe some types of behaviour that conflict with the Emirati values I was raised on. This makes me feel upset, at the same time it encourages me to hold onto my principles and my national identity more. For instance, some students made fun of me for wearing traditional dresses during Ramadan. The same students were wearing indecent clothing and did not even respect the holiness of Ramadan. Such experiences challenge my national identity but strengthen it at the same time. I also have the choice and the freedom to do the same thing [wear indecent clothing] but I do not, because it is important for me that I

wear something that represents my culture and identity, and what is appropriate for me as an Emirati lady. I'm fully convinced that I do not want to look in a way that offends my Emirati values and does not represent my identity.

Our society is open and tolerant, it affected us and we are known for being kind, welcoming and comfortable in being with people from different parts of the world. I experience my national identity when I interact with people from other places, when I help them and I teach them about the UAE. I also experience my national identity during National Day celebrations, such as when the entire society celebrates succession anniversaries and Sheikh Zayed's memorial. In addition, I experience it when I'm travelling, because when I'm travelling I'm representing the UAE. Perhaps I'll meet people that do not know anything about the UAE, and it might be their first time to meet an Emirati.

Our society is open and modern, but we are proud of our values and culture, and this is an important part of my national identity experience. Cultural attachments such as Islamic values and traditional and modest clothing create several national identity experiences. For instance, lately many shopping malls started hanging a dress code on doors, which states wearing modest clothing. This might have come late, because recently we have been seeing so many people wearing indecent clothing and not respecting our Muslim society, even on holy occasions like Ramadan. I'm happy with such campaigns and decisions that promote Islamic values. I think that expatriates should respect our Islamic and cultural values. When I see some visitors in malls that are wearing indecent clothing, I feel so upset. If I notice that the security staff members are not paying attention, I always go and notify them.

The prayer call is linked to my national identity. Recently, a photo of people praying Friday's prayer in a shopping mall was broadcasted through social media. They stood side by side and filled the mall's hallways. The photo was majestic, and it emphasised a very important fact: we are a Muslim country. No matter how much progress we have made there are things that are going to be the same, and one of them is our deep attachment to Islam. Some might wonder that this is not a mosque or a worshipping place, it is a shopping mall, but this is what distinguishes us in our attachment to our religion, which is the fact that it is with us everywhere and all the time. My attachment to Islam is linked to my national identity.

When I see restaurants closed during Ramadan, I experience national identity. Some might ask: why do you close restaurants during Ramadan when you depend on tourism as an income? Because respecting Ramadan is important for us. We want to keep developing as a

modern country but we want to preserve our religion at the same time. If I lose my Islamic attachments I will lose with it so many things, many meanings and experiences will not be the same. For instance, I will not care about praying or the prayer call and my attitude towards modest clothing will be different. I fully believe that many of our values and parts of our culture have emerged from Islam, therefore, if I lose these attachments my national identity will be seriously damaged.

I like to wear traditional clothing; it represents who I am and it is very close to my national identity. Traditional and modest Emirati clothing assists me in presenting myself as a true Emirati lady that respects her culture and values. I like it when my mother helps me choose traditional dresses. My father at the same time helps my young brother wear his traditional clothes before going to the Friday prayer. He tells him that he has to wear his traditional clothes in order to join the prayer. My parents encourage me to not only hold onto culture, but also to hold onto everything that links to my national identity. They encourage me to work harder and make sure that I meet my objectives. I consider obeying my parents as part of my national identity.

The UAE's history tells the story of building the UAE, and how it grew as a strong country. However, many young people in the UAE do not know a lot about the history of the UAE, the union and heritage. When I look at old UAE photos, I start thinking about the beautiful country I belong to, and how it has transformed completely. It saddens me how some young people in the UAE know dates of other occasions that are not important for us, but know little about important historical events in the UAE. Sometimes they cannot even recall the date of the federation.

I listened to the spirit of the union lecture given by Sheikh Mohammed on the 40th National Day celebrations. I was happy to learn more about the UAE, but I felt sad at the same time, because it was the first time I heard such information. Sometimes I feel that Emiratis are neglecting history. At the same time there is a lack in educating people about history. Learning history is very important because having a national identity means knowing my history, where I came from, what place I belong to, how my country was built, what my future is, knowing my traditions and customs, and living and practicing my culture. When a person knows all of this, this person will be stable from the inside, unlike some people who might be facing conflicts and do not know where they belong to, and they feel unstable. For me, my national identity is the reason for feeling stable and proud. I'm proud of belonging to the UAE.

Regional countries around the UAE are going through huge political changes, it is normal that we get affected a little bit. It is normal for some individuals in the UAE to get affected and try to follow the same approach. But, I'm convinced that if something similar happened in the UAE, and a group that calls for similar changes appears, for instance let's say 50,000 people, I'm convinced that another bigger group of 500,000 people will appear and tell the police: do not interfere, we will stop them.

Recently, I've been following people's comments on social media about the latest events in the UAE. I have noticed that there is some kind of cohesion. I have read different comments from media figures, Emiratis and even some expatriates – there is a spirit of cohesion and union, and I feel even those of us who are not soldiers will become soldiers in difficult times, people will stand to face such challenges before the police and the army do.

I always experience my national identity when I read about our leaders, especially Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid too. I love reading about them and their achievements. I remember once I was walking in a shopping mall with friends who visited me from another country. We suddenly saw Sheikh Mohammed walking in the same place. My friends were surprised and asked why he was walking in a public place with no security around him. I told them our leaders always walk freely and feel safe walking around and meeting people in different places. Our leaders are humble, and this is one of the things that Sheikh Zayed taught us. At the same time, everyone now knows the UAE, because Emirati leaders are often featured in media during different events and occasions.

Because of the flag campaign during National Day celebrations, many people hung flags on their houses, and many have not removed them yet. We have not removed ours. Whenever I leave home or enter it I see the flag. In fact, many other houses in our neighbourhood have not removed their flags either. Hence, whenever I leave our neighbourhood or enter it I see the flag. I experience my national identity when I see the flag, when I see it, I smile and feel proud.

In all the different situations which make me experience my national identity, I become overwhelmed by different feelings – I feel happy, proud and humble, I think about the federation, I think of Sheikh Zayed, his impact, work and efforts. I share these thoughts with my mother, and recently I have started sharing these thoughts with a new friend from Bahrain. I talk to her about such thoughts and the UAE, and she shares all of this with her

friends in Bahrain. When she talks about these things to her friends, it is like she is an Emirati.

The more I experience my national identity, the more I learn about my rights and duties.

When I follow our leaders' news and what they do, I learn about my rights.

They often appear in different media channels and talk about our rights and duties as Emiratis on different occasions. It is my duty as an Emirati to talk to the security in the shopping malls and I will continue to do so. It is my duty to respect my culture and be loyal to the UAE. I think it is important for Emiratis to fulfil their roles towards our national identity. We need to maintain it for the next generations so that they can fulfil their roles in maintaining it as well. Maintaining national identity is everybody's job, it is not for some people only.

I think participating in this research made me realise the importance of my national identity, and my duty in protecting it. I now understand my national identity more, what creates it, and what affects it better than before. If I do not have the same national identity, or if I do not experience it in the same way, my decisions and the attitudes I follow will be different. My national identity affects almost all my life aspects, hence, I think it will continue to affect me in the future, and if I lose it, I will not be the same anymore, I will be another person with no attachments, living my life to fulfil my personal objectives only.

Appendix 7D: Praying silently and dreaming loudly (Shamma's story)

When I look at the UAE map, I feel proud about each small detail within this shape; I love everything about the UAE, including disadvantages. I love the colours of the flags – I'm so attached to the colours, I always carry something that represents the four colours. I do not believe that these colours are only important on National Day; they are important every day. I do not think that being national or showing patriotism is something that is limited to National Day. For me it is not only about 2nd December, I think I can show my patriotism anytime and anywhere. Whenever I feel tired and pressured from my studies I look at the thing that I have with me that represents the colours of the flag. Looking at it makes me feel comfortable, and reminds me of my objective to study and work hard in order to take part in the development of the UAE, and to make the UAE proud of me.

I wish I could erase the lines of the maps [borders] – they make feel that Emiratis are closed and rigid. Emiratis, including the leaders, are tolerant and giving. For instance, the government of the UAE is always involved in charity projects across the world. Also, Emiratis are always participating in such projects inside and outside the country. Emiratis emulate leaders who always participate in such projects, and help people in the UAE, in the Arab world and across the world. They have set an example for us to follow the same path of giving and helping.

Emirati leaders are very important in my national identity. When I see them participating with us in social occasions I feel proud. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed participated in the traditional dancing during the 40th National Day celebrations. Everyone felt happy when he did that and shared the happy moments with people. Everybody said that he was walking in his father's footsteps, who used to share happy moments with people too. Sheikhs in the UAE participate in Eid prayers, they pray with the rest of the people and receive Eid greetings from them. On such occasions, I feel that nothing separates our leaders from people. I remember watching Sheikh Mohammed in an interview with CNN. He was asked why he was walking alone with no security. He answered: but I did not harm anyone to be afraid of walking alone. We love our leaders, they are humble, and close to us, and I want to emulate them. But I admit that although I care a lot about learning from our leaders, I do not follow all political news, just the internal ones.

As Emiratis we are close to each other, mostly because of traditions and customs, but also because of the leaders who have shared their visions and spread it all over the country. In the UAE, we have a history which we are proud of, we have a religion, traditions and culture. If all of these aspects are not there, it is difficult to consider someone a true Emirati, who understands his/her identity. In other countries, speaking the language could be the only common thing among citizens, unlike us, where there are many more aspects involved in being a citizen.

I cannot experience my national identity without being attached to cultural symbols such as clothing and the Emirati dialect. Culture creates a balance in our lives; regardless of our diverse community, we still experience our national identity because of our attachments with cultural symbols. I thank Allah that we have a culture that we live every day. This assists us in maintaining our national identity. At the same time, Emiratis have been divided into two types – one type that tries to imitate westerners and compete with them, and a type that wants to preserve his/her identity and culture. I respect traditional clothing and it is very important for me, but it is what it symbolises that is more important, and here I mean modesty. I cannot

abandon modest clothing that represents my values and morals. I cannot abandon my Emirati dialect that distinguishes me and represents me as an Emirati citizen. If I abandon them, I will be losing an important part of my national identity.

I think attitude and behaviour are very important in addition to clothing and appearance, because the way you deal with people also makes you who you are. I think a combination of traditional clothes and an attitude of acceptance, tolerance and respecting everyone makes me an Emirati citizen, and truly represents my sense of belonging and national identity. This is something that I do not show only on 2nd December but every day and everywhere.

I experience my national identity at home and with my family, more than any other place. In fact, it was my family that first taught me about my national identity. I experience it on Friday's family gatherings, when we talk and discuss our concerns and aspirations as Emirati citizens. Everyone in my family is a hard worker – that motivated me to become a hard worker, to never complain and to focus on achieving my objectives. I also learned Emirati culture from my family. I grew up in an extended family, elder family members like my grandmother taught me about culture and that made me confident of who I am. Culture has become an important part of me – I cannot remove it from me. The cultural knowledge I gained from my family will always protect me from falling into emulating others, will remind of my identity, and to present myself appropriately.

My extended family taught me about Emirati history as well. I learned about the early days of the federation from my grandmother and parents. I feel sorry for young people who do not have someone in their lives that could teach them the same. I do not think that they will grasp the importance in their lives. I define our history as a collection of challenges faced by leaders and the UAE, despite the challenges, they insisted on continuing the work and building the country. Our history is positive; it does not include stories of wars or bloodshed similar to other countries. Our history taught me about our ancestors, and the challenges they went through. It has made me a positive person, and I want to work hard to continue the work of our former leaders. I think there are important lessons that we did not fully grasp from history like the concept of union and federation – it is an important concept about change, cooperation and sharing experiences. It is part of us, and it is even associated with the name of our country. We should make sure that we learn from it and share what we learn with others.

I think that there is a lack in maintaining culture, heritage and history, especially in conveying these things to the new generations. We have lost a lot because of the wide gap between us and our ancestors; that means that next generations will even lose more. I think that culture,

heritage and history have a significant impact on national identity, and we have to make sure that they are conveyed to the next generations, otherwise there will be serious damage to their national identity.

The prayer call is very important to my national identity, it reminds me of belonging to a safe and peaceful Muslim country. I feel that also when I go to Fujirah in our holidays I experience the peace of the beach, the sunset, the simple, quiet and traditional life that I do not see anymore in Dubai. I experience how people are content, happy and very relaxed. I do not experience this in Dubai, where life has become complicated.

Sometimes, I imagine my national identity as a broken thing. There are many elements that complete my experience of national identity, similar to people around me like my family members. Having them around me strengthens my national identity. However, I feel that national identity was purer in the past, more complete. There are so many strange things that get mixed up with national identity now. Previously, it used to be there, but there were not any challenges facing national identity. It was not a topic that people discussed or got concerned about, a situation that has changed. Now everyone is concerned about national identity. Regardless, national identity has become a beautiful occasion, like Eid. Sometimes when I'm experiencing it, I want to go home and tell everyone about it.

I think about my national identity at college. For instance I think about the topics that I will write about, can I write about the UAE? I thought about it when I was deciding on my major. I wanted to make sure that whatever I chose would enable me to serve my country. For example, I chose to do a minor in psychology; there are not that many Emirati ladies working in this field. I might not use this minor in the future, but at least I have studied a field that lacks Emirati ladies. I made the choice to do my internship in a governmental workplace or at least semi-governmental. I wanted to benefit a place that is linked to the government. I realised that if I trained in a place like that I would feel more comfortable because I would be serving my country with fellow Emiratis. I aim to work in a similar place, because I want to feel the same way I felt during my internship, that I'm serving my country with my fellow Emiratis. This is so important for me.

I experience my national identity when I present work on my assignments. It is not necessary that they are linked to national identity. It motivates me to work harder in my studies and everything else I do, and it strengthens my sense of responsibility. When I'm in class, I'm receiving knowledge. I feel that when I learn something from the university I need to use it later in serving my country. My national identity taught me to respect and appreciate everything I learned from my university. If I do not do so, I will not be able to give something

in the future. I think this has then reflected on other aspects outside the university such as appreciating everything I received from my family, and appreciating my country in general.

I experience my national identity when I participate in university activities, but this has changed. During my first college year, I was with a group of my friends. We did different things together such as participating in National Day activities and other university activities. This made me experience my national identity collectively with them. But later, when everyone had joined a different major, we have our different interests and schedules, we stopped experiencing national identity like before.

If I do not experience my national identity the way I do, I will not be that careful in my studies and I will not care about my performance or what will I gain from it. I will be selfish; I will not think about my society and country, or what I want to achieve for them. In this situation, I will not feel obliged to return the favour to my university, society and country. I will not appreciate anything and will not care about what happens around me.

My national identity teaches me about my rights and duties. It helps me in planning my future – I want to make sure that I serve the UAE in the future. I think it is beautiful that my national identity taught me about my duties, not forcing them on me, but encouraging me to fulfil my duties and serve my country. I feel that we have received and enjoyed many rights, and it is time now to focus on our duties.

My national identity makes me live and raise my head high. I'm proud of it, I feel safe and secure. Hence, this will make me more able to live and give – my national identity is the motivation for many things I live daily. My national identity is an inner feeling I feel when I pray that Allah protects my country. I have always kept my national identity as an inner feeling that I do not share with others. But, after participating in this research, I now know more about my national identity, and I know my priorities. In the future, when I experience a situation related to my national identity, I will think more about it, and I will be more confident and aware in my reaction or attitude. Maybe in the past, I would have left without thinking or linking the situation with my national identity in a better way. I think all of this will change now.

Appendix 8: Narrative analysis

Appendix 8A: Alia's narrative analysis

Sentiments		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1S	Feeling confident	1	0	0	1
2S	Having an inner feeling	0	0	0	0
3S	Feeling responsible	1	0	1	1
4S	Feeling safe	0	1	1	0
5S	Feeling humble	1	0	1	0
6S	Feeling proud	1	1	1	1
7S	Feeling enthusiastic	1	1	1	1
8S	Feeling uncomfortable	1	0	1	1
9S	Feeling unsafe	1	0	1	0
10S	Feeling lonely	1	0	0	0
11S	Feeling upset	1	0	0	0
12S	Feeling love	1	0	0	1
13S	Feeling that I belong	1	0	0	1
14S	Feeling loyal	1	1	0	0
	Total	12	4	7	7
	Percentage	86%	29%	50%	50%

Thoughts		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1TH	Practice Islam	0	0	0	0
2TH	Appearing as an Emirati	1	0	1	1
3TH	Obeying leaders	1	1	1	1
4TH	Emulating leaders	1	1	1	1
5TH	Trusting the government	1	1	1	0
6TH	Remembering Sheikh Zayed	1	1	1	1
7TH	Accepting other cultures	1	0	1	0
8TH	Not imitating other cultures	1	0	1	0
9TH	Being with family	1	1	1	0
10TH	Getting high grades	0	0	0	1
11TH	Deciding on the major	0	0	0	1
12TH	Making choices	1	0	1	1
13TH	Making decisions	1	0	1	1
14TH	Remembering high school	1	0	1	1
15TH	Planning my objectives	0	0	0	1
16TH	Understanding myself	0	0	1	1
17TH	Being grateful	0	1	1	0
18TH	Having morals	1	0	1	0
19TH	Having values	1	0	1	0
20TH	Being challenged	1	0	1	1
21TH	Changing wrong impressions	0	0	1	1
22TH	Protecting my national identity	1	0	1	1

23TH	Holding strongly into what I believe	1	0	1	1
24TH	Appreciating rights	0	1	1	1
25TH	Completing duties	0	1	1	1
26TH	Representing the UAE	1	1	1	1
27TH	It will follow me in the future	0	0	0	0
28TH	My national identity pressures me	0	0	0	0
29TH	My national Identity is challenged everyday	0	0	0	0
30TH	Thinking about my future	0	0	0	1
31TH	I don't want to be separated from culture	1	0	0	0
32TH	I don't want to be separated from my national identity	0	0	1	0
33TH	I believe in my national identity	0	0	1	0
34TH	I'm a role model	0	0	1	0
35TH	I live it everyday	0	0	0	0
36TH	I'm conscious	0	0	1	0
	Total	18	9	26	19
	Percentage	50%	25%	72%	53%

Actions		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1A	Reserving the environment	0	0	0	0
2A	Listening to the prayer call	0	0	0	0
3A	Wearing Abaya	1	0	1	1
4A	Covering my hair	0	0	0	0
5A	Wearing modest clothing	1	0	1	1
6A	Wearing traditional dress	1	0	1	0
7A	Reading about leaders	0	1	1	0
8A	Obeying parents	1	0	1	0
9A	Socialising with others	1	1	1	1
10A	Socialising with Emiratis	1	1	1	1
11A	Guiding others	0	0	1	0
12A	Supporting friends	0	0	0	1
13A	Learning from elders	1	1	1	0
14A	Celebrating with everyone	1	1	0	1
15A	Participating in national day celebrations	1	1	0	1
16A	Sharing thoughts	0	0	1	0
17A	Sharing feelings	0	0	1	0
18A	Learning from others	1	1	1	1
19A	Learning from history	1	1	1	0
20A	Studying	0	0	1	1

21A	Respecting professors	1	0	0	1
22A	Attending classes	0	0	0	1
23A	Working on assignments	1	0	0	1
24A	Working on different projects	1	0	0	1
25A	Participating in university events and activities	0	0	0	1
26A	Participating in external activities	0	0	1	1
27A	Talking about the UAE	1	0	1	1
28A	Talking about the UAE while traveling	1	0	0	0
29A	Reading	1	1	1	1
30A	Reading about Emirati history	0	1	1	0
31A	Organising priorities	0	0	0	1
32A	Not complaining	0	0	0	0
33A	Tweeting	0	1	1	0
34A	Texting	0	0	0	0
35A	Speaking in Arabic	1	1	1	1
36A	Speaking in an Emirati dialect	1	0	1	1
37A	Reading in Arabic	0	0	1	1
38A	Watching TV	1	0	1	0
39A	Listening to the radio	1	1	1	0
40A	Carrying the flag	0	1	1	0
41A	Listening to songs	0	1	1	0
42A	Eating Emirati food	0	0	0	0
43A	Volunteering	0	0	0	0

44A	Graduating	0	0	1	1
45A	Getting a job	0	0	1	1
46A	Visit other Emirates	0	0	0	0
47A	Giving back	1	0	0	1
48A	My parents guide me	1	0	1	0
49A	Observing my parents guiding my siblings	0	0	0	0
50A	I practice my hobbies	1	0	1	1
	Total	24	15	30	25
	Percentage	48%	30%	60%	50%

Appendix 8B: Khadijah's narrative analysis

Sentiments		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1S	Feeling confident	1	1	1	1
2S	Having an inner feeling	0	0	1	1
3S	Feeling responsible	1	1	1	1
4S	Feeling safe	0	0	0	0
5S	Feeling humble	0	0	1	0
6S	Feeling proud	1	1	1	1
7S	Feeling enthusiastic	1	0	1	1
8S	Feeling uncomfortable	0	0	1	1
9S	Feeling unsafe	0	0	0	0

10S	Feeling lonely	0	0	0	0
11S	Feeling upset	0	0	1	0
12S	Feeling love	1	1	1	1
13S	Feeling that I belong	1	1	1	1
14S	Feeling loyal	0	1	0	1
	Total	6	6	10	9
	Percentage	43%	43%	71%	64%

Thoughts		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1TH	Practice Islam	0	0	1	0
2TH	Appearing as an Emirati	1	1	1	1
3TH	Obeying leaders	0	1	0	0
4TH	Emulating leaders	0	1	1	0
5TH	Trusting the government	0	1	1	0
6TH	Remembering Sheikh Zayed	1	1	1	1
7TH	Accepting other cultures	1	0	1	1
8TH	Not imitating other cultures	1	0	1	1
9TH	Being with family	1	1	1	1
10TH	Getting high grades	0	0	1	1
11TH	Deciding on the major	0	0	1	1
12TH	Making choices	1	0	1	1
13TH	Making decisions	1	0	1	1
14TH	Remembering high school	1	0	0	0

15TH	Planning my objectives	0	0	1	1
16TH	Understanding myself	1	0	1	1
17TH	Being grateful	1	1	1	1
18 TH	Having morals	1	0	1	1
19TH	Having values	1	0	1	0
20TH	Being challenged	1	0	1	1
21TH	Changing wrong impressions	1	0	1	1
22TH	Protecting my national identity	1	0	1	1
23TH	Holding strongly into what I believe	1	0	1	1
24TH	Appreciating rights	0	1	1	1
25TH	Completing duties	0	1	1	1
26 TH	Representing the UAE	1	1	1	1
27th	It will follow me in the future	0	0	1	0
28th	My national identity pressures me	0	0	0	0
29Th	My national Identity is challenged everyday	0	0	0	0
30th	Thinking about my future	0	0	1	1
31TH	I don't want to be separated from culture	1	0	1	0
32TH	I don't want to be separated from my national identity	0	0	1	0
33TH	I believe in my national identity	0	0	1	0

34TH	I'm a role model	0	0	0	0
35TH	I live it everyday	0	0	0	0
36TH	I'm self-conscious	0	0	1	0
	Total	18	10	30	21
	Percentage	50%	28%	83%	58%

Actions		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1A	Reserving the environment	0	0	0	0
2A	Listening to the prayer call	0	0	0	0
3A	Wearing Abaya	0	0	0	0
4A	Covering my hair	1	1	1	1
5A	Wearing modest clothing	1	1	1	1
6A	Wearing traditional dress	0	0	0	1
7A	Reading about leaders	0	1	0	0
8A	Obeying parents	0	0	1	0
9A	Socialising with others	1	1	1	1
10A	Socialising with Emiratis	1	0	1	1
11A	Guiding others	0	0	1	1
12A	Supporting friends	0	0	1	1
13A	Learning from elders	0	0	0	0
14A	Celebrating with everyone	1	1	1	1
15A	Participating in national day celebrations	1	1	0	1

16A	Sharing thoughts	0	0	1	1
17A	Sharing feelings	0	0	1	1
18A	Learning from others	0	0	1	0
19A	Learning from history	0	1	0	0
20A	Studying	0	0	1	1
21A	Respecting professors	0	0	0	0
22A	Attending classes	0	0	0	1
23A	Working on assignments	1	0	0	1
24A	Working on different projects	0	0	0	1
25A	Participating in university events and activities	1	0	1	1
26A	Participating in external activities	0	0	0	1
27A	Talking about the UAE	1	1	1	1
28A	Talking about the UAE while traveling	1	0	0	0
29A	Reading	0	1	0	0
30A	Reading about Emirati history	0	0	0	0
31A	Organising priorities	0	0	0	1
32A	Not complaining	0	1	1	0
33A	Tweeting	0	0	1	0
34A	Texting	0	0	0	0
35A	Speaking in Arabic	1	1	1	1
36A	Speaking in an Emirati dialect	0	0	0	0
37A	Reading in Arabic	0	0	1	0
38A	Watching TV	1	0	1	0

39A	Listening to the radio	0	0	0	0
40A	Carrying the flag	1	1	1	1
41A	Listening to songs	0	0	0	0
42A	Eating Emirati food	1	0	0	1
43A	Volunteering	1	0	1	1
44A	Graduating	0	0	1	1
45A	Getting a job	0	0	1	1
46A	Visit other Emirates	0	0	0	0
47A	Giving back	0	0	0	1
48A	My parents guide me	1	0	1	0
49A	Observing my parents guiding my seblings	0	0	0	0
50A	I practice my hobbies	0	0	1	0
	Total	16	12	25	26
	Percentage	32%	24%	50%	52%

Appendix 8C: Reem's narrative analysis

Sentiments		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1S	Feeling confident	1	0	1	1
2S	Having an inner feeling	0	0	1	0
3S	Feeling responsible	1	1	1	1
4S	Feeling safe	0	1	1	0

5S	Feeling humble	1	1	1	1
6S	Feeling proud	1	1	1	1
7S	Feeling enthusiastic	1	1	1	1
8S	Feeling uncomfortable	1	0	1	1
9S	Feeling unsafe	1	0	1	0
10S	Feeling lonely	1	0	0	1
11S	Feeling upset	1	0	0	1
12S	Feeling love	1	1	0	1
13S	Feeling that I belong	1	0	0	1
14S	Feeling loyal	1	1	0	0
	Total	12	7	9	10
	Percentage	86%	50%	64%	71%

Thoughts		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1TH	Practice Islam	1	0	1	0
2TH	Appearing as an Emirati	1	0	1	1
3TH	Obeying leaders	1	1	1	1
4TH	Emulating leaders	1	1	1	1
5TH	Trusting the government	1	1	1	0
6TH	Remembering Sheikh Zayed	1	1	1	1
7TH	Accepting other cultures	1	0	1	1
8TH	Not imitating other cultures	1	0	0	0
9TH	Being with family	1	1	1	1

10TH	Getting high grades	0	0	0	1
11TH	Deciding on the major	0	0	0	1
12TH	Making choices	1	0	1	1
13TH	Making decisions	1	0	1	1
14TH	Remembering high school	0	0	0	0
15TH	Planning my objectives	0	0	0	1
16TH	Understanding myself	0	0	1	0
17TH	Being grateful	1	1	1	1
18TH	Having morals	1	0	1	0
19TH	Having values	1	0	1	0
20TH	Being challenged	0	0	0	1
21TH	Changing wrong impressions	1	0	1	1
22TH	Protecting my national identity	1	1	1	1
23TH	Holding strongly into what I believe	1	1	1	1
24th	Appreciating rights	0	1	1	1
25th	Completing duties	0	1	1	1
26th	Representing the UAE	1	1	1	1
27th	It will follow me in the future	0	0	1	1
28th	My national identity pressures me	0	0	0	0
29Th	My national Identity is challenged everyday	1	0	1	1
30th	Thinking about my future	0	0	1	1

31TH	I don't want to be separated from culture	1	0	0	0
32TH	I don't want to be separated from my national identity	0	0	1	0
33TH	I believe in my national identity	0	0	1	0
34TH	I'm a role model	0	0	0	0
35TH	I live it everyday	0	0	1	0
36TH	I'm conscious	0	0	1	0
	Total	20	11	27	22
	Percentage	56%	31%	75%	61%

Actions		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1A	Reserving the environment	0	1	1	1
2A	Listening to the prayer call	1	0	1	0
3A	Wearing Abaya	1	0	1	0
4A	Covering my hair	0	0	0	0
5A	Wearing modest clothing	1	0	1	1
6A	Wearing traditional dress	1	0	1	1
7A	Reading about leaders	0	1	1	0
8A	Obeying parents	1	0	1	0
9A	Socialising with others	1	1	1	1
10A	Socialising with Emiratis	1	1	1	1

11A	Guiding others	0	0	0	0
12A	Supporting friends	0	0	0	0
13A	Learning from elders	0	1	0	0
14A	Celebrating with everyone	1	1	0	1
15A	Participating in national day celebrations	1	1	0	1
16A	Sharing thoughts	0	0	1	1
17A	Sharing feelings	0	0	1	0
18A	Learning from others	0	0	0	0
19A	Learning from history	1	1	1	0
20A	Studying	0	1	1	1
21A	Respecting professors	1	0	0	1
22A	Attending classes	0	0	1	1
23A	Working on assignments	1	0	0	1
24A	Working on different projects	1	0	0	1
25A	Participating in university events and activities	0	0	1	1
26A	Participating in external activities	0	0	1	1
27A	Talking about the UAE	1	0	1	1
28A	Talking about the UAE while traveling	1	0	0	0
29A	Reading	0	0	0	0
30A	Reading about Emirati history	0	0	0	0
31A	Organising priorities	0	0	0	1
32A	Not complaining	0	1	1	1

33A	Tweeting	0	1	1	0
34A	Texting	0	0	1	1
35A	Speaking in Arabic	1	1	1	1
36A	Speaking in an Emirati dialect	0	0	0	0
37A	Reading in Arabic	0	0	1	1
38A	Watching TV	0	0	0	0
39A	Listening to the radio	0	0	0	0
40A	Carrying the flag	0	1	1	1
41A	Listening to songs	0	0	0	0
42A	Eating Emirati food	0	0	0	0
43A	Volunteering	0	0	0	0
44A	Graduating	0	1	1	1
45A	Getting a job	0	1	1	1
46A	Visit other Emirates	0	0	0	0
47A	Giving back	0	0	0	1
48A	My parents guide me	1	0	1	1
49A	Observing my parents guiding my siblings	1	0	1	0
50A	I practice my hobbies	0	0	0	0
	Total	18	15	27	26
	Percentage	36%	30%	54%	52%

Appendix 8D: Shamma's narrative analysis

Sentiments		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1S	Feeling confident	0	0	0	1
2S	Having an inner feeling	1	0	1	0
3S	Feeling responsible	1	0	1	1
4S	Feeling safe	0	1	1	0
5S	Feeling humble	1	1	1	0
6S	Feeling proud	1	1	1	1
7S	Feeling enthusiastic	0	0	1	1
8S	Feeling uncomfortable	1	0	1	1
9S	Feeling unsafe	1	0	1	0
10S	Feeling lonely	0	0	0	0
11S	Feeling upset	0	0	0	0
12S	Feeling love	1	1	1	1
13S	Feeling that I belong	1	0	0	0
14S	Feeling loyal	1	1	0	0
	Total	9	5	9	6
	Percentage	64%	36%	64%	43%

Thoughts	Contexts			
	Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions

1TH	Practice Islam	1	0	1	0
2TH	Appearing as an Emirati	1	0	1	1
3TH	Obeying leaders	1	1	1	1
4TH	Emulating leaders	1	1	1	1
5TH	Trusting the government	1	1	1	0
6TH	Remembering Sheikh Zayed	1	1	1	1
7TH	Accepting other cultures	1	0	1	0
8TH	Not imitating other cultures	1	0	1	0
9TH	Being with family	1	0	1	0
10TH	Getting high grades	0	0	0	1
11TH	Deciding on the major	0	0	0	1
12TH	Making choices	0	0	1	1
13TH	Making decisions	1	0	1	1
14TH	Remembering high school	0	0	0	0
15TH	Planning my objectives	0	0	0	1
16TH	Understanding myself	0	0	1	1
17TH	Being grateful	0	1	1	0
18TH	Having morals	1	0	1	1
19TH	Having values	1	0	1	1
20TH	Being challenged	0	0	0	1
21TH	Changing wrong impressions	0	0	1	1
22TH	Protecting my national identity	1	0	1	1
23TH	Holding strongly into what I believe	1	0	1	1
24TH	Appreciating rights	0	1	1	1

25th	Completing duties	0	0	1	1
26th	Representing the UAE	1	0	1	1
27th	It will follow me in the future	0	0	0	1
28th	My national identity pressures me	0	0	1	0
29Th	My national Identity is challenged everyday	0	0	0	0
30th	Thinking about my future	0	0	0	1
31TH	I don't want to be separated from culture	1	0	1	0
32TH	I don't want to be separated from my national identity	0	0	1	0
33TH	I believe in my national identity	0	0	1	0
34TH	I'm a role model	0	0	0	0
35TH	I live it everyday	0	0	1	1
36TH	I'm conscious	0	0	1	0
	Total	16	6	27	22
	Percentage	44%	17%	75%	61%

Actions		Contexts			
		Cultural attachments	Political understanding	Everyday encounters	College life interactions
1A	Reserving the environment	0	1	1	0
2A	Listening to the prayer call	1	0	1	0

3A	Wearing Abaya	1	0	1	1
4A	Covering my hair	0	0	0	0
5A	Wearing modest clothing	1	0	1	1
6A	Wearing traditional dress	0	0	0	0
7A	Reading about leaders	0	0	0	0
8A	Obeying parents	1	0	1	0
9A	Socialising with others	1	1	1	1
10A	Socialising with Emiratis	1	1	1	1
11A	Guiding others	0	0	0	0
12A	Supporting friends	0	0	0	0
13A	Learning from elders	1	1	1	0
14A	Celebrating with everyone	1	0	0	0
15A	Participating in national day celebrations	1	0	0	0
16A	Sharing thoughts	0	0	1	0
17A	Sharing feelings	0	0	1	0
18A	Learning from others	1	0	1	1
19A	Learning from history	1	1	0	0
20A	Studying	0	0	1	1
21A	Respecting professors	1	0	0	1
22A	Attending classes	0	0	0	1
23A	Working on assignments	0	0	0	1
24A	Working on different projects	0	0	0	1
25A	Participating in university events and activities	0	0	0	1

26A	Participating in external activities	0	0	1	1
27A	Talking about the UAE	1	0	1	1
28A	Talking about the UAE while traveling	1	0	0	0
29A	Reading	0	1	0	1
30A	Reading about Emirati history	0	1	0	0
31A	Organising priorities	0	0	0	1
32A	Not complaining	0	1	1	1
33A	Tweeting	0	0	0	0
34A	Texting	0	0	0	0
35A	Speaking in Arabic	1	0	1	1
36A	Speaking in an Emirati dialect	1	0	1	1
37A	Reading in Arabic	0	0	1	0
38A	Watching TV	1	0	1	0
39A	Listening to the radio	1	0	1	0
40A	Carrying the flag	1	1	1	0
41A	Listening to songs	0	0	0	0
42A	Eating Emirati food	0	0	0	0
43A	Volunteering	0	0	0	0
44A	Graduating	0	0	1	1
45A	Getting a job	0	0	1	1
46A	Visit other Emirates	1	0	0	0
47A	Giving back	0	0	0	1
48A	My parents guide me	1	0	0	0

49A	Observing my parents guiding my siblings	0	0	0	0
50A	I practice my hobbies	0	0	0	0
	Total	21	9	23	21
	Percentage	42%	18%	46%	42%

Appendix 9: Ethics form

To be completed by the student and submitted to the Ethics Research Committee

NAME OF RESEARCHER: **Rabaa Alsumaiti**

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: **050 450-7001**

EMAIL ADDRESS: **rabaa.chan@gmail.com**

DATE: **17 September 2011**

PROJECT TITLE: Narratives of the Maps: Emirati Undergraduate Students' Stories of National Identity

BRIEF OUTLINE OF PROJECT (100-250 words; this may be attached separately. You may prefer to use the abstract from the original bid):

The current changes that occurred in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have made an impact on different parts and aspects of the society. These changes have transferred the community into a global context. Some of these changes have influenced youth in the UAE and how do they visualise themselves in the light of the on-going changes. This research project is a qualitative study that will explore how a group of Emirati undergraduate students experience their national identity culturally and politically. This will include examining cultural and political symbols, and how are they conveyed through social interaction. In addition, this research study will explore how students build an understanding of their national identity and how this understanding affects their educational or career decisions. The theoretical framework is based on perspectives of symbolic interactionism and social representation theory. Methodology will follow an ethnographic approach which will include ethnographic interviews and participant-observations.

MAIN ETHICAL CONSIDERATION(S) OF THE PROJECT (e.g. working with vulnerable adults; children with disabilities; photographs of participants; material that could give offence etc):

This research will include working with undergraduate students and studying their experience of national identity. This will involve observing emotions that participants might display for the first time, they will be telling me about situations that involve them and their family members, and I will be listening to them talking about their political and cultural understanding and attitudes, all of this might involve disclosing personal information, personal memories and emotions.

DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT (please provide dates as month/year):

Start date: 1 Nov, 2011, end date: June 2013

DATE YOU WISH TO START DATA COLLECTION:

1 Nov, 2011

Please provide details on the following aspects of the research:

1. What are your intended methods of recruitment, data collection and analysis?

Please outline (100-250 words) the methods of data collection with each group of research participants.

Data collection methods will include participant-observation, ethnographic interviews, and analysis of artefacts. Artefacts include individual concept maps of national identity created by participants. Participants will be working on their maps throughout the research, and will use them to define aspects and patterns related to their experience of national identity, explain their connections and their impact and significance on their lives. Participant-observations will be conducted while they work on their concept maps, and interviews will be conducted after participant-observations.

Data analysis will follow narrative analysis. Data collected in this study will be analysed into codes and themes. This will include four sections, the first section is cultural experiences; it will include an analysis of all themes generated from participants' interactions with culture and their impact on national identity. The second section will

include an analysis of themes related to participants' political understanding and their interactions in political activities, and their role in national identity. The third section will focus on social interactions, and their role on conveying meanings and creating experiences of national identity. The last section will include a discussion of the impact of national identity on educational and career choices. A content analysis will be conducted on the concept maps to identify and address all emerging aspects from them. These emerging aspects will be linked data collected from interviews and observations to produce ethnographic narratives, and later generate themes and interpret them.

2. How will you make sure that all participants understand the process in which they are to be engaged and that they provide their voluntary and informed consent? If the study involves working with children or other vulnerable groups, how have you considered their rights and protection?

All participants will be receiving an informed consent form, which will include a protocol sheet that outlines the purpose and nature of the research, and requests their approval. The informed consent forms will also include information about the nature of interviews and the observations. All participants will be ensured in the informed consent that they can decide to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. Throughout the research only first names of participants will be used. Participants will be also informed that interviews and observations will be recorded using an MP3 recorder. They will be ensured that they could try a pilot session where they could try working on the map before confirming their approval.

3. How will you make sure that participants clearly understand their right to withdraw from the study?

It will be included in the informed consent that they can withdraw any time with no penalty.

4. Please describe how will you ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Where this is not guaranteed, please justify your approach.

Only first names of participants will be used in this research study.

5. Describe any possible detrimental effects of the study and your strategies for dealing with them.

There are no detrimental effects of this study.

6. How will you ensure the safe and appropriate storage and handling of data?

Data will be kept secured at my laptop, and maps will be kept locked in my room.

7. If during the course of the research you are made aware of harmful or illegal behaviour, how do you intend to handle disclosure or nondisclosure of such information (you may wish to refer to the BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2004; paragraphs 27 & 28, p.8 for more information about this issue)?

Session will be stopped and the guardian of the participant will be informed. Information about guardians will be collected once participants have been identified and their informed consent is received.

8. If the research design demands some degree of subterfuge or undisclosed research activity, how have you justified this?

The research does not demand any degree of subterfuge or undisclosed research activity.

9. How do you intend to disseminate your research findings to participants?

Every participant will receive his/her narrative report, and later will receive a report of the key findings of the research.