

**BETWEEN PROPHET AND PROFESSIONAL: IMAGERY AND
IDENTIFICATION AMONGST BEGINNING TEACHERS IN
LEBANON**

Mahmoud A. Natout
Department of Education
St. Antony's College

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ABSTRACT

Between ‘prophet’ and ‘professional’: imagery and identification amongst beginning teachers in Lebanon

This study explores the motivations, perceptions, and imagery of beginning teachers in Lebanon. It foregrounds the importance of ‘images’ as potentially useful conceptual tools for understanding the developing identities of beginning teachers.

The research consists of in-depth, semi-structured interviews in which student-teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own and other people’s views and perceptions about teaching. The thesis places the students-teachers’ personal portraits of teaching within broader cultural-historical representations of teachers in Lebanon and examines how the student-teachers deal with such representations while still in training.

The core research questions focus on the participants’ motivations as well as the underlying cultural, social, and political factors that influence their views and perceptions about teaching. The research questions were designed to explore the various images of teachers and teaching that the students draw on in their personal portraits. Biographical information as well as students’ experiences at the time of training were explored for this purpose.

The findings suggest that student-teachers’ developing identities emerge through their identification with competing images and representations of teaching and teachers. These images cut across various contexts, temporalities, and imagined settings in the student-teacher portraits, linking personal, educational and professional experiences. Many of the images synthesized large amounts of experiences and knowledge about teaching and contained gendered, religious, affective and interpersonal dimensions. Finally, the thesis offers a new way of conceptualizing images. This study hopes to help teacher education programs gain greater insight into beginning teachers’ thinking, motivations and developing identities.

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Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved daughter, Layla.

Rise to the teacher and praise him for a teacher is almost a prophet

(Ahmad Shawqi)

Teaching is an occupation for those without one

(Attributed to al-Jahiz)

Chapter 1 – Purpose, Context, and Organization of the Study

Introduction

Overview of the study

The main aim of this research is to increase understanding of how beginning teachers in Lebanon make sense of their choices to become teachers. The research question and sub-questions that informed this study are:

How do student-teachers in Lebanon make sense of their choice to pursue teaching as an occupation? More specifically:

- a. How do student-teachers in Lebanon explain their motivations for and anxieties about becoming teachers?
- b. How do their perceptions of teaching inform their choices?
- c. How can ‘images’ be theorized to better explain how student-teachers negotiate their choices?

The above questions guided the development of the research design and implementation process as well as the conceptualization of this study’s main theoretical lenses. Twenty student-teachers from three major universities in Lebanon were interviewed. The study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach utilizing the construct of ‘image’ as a guiding theoretical and interpretive lens.

I would like to affirm here that the above concise and formulaic overview of this project somewhat abstracts and consequently conceals a long personal experiential process that eventually shaped the main thesis of this study. In effect, before I embark on presenting this research through the tools and conventions of social science research, I would like to draw a personal portrait of the experiences, motivations, and anxieties that have led to my choice of this research topic.

A personal portrait: how my research interest developed

My interest in this area of study emerges from the coalescence of a number of personal experiences and motivations often accompanied by questions, reflections, and anxieties regarding my choice to pursue Education as a field of study. I was born in the early seventies in a small coastal city south of Beirut. The civil war began a little over a year after I was born. Consequently, my schooling experience was directly affected by the war. Due to a shortage of teachers, my classroom experience was shaped by various ‘experts’, many of whom came from different backgrounds and walks of life. In addition to the ‘regular’ teachers, I was also ‘educated’ by political ideologues, former militia fighters, explosives specialists, among other ‘professionals’ who filled the vacancies created by the major demographic shifts that were taking place throughout the civil war; especially during and after the Israeli occupation of my hometown. This ‘professional eclecticism’ that characterized my classroom experience at school, along with several culturally inherited images of teachers, influenced my perceptions of teaching as an occupation whilst a young student.

After graduating from high school, my career path was somewhat set before me. My father owned a computer business in my hometown and so it was expected of me to pursue either engineering or business in order to later join the family enterprise. And so I did. I worked in the family business for almost five years. Several life experiences and dilemmas led me to later return to college to pursue a degree in Psychology. My encounter with teachers in college influenced my perceptions of teaching and education in general. I personally identified very closely with a few of them and eventually started to glimpse another possible career path unfolding before me. After obtaining my Masters degree in Science and Religion at Oxford, I returned to teach at the same university from which I had graduated. Needless to say, I found myself in teaching. I felt that this field which requires knowledge, tact, experience, and enthusiasm and that can prove very rewarding on several levels was what I wanted to do with my life.

However, I faced several objections and concerns from members of my family and immediate community regarding my career path. In response, I found myself often pulling together very

elaborate and convincing arguments to negotiate my choice amidst incessant objections. In retrospect, I realize that I often drew on entrepreneurial, moral, professional, cultural, and technical dimensions of teaching to justify my choice to people. For example, in response to objections put forward by relatives who were business minded, I often justified my choice by talking about the prospect of investing in my own education consultancy and training center. With those who were more technically inclined, I would speak about how teaching is a science that is couched in developmental psychology and theories of learning. After a while, I discovered that I had developed an intricate yet flexible rhetoric to cogently express my choice to become a teacher. And this rhetoric was often informed by certain images I had about teaching and education that were rooted in family, school, and community contexts. The images and metaphors that I developed and utilized also helped me synthesize various aspects of my personal, educational and professional backgrounds: engineering, sales, business, psychology, theology, philosophy, and education. In other words, the images I constructed also helped me deal more effectively with tensions I experienced on both intrapersonal and interpersonal levels.

My entry into the teaching career was unorthodox. However, the images of teaching that I developed and continue to develop have helped me connect amongst my various experiences and motivations and to locate them in teaching as an activity. When I first embarked on this occupation, it felt like a new beginning. This has led me to contemplate how it feels like for young people to enter teaching as a career in Lebanon; recognizing the social pressures that students often face regarding their career choices. My personal motivations and anxieties have deeply influenced my interest in this area of research. They have led me to ask the following fundamental question: how do student-teachers in Lebanon make sense of their choice to pursue teaching as an occupation?

The above question that guides this research study provided part of my motivation for entering education as a field of research. Not surprisingly, the tensions I had experienced along my path to become a teacher were not ameliorated by my pursuit of education as a field of study. It was not long before I experienced tensions, contradictions, and confusion regarding this field. These tensions were further compounded by the wide spectrum of research projects that my cohort of doctoral students had planned to undertake. Yet at the same time, education as a field closely

resonated with my ‘multidisciplinary’ background and intellectual interests that I had brought with me to my doctoral program. During the first year of my doctoral training, I found myself navigating through various perspectives to educational research including ethnographic (Walford, 2008; Forsey, 2008; Trondman; 2008; Mills, 2013, among others), sociological (Bourdieu, 1977; Bernstein, 2000 and those who drew on such works as Rawolle & Lingard, 2008; Shay, 2008; among others), psychoanalytic (Freudian, Lacanian, and Kleinian theoretical frameworks such as in the works of Britzman, 1986; Hanley, 2007; Bibby, 2011; among others), critical (the works of Hall, 1996; Grossberg, 1996; Girous, 2000; McLaren, 2003; and Graziano, 2008), discursive (Davies & Harre, 1990; Laclau, 1992; Kvale, 2006; Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002; among others), and Bakhtinian (such as in the works of Halasek, 1999; among others). All the abovementioned literature shaped and influenced my research focus and the consequent perspective(s) that I adopted for this research project. In other words, during the first year of research training, my approach to theory could best be characterized by a technique in data collection known as the ‘magpie technique’ (Walford, 2008); ‘picking up’ different theories and perspectives that looked interesting and potentially helpful in my conceptualization of my research thesis.

As my project developed, I increasingly felt the need to locate it within certain disciplinary boundaries; especially during the final stages of my research. Consequently, I had to grapple with the question of whether education can best be defined as a field of research or as a discipline. As such, it was important for me to engage with relevant debates that addressed such a question.

Furlong, in *Education – An Anatomy of the Discipline*, undertakes delineating education as a discipline acknowledging that there are “major debates between different research traditions in education with fundamental differences in theory and method” (2013, p. 3). Furlong agrees that education, from an epistemological perspective, “lacks the consensus and indeed the coherence of some of the more established disciplines” yet argues that “institutionally and politically ... [education] functions very much as a discipline in its own right, even though, for most of its existence, it has not been ‘master’ of its own destiny” (2013, pp. 3-4). Furlong identifies the practical and professional bent that education had assumed in the past as one of the main reasons

behind such an issue. However, more recently, higher education institutions have developed non-professional and research degrees in education; the existence of which has adumbrated a skeleton, albeit malleable, for a discipline. In effect, Furlong attempts to stimulate a debate about what education should be like as a university-based discipline:

The most common term used to characterize education is as a ‘field’. Because the study of education covers so many different educational contexts (from early years to lifelong learning), so many different topics (from the teaching of reading to the management of higher education), because it draws on so many other disciplinary perspectives (from neuroscience to economics and philosophy), and because it is studied by using so many different approaches to research and scholarship (from history or literary studies to ethnography or randomized control trials), because of all of this diversity, how could it be anything else but a ‘field’? By definition, it must fail the first test of a discipline, which demands some coherence, distinctiveness and rigour in terms of epistemology ... (2013, p. 6)

Furlong also distinguishes between English-speaking countries and certain European countries where education did not strictly develop to serve professional ends. As such, in several countries such as France and Germany, educationists are more confident about speaking of education as a ‘science’ (Furlong, 2013, pp. 6-7). The author argues that some of the problematics of defining education as a discipline emerge from the ‘nature’ of knowledge in education and the role that such knowledge must play in research, professional education, and practice such as in the case of teaching (Furlong, 2013, p. 7). Drawing on Barnett (1990), Furlong makes a case for education as a discipline by arguing that there are epistemological as well as sociological dimensions that affect how disciplines are created and maintained: “A discipline, whether it is physics, theology or education, has to be realized in some way; it needs an existence in terms of courses and qualifications, in lectureships and professorships, in specialist journals, in learned societies and in a whole range of other institutionalized practices” (2013, p. 11).

Furlong concludes that “education may lack the epistemological coherence of some other disciplines, but at the same time, it has a strong institutional reality” (ibid). The author addresses this issue by focusing on different facets of education as a field/discipline including educational research. Drawing on a recent panel for education (2014 REF), Furlong draws attention to the

now acknowledged diversity in education research. The Panel's recommendations included: "Research in education is multidisciplinary and is closely related to a range of other disciplines with which it shares common interests, methods and approaches ... [and] employs a range of *theoretical frameworks and methodologies* drawn from a range of different disciplinary traditions, including but not limited to: 'anthropology, applied linguistics, economics, geography, history, humanities, mathematics, statistics, philosophy, political science, psychology, science, and sociology'" (HEFCE, 2012, pp. 26-28; quoted in Furlong, 2013, p. 88).

This research study operates within the epistemological terrain that has characterized educational research in more recent years. It incorporates theories and methods that span several disciplines such as psychology (cognitive psychology, psychoanalysis), linguistics, anthropology (ethnography, phenomenology), among others. On the sociological level of the discipline, this research locates itself amongst debates in teacher education that are prominent in such research journals as *Teaching and Teacher Education (TATE)* and *Journal of Teacher Education (JTE)*, among others. In fact, the main literature and research studies that have influenced this project, such as the works of Clandinin, Calderhead and Robson, Goodman, Weinstein, among others, are also characterized by the epistemological eclecticism endemic of the field/discipline of education. Clandinin's (1986) conceptualization of images which draws on linguistics as well as cognitive psychology provided me with an entry point to conceptualizing images. Lacanian critiques of discursive approaches that emphasize rational models to understanding identity also helped me formulate the main thesis of this study.

In summary, education's supple epistemological boundaries resonated with my multidisciplinary background and attracted me further to the discipline of education. In it, I felt I could pursue many of my theoretical and methodological interests while still operating within the discipline of education. The sociological dimension of this growing discipline also provided me with some grounding and helped me locate my research study within the increasingly growing sociological and institutional disciplinary boundaries of education.

This study explores the abovementioned guiding research question through the personal portraits of 20 student-teachers undergoing teacher education at three major universities in Lebanon. This

study is also characterized by a multidisciplinary disposition that is the result of my personal and professional background as well as my attempt to understand a complex phenomenon such as beginning-teachers' sense-making processes.

Organization of the chapters

The chapters presented in this dissertation are the product of a reflective and interpretive process that was informed by the research question and sub-questions that guided this study. This chapter provides an introduction to the background, motivation and aims of the research. It also introduces the chapters and the general organization of the thesis. Furthermore, I provide a brief overview of the three main institutions that are the focus of this study. The main purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into the setting in which the student-teachers' personal portraits are to be contextualized.

Chapter 2 provides a review of current international research on teacher identity and teacher images. This is achieved through a critical analysis of the constructs utilized by, as well as the competing approaches to, research on teacher identity. The purpose of the literature review is threefold. First, it attempts to locate this study in a broader context of research on teacher identity as well as to engage with the ongoing debates on the subject. Second, it attempts to explore some of the limitations of current research on teacher identity and make a case for the need to explore alternative approaches to the subject. Finally, the literature informs the conceptualization process of the main construct utilized by this study; namely 'image'. This chapter concludes by clarifying the conceptual framework adopted by this study in order to develop its main guiding research questions. Chapter 3 foregrounds the research design process while focusing on such dimensions of research methodology as participant selection, research site selection, interview design, the interview process, data collection and methods of analysis, ethical considerations and my role as a researcher in this study. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the research findings from the three universities under study; namely, the Lebanese American University, St. Joseph University, and the Lebanese University respectively. Every chapter offers portraits of the participants' views, perceptions and motivations while zooming in on specific images and visualizations that the student-teachers evoke through their portraits.

Finally, Chapter 7 discusses this study's general conclusions and examines some of their implications for teacher education and policy as well as future research on this particular topic.

The purpose of this study is not to provide a systematic and rigorous historical overview of the educational institutions involved in this research. Instead, this study aims at providing rich and vivid portraits of beginning teachers' sense-making process for choosing teaching as a career. These portraits, as will become evident in the chapters below, also function as 'lenses' for shedding light on broader historical, institutional, and political factors and forces that continue to shape the education system in Lebanon. In other words, these portraits provide insights into experienced realities and overarching structures characteristic of the educational context in Lebanon. Therefore, instead of providing a historical analysis to better understand how certain structures and settings influence desires, motivation and perceptions of beginning teachers in Lebanon, this study is keen on offering rich and vivid portraits of beginning teachers' sense-making processes through which one can 'read' the broader historical, political, and social contexts that influence the teachers' lived experiences and personal motivations.

An overview of the institutions involved in this study

The Republic of Lebanon gained independence in 1943, establishing a unique 'confessional' political system. It is based on a consociational democracy; a power-sharing mechanism based on the various religious communities that constitute the Lebanese population. The population of Lebanon is estimated to be around 4 million; however no official census has been conducted since 1932. Lebanon is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the Middle East. A recent demographic study claims that approximately 27 percent of the population in Lebanon are Sunni, 27 percent are Shiite, 21 percent are Maronite, 8 percent are Greek Orthodox, 5 percent are Druze, and 5 percent are Greek Catholic, while the remaining 7 percent belong to smaller Christian denominations (Statistics Lebanon, 2014). The following overview of the three main institutions that this research focuses on provides the historical context for this study.

In 1869, the Ottoman government granted each religious group in Lebanon the right to establish its own educational system. This, to a large extent, resulted from increasing pressures exerted by

western powers on the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century. These events led to an influx of foreign missionary expeditions into the Levant specifically from France, England, and the United States. In 1866, the Syrian Protestant College (today known as the American University of Beirut, AUB) was established followed by the institution of St. Joseph University in 1875 which is affiliated with a French Catholic missionary. In other words, the birth of secondary and higher education in Lebanon was mostly led by foreign missionaries. At that time, the Lebanese ‘government’ had jurisdiction over public elementary schools only. Secondary and higher education were predominantly foreign-led (Matthews & Akrawi, 1949).

St. Joseph University was founded by a French Jesuit missionary in Lebanon whose activity in the region (Syria and Lebanon) started mainly in 1831 through establishing small schools until the founding of St. Joseph University in 1875. Matthews and Akrawi (1949) explain that the main purpose of the founding of this university was the education of the elite Christian ruling class in Lebanon as well as to compete with the Syrian Protestant College (now AUB).

The origins of the Lebanese American University (LAU) extend back to the 19th century when an all-girls college, known as Junior College, was established in Beirut by an American Presbyterian missionary. The first institution that was the nucleus of this College was an all-girls school called the American School for Girls (ASG) that was founded in Beirut by the daughter of an American Missionary in 1830. It is considered to be the oldest American Missionary school in the region. After the sectarian conflicts in 1860 in Mount Lebanon, ASG was renamed Beirut Female Seminary. The school went through various transformations, including occasionally shutting down, until 1868 when it resumed its duties as a school for women which included secondary-level education. This school developed into Junior College which provided a two-year education for girls which in turn qualified them to enroll at the American University of Beirut to continue their higher education. This College was later moved and renamed BCW (Beirut College for Women) in 1924 which later became BUC (Beirut University College) in 1974. Finally, BUC was developed into a full-fledged university in 1994 and was called the Lebanese American University (LAU, 2014).

After the end of World War I, the Levant was divided according to the Sykes-Picot agreement between the Mandates of England and France. In 1920, the French Mandate declared the Greater State of Lebanon. During the Mandate, the French government established the first 'modern' elementary teacher preparation institution then called *Dar al-Mu'allimin al-Ibtida'iyah* in 1932 (Matthews & Akrawi, 1949).

The Lebanese educational system, in the wake of the establishment of the Republic of Lebanon in 1943, was characterized, according to Matthews and Akrawi (1949), by two distinct phenomena in comparison to neighboring countries in the Arab world. First, Lebanon was characterized by high literacy rates (approximately %70). Second, this high literacy rate is considered to be the product of the various foreign schools that had been established by French, English and American missionaries (among others) in the 19th century. This phenomenon, according to the authors, also contributed to the predominantly religious sectarian nature of education in Lebanon. Furthermore, the majority of school children at this time were enrolled in foreign or local (yet foreign affiliated) schools rather than public schools (Matthews & Akrawi, 1949).

Further, Matthews and Akrawi (1949) mention two institutes that existed in the 1940's that prepared teachers for teaching in the elementary schools. The first was for males while the other for females. Both provided a two-year degree with courses in psychology, civics, professional ethics, school management, didactics, mathematics, science, Arabic literature, French literature, history, geography, social studies, crafts, drawing, music, physical education, health education, home economics and agriculture. In 1945, these two schools had a total of 85 students only and were not therefore considered the main lifelines of teacher supply in Lebanon.

After Lebanon's independence from the French Mandate in 1943, recurrent labor, teacher and student movements in Lebanon were able to establish the first labor laws in the region as well as pressure the government to found *Dar al-Mu'allimin and 'Ulya* (Higher Institute for Teachers) which was eventually established in 1951 and which became the nucleus that later developed into the public Lebanese University (Shahine, 2011). Several historians and educationists in Lebanon consider the year 1959 as the official date for the establishment of the Lebanese

University following an official decree by the Lebanese government. During the office of President Fuad Shihab, several Faculties and Departments were instituted in the Lebanese University including the Faculties of Law, Science, and Letters. Several historians and critics argue that the official Lebanese government after that date fell in constant conflict with such a national public institution (see Shahine, 2011; Amel, 2007).

Shahine further argues that foreign missionary universities in Lebanon exerted pressure on the Lebanese government to withhold the right of the Lebanese University to institute Faculties in the applied sciences such as Medicine and Engineering. This resulted in large student mobilizations and movements advocating this cause. It was not until 1969 that the government agreed, in light of successive student and labor movement demonstrations and pressures, to build the main Lebanese University campus. The onset of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 resulted in the emergence of sectarian fiefdoms and demographic boundaries which in turn led to the institution of various ‘branches’ of the Lebanese University in different areas in Lebanon. This resulted in what Shahine describes as sectarian university ‘ghettos’ controlled by the different politico-sectarian militias. This development was ratified by the government in 1977 through what was referred to as the ‘branching’ decree. Today, the condition of the Lebanese University is not too different from that during the civil war despite recurring protests and demonstrations regarding this and other issues. Currently, the Lebanese University has more than 70,000 students that are spread across sixteen Faculties.

It is interesting to note that sectarian divisions and loyalties in 19th-century Lebanon emerged largely due to power struggles between foreign colonial powers and the Ottoman Empire (Maqdisi, 2006). This, in turn, shaped the development of the education system in Lebanon. Today, these conflicts continue to manifest in the schisms and tensions that exist within the main governing education bodies in Lebanon.

Conclusion

The above short overview is intended to provide a general picture of the main context in which these institutions exist. This picture is brought to life through the student-teacher personal portraits provided in chapters 4, 5, and 6. However, before presenting the student portraits, I will embark on a discussion of the literature that informed the development of the conceptual framework of this study as well as the research design and methodology.

Chapter 2 – Teacher Identity and Imagery: towards a research design

Introduction

This research explores the views and perceptions of beginning teachers undergoing initial teacher education in Lebanon. Current literature locates research on teacher views and perceptions within the framework of ‘teacher identity’. The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, I explore how ‘teacher identity’ is discussed in the literature. Second, I highlight an area that has been relatively neglected – namely an attention to imagery. Finally, I offer a theoretical framework that provides useful tools for conceptualizing this area of research.

Section 1 provides a critique of the literature on ‘teacher identity’ addressing some of the problems that arise from the complexities that researchers on the subject often face. Some of the questions that this section will attempt to answer are:

- a- What are some of the complexities in researching ‘teacher identity’?
- b- What alternative analytical tools can prove useful for research on beginning teachers’ views and perceptions?

On the basis of the aforementioned questions and the consequent discussion in section 1, section 2 will explore ways in which the construct of ‘image’ can be developed for the purpose of this study. In other words, this section will attend to the question: How can the construct of ‘image’ be utilized to explore the views and perceptions of beginning teachers? Further, a case for focusing on beginning teachers in particular is made.

The concluding section of this chapter shows how the construct of image informs the main research questions of this study.

Section 1: Complexities in conceptualizing ‘teacher identity’; a review of the literature

The aim of this study is to explore the views and perceptions of beginning teachers undergoing initial teacher education in Lebanon. Studies on this subject locate themselves within the broader area of research on teacher identity which has attracted much interest and focus in the last twenty years (Beijaard *et al.*, 2000; Akkerman & Meijer, 2010). Several reasons underlie the developing interest in research on teacher identity including its implications for teacher education, professional development, and educational policy. A number of studies argue that initial teacher education programs are generally not effective in addressing the enduring views and perceptions of teaching that beginning teachers bring with them to initial teacher education programs (Tatto, 1998; Weinstein, 1990). Kagan (1992), in her research review on professional growth, argues that

the personal beliefs¹ and images that pre-service candidates bring to programs of teacher education usually remain inflexible. Candidates tend to use the information provided in coursework to confirm rather than to confront and correct their pre-existing beliefs. A candidate’s personal beliefs and images therefore determine how much knowledge the candidate acquires from a pre-service program and how it is interpreted. (p. 154)

In consequence, calls have been made for exploring the views and perceptions of beginning teachers in order to improve the efficacy of teacher education programs. Tatto contends that “Reflecting and attempting to understand how their [beginning teachers’] beliefs influence their teaching are critical to teachers’ development and change ...” (1998, p. 66).

Research on teacher education in Lebanon

For the purpose of this study, I undertook a review of the available literature on teacher education, preparation and training in Lebanon for two main reasons. First, I was interested in identifying key experts, informants, and gatekeepers that could help facilitate the fieldwork stage of my project. Second, I was keen on exploring the nature of such research; that is, the varying theoretical frameworks and methodological perspectives that local research utilizes. The survey

¹ It has come to my attention that the terms ‘beliefs’, ‘views’, and ‘attitudes’ are often used interchangeably in discussing teacher identity, although the growing literature on each of the individual categories demonstrates that they are distinct constructs. I take caution when referring to literature that does not draw clear distinctions among such constructs and have consequently restricted the scope of this study to ‘views’ and ‘perceptions’.

of literature on this topic yielded the following broad categories of literature and research on teacher education in Lebanon:

- a- Non-academic literature resulting from conferences organized by teacher unions and syndicates that had a political bent such as building solidarities and producing ‘evidence’ for teacher advocacy.
- b- Academic conference proceedings from conferences organized and held in Lebanon by Lebanese academics on the issue of teacher preparation and education.
- c- Academic research undertaken by Lebanese and international educationists on issues in teacher education published in international peer-reviewed journals.

The first category of literature was very helpful in providing this research with some of the crucial issues that teachers and unionists felt are at stake in teacher preparation (among other issues) in Lebanon. This literature, however, was mostly rhetorical in nature; the purpose of which was to serve political and activist agendas. As such, this literature served as an entry point into the political context (or a particular facet of it) within which teachers found themselves in Lebanon. This corpus of literature also helped me identify key gatekeepers and informants for my research. Several secondary interviews conducted with unionists, educationists, legislators, and activists that I refer to throughout this study were inspired by the literature that was available from such conference proceedings. The main body of literature that falls within this category comes from a series of conferences that were organized by the League of Secondary School Teachers in Lebanon that was held in UNESCO, Beirut between 2000 and 2006.

The second category of literature on teacher education and preparation in Lebanon and the Arab world came from a series of conferences organized by the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies (LAES) as well as other local academic or research institutions in Lebanon. Examples of such literature include *Tamhin al-ta‘lim fi lubnan* (Professionalizing² Teaching in Lebanon, 2009), which compiles proceedings of a conference organized by St. Joseph University in Beirut; *I‘dad al-mu‘allimin fi al-buldan al-‘arabiyah* (Teacher Preparation in the Arab Countries, 2002) organized by LAES; *Al-dawlah wa al-ta‘lim fi lubnan* (The State and Education in Lebanon, 1999); among other conference proceedings. The three aforementioned texts were the closest in

² The word *tamhin* in Arabic comes from *mihnah* meaning occupation. However, I translated the former word to ‘professionalizing’ since the term ‘occupationalizing’ might be confusing.

relevance to teacher preparation and education. The rest of the available literature focused on other issues in education such as curriculum reform, educational governance, and teaching specific subject matters. Another available resource on relevant research topics was *Majallat al-abhath al-tarbawiyyah* (Educational Research Journal) published by the Faculty of Pedagogy at the Lebanese University. After conducting a thorough survey of the available literature on teacher preparation, the most relevant studies I found included such titles as ‘Assessment Practices in Teacher-preparation Programs in Higher Education in Lebanon’ (Shatila, Adada, & el-Chami, 2012), ‘Structural and Conceptual Foundations of Teacher Education Programs in Selected Universities in Lebanon’ (el-Mouhayar & BouJaoude, 2012), and ‘A Concept Note on Enhancing Teacher Training and Cooperation among Faculties and Departments of Education in Public and Private Universities in Lebanon’ (Ghaith, 2012). In all of the abovementioned studies, very broad allusions to the importance of understanding beginning teachers developing identities are made without any discussion of such a construct on theoretical levels.

The abovementioned sources, however, were helpful in providing me with insight into the quality and relevance of the available literature on teacher preparation in Lebanon and the Arab World that is locally produced and published. This study, however, does not strictly rely on such literature for three main reasons. First, most of the local papers I encountered were somewhat prescriptive in nature; offering concept notes and policy strategies for improving teacher preparation in the Arab world. For example, the St. Joseph conference proceedings were mostly prescriptive and had been developed from focus-groups and workshops conducted with teacher educators to chart action plans for developing teacher education and policy. Second, articles that were not prescriptive adopted a somewhat strict descriptive approach to the status of teacher preparation in the Arab world relying mostly on conventional quantitative social science tools and approaches for supporting their arguments. Finally, and most importantly, all of the local studies I surveyed drew heavily on international/foreign sources for their theoretical frameworks. Almost all the sources used by the authors of the local articles I surveyed were international (Anglo-American and French) where terminology were either translated or transliterated. Unfortunately, this is characteristic of many research studies in education undertaken by researchers in Lebanon and the Arab World. They often rely heavily on theoretical borrowing as well as conventional social science tools and research methods. As was mentioned above, the survey of this category of literature was very helpful for gaining insight into the nature and

quality of research in education in Lebanon while also gaining fieldwork access through identifying key informants and gatekeepers in various institutions and political bodies.

The third category of literature included research on teacher education published in international peer-reviewed journals. Intensive search on the subject of teacher education in Lebanon yielded a considerably small number of studies on the subject of teacher education such as ‘No Teacher Left Behind: Subject Leadership that Promotes Teacher Leadership’ (Ghamrawi, 2010), ‘The Environmental Knowledge and Attitudes of Prospective Teachers in Lebanon: A Comparative Study’ (Vlaardingerbroek & Taylor, 2007), and ‘Issues and Trends in Arab Teacher Education’ (Rugh, 1956). These, and other similar publications on teacher education, focused on topics and issues that were not relevant to my study.

In summary, the dearth of local and international literature on the subject of teacher education in Lebanon, and more specifically beginning teachers’ identity development, had led me to rely more on international studies in developing my theoretical and methodological frameworks for this research project.

Research on teacher identity

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), in ‘Understanding teacher identity’, acknowledge the challenges inherent in understanding the various aspects and dimensions of ‘identity’ and the ways in which they are related. The authors explain:

In our own efforts to understand the growing literature on teacher identity, we note that identity in teaching has been explored in a variety of *very different ways*: in terms of the constant ‘reinventing’ of themselves that teachers undergo (see Mitchell & Weber, 1999), in terms of the narratives that teachers create to explain themselves and their teaching lives (see Connelley & Clandinin, 1999; Sfard & Prusak, 2005) and the variety of discourses teachers participate in and produce (see Alsop, 2006), in terms of the metaphors that may guide or result from a teacher’s understanding of their role (see Hunt, 2006; Leavy, McSorley, & Boté, 2006), and in terms of the influence of a wide range of contextual factors on teachers and their practice (see Chevrier, Gohier, Anadon, & Godbout, 2007; Flores & Day, 2006) [emphasis added].

A review of the literature on teacher identity buttresses the claims made by Beauchamp and Thomas above. Teacher identity is explored from various perspectives including discourse analytical (Peressini & Knuth, 1998; Robinson & McMillan, 2006; Cohen, 2009), socio-cultural (Lasky, 2005, among others), psychoanalytic (Atkinson, 2004; Hanley, 2009, among others), sociological (Ozga, 2000; Rawolle & Lingard, 2008; Shay, 2008; Daley & Maguire, 2009); among others. The different perspectives and approaches have correspondingly utilized different constructs and theoretical lenses for exploring identity. The varying definitions of identity have therefore led researchers to pursue such a topic using various analytical constructs such as motivation (Bruinsma & Jansen 2010), beliefs (Alsup, 2006; Earl, Freeman, Lasky, Sutherland, & Torrence, 2001, among others), views (Lortie, 1975; Knowles, 1992; Zembylas, 2008; among others), emotions (Kelchtermans, 2005), images (Clandinin, 1986; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Weber & Mitchell, 1996; among others), narratives (McVee, 2004; Gomez, Walker, & Page 2000; among others) or combinations of these and other constructs.

As was mentioned in the introduction above, the main aim of this study is to explore the views and perceptions of beginning teachers in Lebanon. It is important to note that a growing corpus of international studies locates research on this topic within the framework of ‘teacher identity’. However, the inherent ambiguities and complexities in defining the category ‘identity’ have rendered such a construct not very useful from analytical perspectives for the purpose of this study. Definitions of ‘identity’ within research on ‘teacher identity’ vary considerably. The latter is often related to “self-image” and “teacher roles” (Volkmann & Anderson, 1998), “sense or perception of autonomy” (Siraj-Blatchford, 1993), “social perception of an occupational group” (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997), and “something that characterized the ideal teacher” (Graham & Young, 1998), among others. Bearing in mind the complexities and ambiguities ensuing from the wide-ranging and at times competing definitions of teacher identity, I propose that the construct of ‘teacher identity’ is a problematic category of analysis and instead will draw on the concept of ‘identification’ and ‘image’ in conceptualizing beginning teachers’ views and perceptions about teaching.

Brubaker and Cooper, in ‘Beyond “identity”’, provide a compelling critique of the application of the term ‘identity’ as an analytical category for the purpose of research. The authors argue that the humanities and social sciences have “succumbed” to the term ‘identity’, stressing that the

latter “tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)” (2000, p. 1). In consequence, the authors attempt to survey the theoretical and conceptual work that the term ‘identity’ is expected to perform and suggest other terms which they argue provide better, analytically more suitable and useful work and that are “unencumbered by the reifying connotations of “identity” ...” (ibid). Furthermore, they argue that notwithstanding the utility and importance of ‘identity’ as a category of practice, this term can do more harm than good when used as a category of analysis. The authors contend that “Conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of “identity” saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary” (2000, p. 2). As an analytical category, the authors argue that the term “identity” is “too ambiguous, too torn between “hard” and “soft” meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis” (2000, p. 2). In brief, the authors stress a distinction between social (i.e. understood as a category of practice) and sociological (i.e. understood as a category of analysis) definitions or understandings of the concept ‘identity’: “The problem, as Loïc Wacquant has argued with respect to “race,” lies in the “uncontrolled conflation of social and sociological ...” (2000, pp. 5-6). This is not uncommon in the case of ‘identity’ in general, the authors argue.

To emphasize their point further, Brubaker and Cooper define ‘identity’ as a category of practice that is utilized by actors in certain everyday situations and practices to make sense of themselves, their activities, and their social positions and how they differ from others. The authors contrast this definition with ‘identity’ as a category of analysis utilized by researchers in their attempts to understand and describe/construct a certain social phenomenon (2000, p. 4). The authors conclude that the term ‘identity’ is

ill suited to perform this [analytical] work, for it is riddled with ambiguity, riven with contradictory meanings, and encumbered by reifying connotations. Qualifying the noun with strings of adjectives – specifying that identity is multiple, fluid, constantly re-negotiated, and so on – does not solve the Orwellian problem of entrapment in a word. It yields little more than a suggestive oxymoron – a multiple singularity, a fluid crystallization – but still begs the question of why one should use the same term to designate all this and more. (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 34)

Indeed, Brubaker and Cooper's concerns prove timely and relevant for critically engaging with recent literature that attempts to reconcile 'hard' and 'soft' definitions of identity. For example, Akkerman and Meijer (2010), in their attempt to deal with the competing perspectives on identity, offer a dialogic approach which draws on Dewey's pragmatism and Bakhtin's dialogism. They propose that:

The emerging theory of dialogical self in psychology offers a more elaborate approach to teacher identity, conceived of as both unitary and multiple, both continuous and discontinuous, and both individual and social. (Akkerman & Meijer, 2010, p. 1)

Reflecting on the above proposition, the concerns put forward by Brubaker and Cooper in regards to the problems of using 'identity' as an analytical category become more qualified. A reasonable question to ask at this stage is whether such a pluralist conceptualization of 'teacher identity', albeit theoretically helpful and perhaps generative for the purposes of teacher education, is useful for analytical purposes in the case of this study. The definitions and conceptualizations provided in the literature which attempt to reconcile seemingly opposing notions of identity through proposing that the latter is both coherent and fragmented, multiple and unitary, etc, remain nonetheless nebulous, particularly for analytical purposes.

Following their critique of 'identity' as a category of analysis, Brubaker and Cooper propose the term 'identification' as analytically more useful and highlight its potential to shed light on the social relations and categories with which individuals *identify*. In particular, they propose 'relational identification' and 'categorical identification' as valuable analytical tools for the study of 'identity'. Examples, according to the authors, may involve 'race' as a form of 'categorical identification' and the relationship between a student and a teacher as a form of 'relational identification'. Another distinction that the authors make in regards to the notion of 'identification' involves the difference between self-identification and the identification and categorization of oneself by others. They explain that "In the ordinary ebb and flow of social life, people identify and categorize others, just as they identify and categorize themselves" (2000, p. 15). In summary, Brubaker and Cooper contend that "[...] "identification" calls attention to complex (and often ambivalent) processes, while the term "identity," designating a condition rather than a process, implies too easy a fit between the individual and the social" (2000, p. 17).

Although recent literature has proposed more workable definitions of teacher identity (ex. Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, among others) that could prove relevant to this research, however, based on the focus and methods adopted by this study, and the practical educational dimension that this study hopes to offer, I have decided to focus on images for the following reasons.

In expressing their views and perceptions, this study's participant teachers drew heavily on visualization and imagery. This will become evident in the findings chapters of this dissertation. As such, I decided to conceptualize images as useful theoretical tools for exploring such views and perceptions. Furthermore, on a more practical level, working with identities in teacher education may prove extremely complex. Images which affect how teachers see themselves in the classroom, in school, or in their teacher education program are more readily evoked through certain reflective exercises and therefore promise to offer teacher educators a more practical bent.

Another reason behind my choice lies in the nature of teacher preparation in Lebanon as well as internationally. Teacher education curricula draw heavily on the visual aspects of practice such as in their emphasis on the observation of in-service teachers while beginning teachers undergo training. In other words, student-teachers go through long hours of observing practicing teachers teach in their classrooms. Furthermore, all student-teachers arrive at teacher education programs having gone through a long process of 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975) which again draws heavily on what these student-teachers had observed throughout their schooling experiences as pupils. The above increased my confidence in the efficacy of images as useful tools for exploring beginning teachers' views and perceptions of teaching.

Finally, the works of Atkinson (2004), Hanley (2009), and Bibby (2011) drew my attention to the shortcomings of rational models in understanding identity formation. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory (Freudian, Lacanian, and Kleinian), these authors emphasize the importance and relevance of the more enigmatic aspects of identity formation that often resist discursive symbolization. As such, images seemed more efficacious in expressing some of these more elusive aspects of teacher identity. Furthermore, gender-critical approaches to teacher

identity such as in the works of Dillabough (1999) among others, drew my attention to the “Kantian and Cartesian assumptions about the modern political subject that have plagued liberal democratic societies for three centuries; most notably, the notion of the teacher as a ‘rational, instrumental actor’” and the impact of such rational and instrumental notions of teaching on the conditions under which teachers often work (Dillabough, 1999, p. 374).

In effect, the use of images in this study provided me with an interpretive and flexible theoretical framework within which powerful analytical work can be done through the creative incorporation of different metaphors, imagery and language in probing the views and perceptions of the participants of this study without feeling strictly bounded by the theoretical stance or assumptions that one particular perspective adopts or incorporates.

It is important to note here that I do make references to beginning teachers’ motivations in this study. I, however, decided not to use ‘motivation’ as a category of analysis for several reasons. The main reason stems from the varying definitions of motivation in the literature. Such definitions varied significantly depending on the epistemological and ontological stance adopted by different perspectives including psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioral, sociological, etc. In other words, the definition of motivation from a psychoanalytic perspective varied considerably from those provided by behaviorist or humanistic perspectives. As stated in the title of this dissertation, this study is interested in exploring imagery and identification amongst beginning teachers in Lebanon. As such, it does not claim to explore identity *per se* for reasons elucidated in more detail earlier. Rather, this study locates itself within the field of teacher identity on sociological grounds (most research studies reviewed for this research located themselves within the field of teacher identity) rather than on epistemological ones.

The focus on images in this study revealed both strengths and weaknesses for understanding beginning teachers’ views and perceptions. On the one hand, images proved powerful tools for exploring the visual aspects of teacher identity. Nevertheless, images, at times, flattened or leveled the otherwise complex terrain of identity formation which involves, as Beauchamp and Thomas explain above, various dimensions such as motivations, beliefs, attitudes, narratives, discourses, among others. Yet, and as the findings chapters will demonstrate, images are

powerful interpretive tools that often synthesize various aspects of the sense-making process that the student-teachers undertake. The efficacy of images to synthesize the various aspects of this process is a dimension I theorize in this study through the notion of ‘articulating power’.

In summary, this study will draw on the term ‘identification’ recognizing that such a category promises to be analytically more useful than ‘identity’ in exploring how beginning teachers make sense of and *identify* themselves with the varied and multiple aspects of teaching in Lebanon. Furthermore, this study considers that fundamental to the process of identification are visualizations and imagery which this research aims to explore through the construct of ‘image’. As will be demonstrated in the methodology chapter, the construct ‘identification’ and its subcategories ‘categorical’, ‘relational’, ‘self-identification’, and ‘identification by others’ were operationalized into the interview questions that consequently evoked visualizations and images on teaching and teachers.

Section 2: Beginning teachers’ developing identity; ‘image’ as a conceptual tool

Why focus on beginning teachers?

As was mentioned above, studies conducted by Tatto (1998), among others, have brought into question the efficacy of teacher education programs in addressing the enduring views and perceptions of beginning teachers about teaching. Tatto explains that student-teachers’ previous experiences as students impacted by their schools’ culture have greater influence than formal teacher education in shaping their teaching (ibid). The author stresses that “Societal mechanisms including the media, socialization processes from childhood to adulthood, and experiences with schooling may heavily influence teacher education students’ views” and elaborates on how “Social, economic, and political forces mediate the influence of teacher education on teacher education students’ views” (Tatto, 1998, p. 67). Reinforcing such a view is the research conducted by Hattingh and de Kock (2008) which proposes that teachers enrolling in teacher education programs often bring with them “fixed images and beliefs about the roles they see themselves fulfilling in the teaching profession” (p. 321).

The above arguments make a case for the frequent inefficacy of teacher education programs to effectively engage with beginning teachers' views and perceptions³ about teaching which, as was discussed above, can have a decisive impact on how student-teachers encounter the content of such programs. It is for such reasons that this study focuses mainly on beginning teachers and the images of teaching and teachers they bring with them to their teacher education programs.

The role of images

Weinstein (1990), in her work on the preconceptions of beginning teachers, has argued that student-teachers often enter professional educational programs "believing they already know what teaching is all about" (p. 279). Drawing on Britzman's (1986) work, Weinstein adds that prospective teachers bring to their teacher education programs their personal institutional biographies as well as personal and "commonsensical" images of teaching (p. 279). Indeed, Calderhead and Robson (1991) argue that research on teacher socialization indicates that student-teachers spend thousands of hours in an "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) resulting in the accumulation of a body of values, commitments, orientations, and practices, which are enduring despite the role of training institutions (Calderhead & Robson, 1991, pp. 1-2). In response, Calderhead and Robson contend that in order to facilitate the process of professional development, some understanding is required of the nature of student-teachers' professional knowledge and therefore "the concept of image may prove useful in this context" (1991, p. 7). In a passage worth quoting at length, the authors suggest:

Once we better understand the nature, development, and use of student teachers' images, imaging itself could perhaps be usefully integrated into the teacher education curriculum. In athletics and sports coaching, imaging is already well established as a means of improving performance. Experimental studies have demonstrated significant improvements in such activities as tennis, skating, gymnastics, and skiing as a result of imaging (Cratty, 1984). In these contexts, imaging appears to offer a mental model for guiding and monitoring performance and fine tuning muscular control. The role of imaging in teaching and teacher education may not be wholly analogous. However, we know that student teachers do spend time imaging their classroom performance and that some students have quite powerful and influential images of teaching.

³ As was noted earlier, although some of the literature that this study reviews uses 'views' and 'beliefs' interchangeably, this research will focus on 'views' and 'perceptions' as they emerge in images without making inferences about beginning teachers' beliefs.

Whether and how these might be more usefully employed in the official processes of professional preparation is an interesting challenge for teacher educators. (1991, pp. 7-8)

I will therefore draw on the construct of ‘image’ as a tool to conceptualize and gain insight into how student-teachers identify themselves as teachers as well as to explore their views and perceptions about teaching in order to better understand how they make sense of their choices. In order to achieve this, this study adopts the following research perspective.

Research perspective

This study emphasizes the perspective of the student-teachers while attempting to locate their narratives and ‘personal portraits’⁴ in the broader educational and cultural context in Lebanon. I therefore avoid approaching the student-teacher perspectives with a theoretically-laden conceptual framework. Rather, this study develops its analysis through a dialectical, iterative process that allows the data to inform the conceptualization process and, in return, have the latter shed more light on and provide deeper insights into the data at hand.

‘Image’, partly in the manner that Clandinin (1986) conceptualizes, provides a tool to understand how student-teachers think about teaching as an activity and an occupational choice. The data with which this study engages, as will be demonstrated in the findings chapters, suggest that student-teachers’ motivations, aspirations, and views about teaching are guided by images they hold of themselves and of teaching on the one hand, and their perceptions of the images others hold of them and of their career choice on the other. According to Calderhead and Robson (1991), images of teaching

... appeared to be ways of representing knowledge that could readily be translated into action, sometimes synthesizing quite large amounts of knowledge about teachers, children, teaching methods, and so on. There is much for further research to investigate in identifying the nature and scope of images, qualitative differences in types of image, and their interactions with other forms of knowledge representation ... (p. 7)

⁴ This ethnographic approach will be discussed in the Methodology chapter of this dissertation.

This study attempts to understand the views and perceptions of twenty beginning teachers at three different teacher education programs in Lebanon in order to elaborate a pre-service-teacher-based conception of ‘image’. The emergent images and the portraits they depict are also located within the broader socio-political and educational context in Lebanon. In effect, this study proposes that images are useful in understanding how student-teachers make sense of their experiences and choices. Also, images provide a dynamic and visual tool for *presenting* the findings of this research study and therefore allow readers to participate in constructing a vivid portrait of beginning teachers’ experiences, perceptions, and motivations.

Thinking about ‘images’ and imagery

During the first stage of this study, ‘image’ was employed as an entry-point into teachers’ views and perceptions. Images often emerged as metaphors that are general and have been abstracted by the student-teachers from a variety of their experiences and episodic memories “relating to particular significant events or people” (Calderhead & Robson, 1991, p. 4). For example, images of ‘good teaching’ and ‘bad teaching’ were explored through students’ general definitions and reflections as well as specific episodic experiences and memories that they expressed during interviews. Calderhead and Robson argue, in their study ‘Images of Teaching’, that “The term “image” appeared a useful one in analysing the transcripts because it emphasised the experiential basis of the knowledge students held, and its strongly visual nature, which were characteristic of many student reports” (1991, p. 3).

Clandinin, in her research on teacher practical knowledge, explores the usefulness of images in conceptualizing and understanding teacher personal practical knowledge. Drawing on Elbaz’s (1983) work on practical knowledge, Clandinin argues that ‘image’ “opens the way for looking at knowledge as experiential, embodied and based on the narrative of experience” (Clandinin, 1986, p. 19). Clandinin utilizes Elbaz’s notion of ‘image’ as a linguistic tool characterized by a “brief, descriptive and sometimes metaphoric statement” (1983, p. 254 quoted in Clandinin, 1986, p. 19). Drawing on Elbaz’s work as well as a number of exploratory studies that she had conducted, Clandinin proposes the following six dimensions/characteristics of ‘image’: images “may be connected to a concrete incident,” “have a metaphoric quality,” “have an affective

dimension,” “have a moral coloring,” are “thought to exhibit complexity,” may be “related to other images and may exhibit specificity in their detailed construction and in the meaning they convey” (1986, p. 33). Furthermore, Clandinin suggests two possible “origins” of image: “a possible connection between image and actual events, as well as a connection between image and reflection” (ibid). Finally, Clandinin conceptualizes the “function” of image as capturing “both the teacher’s personal philosophy and helping the teacher cope with classroom situations” (ibid). In summary, Clandinin introduces three subcategories for conceptualizing image; namely, ‘dimension’, ‘origin’, and ‘function’.

Clandinin also employs Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) understanding of images as taking the character of a “public metaphor” (1986, p. 19). She, however, contends that Elbaz’s as well as Lakoff and Johnson’s constructs of ‘image’ do not take into account “the private experience invested in an image which is part of the construct of image offered in the [Clandinin’s] present research” (1986, p. 19), emphasizing that an image is “a coalescence of an individual’s experience” (1986, 148). She explains that the specific task of her study is to “offer a conceptualization of a teacher’s experiences as they can be seen to crystallize in the form of images” (Clandinin, 1986, p. 4). Although this study shares Clandinin’s intentions in utilizing ‘images’ as conceptual tools for analyzing teacher knowledge, it nevertheless avoids an understanding of images as ‘crystallizations of experiences’. Instead, a socio-cultural perspective of images is emphasized. Drawing on perspectives of learning and meaning-making espoused by Murphy and Hall (2008), among others, which contend that ‘meaning’ is ‘distributed’, ‘non-local’, and ‘embodied’, this study extends such perspectives to ‘images’ as they are constructed by participants of this research while mediating, and at the same time being mediated by, their experiences; personal, educational and professional. In this study, I approach ‘images’ as dynamic and ‘non-local’ (i.e., not strictly individual and private); co-constructed by the individual through a mediating environment that does not exclude the interview/research process itself. In other words, I do not consider images as concluded, fossilized or crystallized entities that the participants of this research merely share. Instead, I look at images as they dynamically emerge in the participants’ narratives and personal portraits through the interview process.

It is important to note that despite Clandinin's use of the term "crystallized," the author nevertheless acknowledges the dynamic nature of images. However, she does not anywhere in her research properly interrogate the interview process as it contributes to the emergence of these images. She does acknowledge her role as a researcher in the research process and emphasizes how the interpretation of these images is minded by her intentions. However, there seems to be a break between, on the one hand, the dimension of the research that involves her 'collection' of these images expressed and communicated by the participants and, on the other, the dimension where she interprets them and therefore participates in reconstructing them. Clandinin asserts that the "interview situation in the present [Clandinin's] study is viewed as one in which the teacher is communicating about her practice in theoretical terms" (Clandinin, 1986, p. 19). However, the author does not sufficiently recognize the role that the researcher plays in the interview as a participant in this image construction process. The missing link, which is a 'third' dimension, is a dialogical one through which the images partially emerge and are co-constructed within the interview process itself. Therefore, these images constitute a 'third' participant in the interview process.

This study emphasizes not only the interpretive process as a reconstructive one, but also the dialogical process that underlies the researcher-participant encounter as kernel to the emergence and articulation of the images of interest. Perhaps an example can help clarify this point. During my interviews with Rami, a participant in this study, I could detect that his perceptions of my position as a researcher in education (which he perhaps identified with one of his professors) were active in the interview process. Such statements as "Ah, I knew you were going to ask me this question," in addition to his gestures, facial expressions, affect, and general posture were very much present and active during the interview. These, I would like to argue, are inexorable 'participants' that emerge in the process of the interview and are instigated not only by my presence and subjectivity, but also by Rami's perception of my presence and subjectivity and his perception of my attitude and perception of his thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and speech in general. This is referred to by Bakhtin as an 'excess of seeing' (Bakhtin, 1990, p. ix). In brief, the dialogical process that constitutes the interview and its *multiple* participants; the interviewer, the interviewee, their perceptions of each other, of the *subject* of discussion, as well as their perceptions of the *other's* perceptions of the subject at hand, are all present and at work in the

encounter and act as a ‘third’ group of participants during the interview. This study is mindful of these dimensions of the interview process and, in consequence, acknowledges that the emergent images are heteroglossic; a Bakhtinian term that denotes the multi-voiced nature of language (Halasek, 1999, p. 83). However, this assertion must not be considered to render the resulting images useless or uninformative since one can, in a similar vein as was expressed above, make a strong case that all meaning emerging from dialogue is heteroglossic.

Conceptualizing images

One of the aims of this study is to develop a conceptualization of image to gain insight into beginning teachers’ views and perceptions. In effect, this study draws partially on Clandinin’s (1986) methodology in conceptualizing images. Nonetheless, I have not restricted the conceptual framework of this study to Clandinin’s categories. Drawing on the theoretical literature hitherto presented, in addition to the data collection and analysis stages of this study, a distinct conceptualization of image is developed. As such, this research also underlines the importance of the interpretive process in the conceptualization of ‘images’. The dimensions of ‘image’ that emerged from this study were iteratively developed where some were discarded in response to the emergent themes from the data, while others that were inspired by previous studies or theoretical works on the subject were tested on the data and either modified and adopted or all together rejected. A process of moving back and forth between the emerging images and the participants’ narrative accounts was undertaken until a set of guiding images were adopted.

This iterative process was used as both an interpretive as well as a conceptualizing method. The resulting conception of ‘image’ was adopted as both a representational (i.e. grounded in student-teachers’ experiences and expressions and in turn used to represent them) and a presentational (i.e. guiding the form and structure of presenting the findings) method. Based on the literature, the data collection process, and the interpretive process, the following conceptualization of ‘image’ was developed: images are (a) *linguistic expressions* of underlying visualizations of

personal experiences, views, and perceptions; they are (b) *rooted*⁵ in experiences, past and present, as well as personal accounts, biographies, and imagined contexts. In this respect, this study is interested in ‘locating’ the various images in the biographies and experiences of the student-teachers. Some images emerged from the students’ personal accounts as a whole while others emerged from what Clandinin refers to as a “watershed experience” which she defines as a recollected experience that is considered “a turning or breaking point after which the person views experiences in an altered way” (Clandinin, 1986, p. 140). Furthermore, images exhibit (c) *articulating power* (instead of the term ‘function’ used by Clandinin) which denotes both the ability to (i) link, join together and synthesize large amounts of personal knowledge with the various aspects of the student-teachers’ experiences and biographies as well as to (ii) cogently negotiate personal choices and preferences in conversation with others. Clandinin (1986) emphasizes in her research how ‘image’ “links a person’s educational life ... personal private life ... [and] educational professional experience” (p. 131). Also, Calderhead and Robson (1991) stress that such images have the ability to synthesize large amounts of data that are rooted in the teacher’s background experiences and life events. Therefore, the notion of *articulating power* is regarded as potentially useful for shedding light on how student-teachers link among and connect (thus articulate) the various aspects and dimensions of their lives and express or articulate them in the interview dialogue. Finally, images exhibit different (d) *colorings or tones* involving moral, interpersonal, affective/emotional, custodial/pastoral, charismatic, technical/discursive, physical, gender, religious, entrepreneurial, among others.

⁵ Although Clandinin (1986) draws on the term ‘rooted’ in her study, she, however, adopts the term ‘origin’ to elaborate the abovementioned aspect of image. Clandinin also adopts the term ‘function’ to describe the ability of images to connect a person’s past and present experiences with future aspirations. This study is cautious about the possible underlying positivist/functionalist implications of such terms as ‘origin’ and ‘function’ and instead adopts the terms ‘rootedness’ and ‘articulating power’ respectively.

Conclusion

The purpose of the above discussion is to locate the present study in the context of ongoing research in the area of beginning teachers' views and perceptions about teaching. In it, I also provide a conceptualization of 'image' as a tool to gain insight into such views and perceptions. In light of this discussion and the underlying main arguments, the following research question and sub-questions were developed to guide this study:

How do student-teachers in Lebanon make sense of their choice to pursue teaching as an occupation? More specifically:

- a. How do student-teachers in Lebanon explain their motivations for and anxieties about becoming teachers?
- b. How do their perceptions of teaching inform their choices?
- c. How can 'images' be theorized to better explain how student-teachers negotiate their choices?

Chapter 3 – Methodology: design process of the study

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline and discuss the design of this research study which took place in Beirut, Lebanon over a period of nine months between October 2009 and June 2010. The design of the study was developed to the specific research questions outlined in the literature review chapter of this dissertation. The main aim of this study is twofold. First, it provides a descriptive and interpretive account of beginning teachers' developing identities through the images of teaching they construct and negotiate during their education. Furthermore, this study provides an original conceptualization of the main theoretical lens it utilizes; namely, 'image'. As was discussed in the literature review chapter, the theoretical framework for this study was developed iteratively through utilizing key research literature on the subject in addition to allowing the data to inform the preliminary theoretical constructs as teacher images gradually emerged in the participants' personal portraits. Below, I discuss the methodology of this research study as well as provide a reflective account on the decisions that were made in regards to the design of the study, the issues that arose during the fieldwork stage of the research, and the limitations that informed the final design and data analysis procedures adopted by this research project.

The literature that was reviewed in the previous chapter aimed to establish the importance of images for this inquiry. However, the various theoretical frameworks that were addressed and which emerge mostly from Western contexts do not sufficiently engage with the specificities of the socio-historical contexts characteristic of a place like Lebanon. In effect, the methods that were adopted for data collection and analysis remained sensitive towards these specificities while at the same time attentive to broader, over-arching factors and influences characteristic of global changes that continue to impact the development of teaching as an occupation in Lebanon as well as worldwide. In consequence, the methods utilized for this study were selected for exploratory aims as well as for theoretical ends.

As was stated in the previous chapter, the research question and sub-questions I adopted for this inquiry are:

How do student-teachers in Lebanon make sense of their choice to pursue teaching as an occupation? More specifically:

- a. How do student-teachers in Lebanon explain their motivations for and anxieties about becoming teachers?
- b. How do their perceptions of teaching inform their choices?
- c. How can 'images' be theorized to better explain how student-teachers negotiate their choices?

The above research question and sub-questions were chosen to be open-ended in order to remain open to the process of research. In fact, the research questions, theoretical framework, and design were iteratively modified and dialectically developed throughout the research process including the data collection and analysis stages; a point I stress in the previous chapter.

The conceptual framework and the design of this study were influenced by a number of works including those of Elbaz (1983), Clandinin (1986), Goodman (1988), Nias (1989), Calderhead and Robson (1991), Goodson and Cole (1994), and Beijard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) which were discussed in the previous chapter. Many of these studies, which focus mostly on beginning-teachers' choices and motivations, have underlined the importance of teachers' perceptions and images of their roles. Furthermore, the methodology of this study was generally influenced by the research aims, questions, research designs and methods undertaken by similar studies such as the abovementioned. It was also influenced by general philosophical and historical debates about the changing nature of teaching and teacher education globally (Gewirtz *et al.*, 2009, among others). The abovementioned literature had considerable influence on the developing design of this study since it shed light on some of the complexities that arise when trying to understand how beginning teachers make sense of their career choice in an environment of escalating tensions regarding teaching as a profession and a form of social practice. Such issues informed both how I developed the tools I used to look at teaching and teacher education in Lebanon (the conceptual framework) as well as provided guidelines for where to look and how to make sense of what I was looking at (methods used in this study). Furthermore, my

choice of the theoretical framework was also partly influenced by my personal biography and motivation for understanding teaching as an occupation⁶ in Lebanon.

This study adopts an interpretive constructionist paradigm (Schwandt, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; among others). I decided that the most suitable methods for the purpose of this study fall under the general category of qualitative research. The study thus aimed to develop an understanding of the meaning-making process that student-teachers undertake during their training to make sense of their choices and motivations to become teachers. In effect, the study focused on student-teachers' biographical accounts, episodic memories, and metaphoric language as these students elaborated on their motivations for, anxieties about, and perceptions of teaching as a career choice and a form of social practice in Lebanon.

The reader will have noticed that most of the research literature that this study draws on is Western. One of the reasons for this is the lack of research studies in the Lebanese context that explore teacher images. This is also why this study adopts as one of its aims the conceptualizing of 'image' as a theoretical lens for describing and interpreting beginning-teachers' choices and motivations for choosing teaching as an occupation in Lebanon. It will slowly become evident that every chapter in this study further contributes to the development of its design and theoretical framework in order to develop tools for further inquiry into teacher images. The findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 reveal the dynamic process through which the conceptual lenses and the theoretical framework as a whole were developed.

In this study, I explore in depth how student-teachers make sense of their career choices. Therefore, this study is partly exploratory in nature and adopts a qualitative research approach. The design and methods used were chosen to be flexible and were developed iteratively to facilitate this in-depth exploration of the participants' sense-making and negotiation processes of

⁶ I use the term 'occupation' here with caution. I am well aware of the different implications of such terms as 'profession', 'vocation', and 'occupation' especially in Western literature on the subject. For example, Evetts (2009) differentiates between teaching as a vocation and as an occupation privileging the former. Further, Western discourse on teaching, especially in England, contextualizes teaching as a profession within specific historical, social, and political settings from which definitions of professionalism emerge (ex. Gewirts *et al.*, 2009). However, in the Lebanese context, the term *mihnah* was used by most participants in this study which translates most accurately into 'occupation'.

their choices and motivations. The data collection methods and strategies, the sample of participants, and data analysis procedures were incrementally developed and refined as the study proceeded. Moreover, this study drew partially on Clandinin's (1986) study for developing its preliminary conceptual framework as well as its design and methods. Clandinin's work also inspired the main impetus of the study; namely, to gain a phenomenological⁷ understanding of what it is like to be a student-teacher studying at a major university in Beirut, Lebanon. Data were collected through a series of interviews with 20 student-teachers enrolled at teacher education programs in three major universities in Beirut, Lebanon. This chapter discusses the major methodological issues that arose during the research and presents the procedures adopted by this study.

Research design

The following discussion will elaborate on the development of the methodology adopted by this study. In it, I focus on the following aspects of the research design: sample and site selection, access, and data collection processes including interview design and data collection and analysis methods. I also provide a short, reflective discussion on my role as the researcher in this study. I conclude with a short discussion on the data presentation framework that I adopt in the findings chapters of this dissertation.

Sample and site selection

Several issues and factors were taken into account in my site-selection process such as the type of university (public, private), language of instruction (Arabic, French, English), and prospective placement of beginning teachers in schools (ex. American or French private schools, Lebanese private or public schools, etc). In Lebanon, these factors are partly informed by socio-economic

⁷ The term 'phenomenological' is used here to indicate that this study is interested in student-teachers' subjective experience and personal accounts or portraits of their sense-making processes as beginning teachers. However, I indicate below that this study's ontological and epistemological assumptions do not conform to those of a phenomenological approach *per se*. In fact, I avoid making assumptions about 'essences' and the ability of social science research methods to 'capture' such essences. I rather adhere to a socio-cultural approach that recognizes that meaning-making is contingent and constantly (re)negotiated in different contexts and through interactions with others.

strata whereby teacher education programs at private institutions generally cater to private middle-upper class schools whereas public institutions cater to lower and lower-middle public and private schools in Lebanon (Sinjkdar, 2002). This distinction is not exact however and mobility across these schools and socio-economic strata does exist (ibid). Further, all the universities were located in Greater Beirut. The reader is referred to the first chapter of this dissertation for an overview of the three institutions on which this study focuses. In brief, there are several institutions in Lebanon that provide teacher education and training and among those, one finds several tracks that students may undergo to become teachers.

The first official institution to have been established to train teachers in Lebanon was called *Dar al-Mu'allimin al-'Ulya* (Higher Institute for Teachers) which later developed into the main public university in Lebanon; namely, the Lebanese University (Kobeisi, 1999). This institution was founded in the 1950's as a national institution that trains secondary-grade-level teachers. Later on, *Dar al-M'uallimin* (Institute for Teachers), which is part of a public (yet, semi-autonomous) educational authority in Lebanon called the CERD (Center for Educational Research and Development), was established. Its main responsibilities included the training of elementary- and intermediate-grade-level teachers.

The two other institutions involved in this study are the Lebanese American University (LAU) and St. Joseph University (USJ) which are American and French missionary intuitions respectively with a lineage that extends back to the 19th century. The reader will detect in the findings chapters that these three universities are among the major lifelines that supply teachers to most of the major schools in Lebanon. Furthermore, although there exists some degree of mobility amongst the different schools in Lebanon, most of the graduates of the French university pursue teaching positions in Francophone schools, those from the American university in American and Anglophone schools, and the Lebanese University in public as well as other schools in Lebanon (Sinjkdar, 2002). Therefore, the decision to focus this study on participants from these universities is based on the representativeness of the sample of beginning teachers.

Gaining access

The process I undertook to gain access to these universities was relatively informal following a snowball approach to sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). This was also influenced by maximum variation sampling (Seidman, 2006) whereby the process of snowballing (i.e. participants and informants directing me to other participants) was also informed by what I was learning from initial participants leading to more purposeful sampling to establish a higher degree of variation amongst participants in order to capture a wider range of experiences. This, I felt, was the most effective way to select a sample for a study that is mostly interview-based (Seidman, 2006). Finally, the most decisive criterion for the sampling procedure proved to be availability. In conclusion, although the main techniques for my sampling procedure were purposive, convenience and availability played a determining role in regards to the final sample adopted by this study.

The sampling procedure I adopted yielded a total of 20 participants from the three target universities; 7 from the Lebanese American University, 7 from St. Joseph University, and 6 from the Lebanese University. The participants were at different stages of their education; some were second-, third- or final-year students while a few were undergoing their teaching diploma which is a post-graduate diploma in teaching similar to the PGCE program in England.

In addition to interviewing the participant student-teachers, I undertook conducting interviews with key informants and gatekeepers that secondary literature on teacher education in Lebanon had helped me identify. The main purpose of these secondary interviews was to provide me with insight into the social and political realities in which the participant student-teachers found themselves. These interviews provided me with the knowledge to paint a more vivid and realistic picture of the historical and political settings that was not otherwise available due to the dearth in available literature on the subject. In the literature review chapter of this study, I provided a short discussion on the nature and quality of research on teacher education in Lebanon. Based on a careful analysis of such literature, I decided to contact the authors of several papers I deemed as the most relevant to my study. I did so to explore certain gaps that I had identified in the literature as well as to probe issues that the literature had left unaddressed

about the experiences of beginning teachers in Lebanon. In other words, the interviews I had conducted with such informants helped me better understand, on a personal level, certain social and political realities that the participant student-teachers may have been experiencing as they underwent their training. The following table provides basic demographic information about the participants in this study:

Table of interviewees:

Name⁸	Age	Status	Institution
Rafi	25	graduate student	LAU
Salwa	22	postgraduate diploma student	LAU
Ruba	22	undergraduate student	LAU
Mira	25	graduate student	LAU
Shadi	23	undergraduate student	LAU
Fadi	25	graduate student	LAU
Mona	23	undergraduate student	LAU
Yara	29	graduate student	USJ
Sophie	21	undergraduate student	USJ
Hala	21	undergraduate student	USJ
Stephanie	20	undergraduate student	USJ
Riva	21	undergraduate student	USJ
Abir	21	undergraduate student	USJ
Mirna	21	undergraduate student	USJ
Rita	20	undergraduate student	USJ
Samah	20	undergraduate student	LU
Nour	20	undergraduate student	LU
Mirvat	22	undergraduate student	LU
Sohad	24	undergraduate student	LU
Lana	20	undergraduate student	LU

⁸ I used pseudonyms for the participant student-teachers. However, I retained the real names of all other (secondary) informants.

Samar	20	undergraduate student	LU
Layla Fayyad		Director	C.E.R.D
Samih Maddah		Judge and legislator	Lebanese Government
Ismat Kawwas		International Liaison	League of Secondary School Teachers
Ahmad Sinjkdar		Former President	League of Secondary School Teachers
Layla Dirani		Former Director	Institute of Educators – USJ

Data collection process

At the onset, I had anticipated the need to set up contact visits with the institutions of interest before I could embark on my fieldwork. However, every institution I visited immediately invited me to talk to their student-teachers and interview them. In other words, my first contact visits also provided me with opportunities to conduct partial interviews with student-teachers, meet others who are interested in participating in my study, and schedule appointments for future interviews. During the first visit which overlapped with the first interviews I conducted for this study, I used to introduce myself and provide an overview of my study. I would also provide the participants with an information sheet about the study (a copy of which is included in Appendix B) and ask if the participants had any questions or concerns before we commenced with the interview process.

I started my interview process at the Lebanese American University since I was able to gain immediate access to the institution because of the good rapport I had as a part-time member of the faculty. Therefore, the Lebanese American University (which is one of two major American Missionary universities in Lebanon) was chosen for accessibility reasons as well as for its prominence in teacher education in Lebanon. At the time I was conducting my fieldwork, I was also teaching at the Humanities Department at this university. In effect, I approached the

Chairperson of the Education Department explaining my research topic and my interest in interviewing students from the Department. The Chairperson invited me to present my research topic to Education students in different classes and invite them to participate. As a result, I was contacted by several students who expressed interest in participating in the study. After the end of every interview, I would ask the participants if they wished to connect me with other students in the program who they thought would be interested in sitting for an interview. This proved very helpful in recruiting more participants for the study.

Once I was done with fieldwork at this site, I pursued gaining access to the French university. I was introduced by a friend to the Director of the Institute of Educators at St. Joseph University. There, I presented my study and I requested access. The Director was very cooperative and showed genuine interest in my research topic. She was keen on inviting me to present my findings at the Institute after my study was complete. After our meeting, the Director introduced me to the Institute's coordinator of the practicum program who connected me with two students who she thought would be interested to sit for an interview. At this institution, I had to observe hierarchy much more carefully than the other two institutions. However, I did not feel this was due to power issues or other political reasons. I simply felt that gatekeepers were fundamental for gaining access and so I was keen on observing and respecting the organizational culture of the institution. In this case, snowballing was not a desirable approach to sampling since it overstepped the access process which I decided I should respect. In effect, I was granted access and my fieldwork was facilitated and supported by the members of the Institute.

The last site for my fieldwork was the Lebanese University. I had decided to delay fieldwork at this site until the final stages of my study for fear of unforeseen hurdles and impediments in gaining access. This was mostly informed by my stereotypes of most governmental institutions in Lebanon. However, my first visit to the site challenged such an outlook. I was introduced to one of the participants from this university through a friend who had mentioned my research to her. She invited me to visit the campus and agreed to sit for an interview. She had also invited one of her peers to join in the interview. When I first entered the campus, I made sure to visit one of the professors at the Faculty of Pedagogy to explain my research and its nature. Fortunately, I was enthusiastically welcomed and access was quickly granted to me. In fact,

after a short meeting with this teacher educator, he led me to the courtyard adjacent to the Faculty's main building and introduced me to a few Education students there. I briefly introduced my study and invited their participation. One student agreed to participate. Later, the students I had interviewed introduced me to other students who also agreed to be interviewed for this study. This process helped me recruit the number of participants needed for my research project. In summary, gaining access to the three sites that are the focus of my research progressed smoothly and without serious challenges or obstacles. The following table provides an overview of the data collection schedule for this study:

October, 2009	Nov. / Dec.	January	February / March	April	May	June, 2010
Conducting local literature research on relevant topics and issues for my fieldwork	Continuing interviews with participants from LAU Conducting interviews with teacher educators from LAU to gain more insight into the specificities of the program	Preliminary interpretation of the data from LAU	Continuing interviews with participants from USJ Conducting interviews with one teacher educator from USJ to gain insight into the specificities of the program	Preliminary interpretation of the data from USJ	Continuing interviews with participants from LU	Conducted a preliminary examination of all the data to explore gaps and possible solutions
Conducting interviews with key officials and educationists to build a more comprehensive picture of the main issues facing teaching and teacher education in Lebanon		Commencing interviews at the French university (USJ)	Meeting with various educationists and teacher unionists to gain insight into the perceived status of teaching in general in Lebanon	Commencing interviews at the Lebanese University (LU)	Finalizing my theoretical framework	
Conducting interviews with participants from the Lebanese American University (LAU)		Reexamining my theoretical framework and interview framework	Examining relevant literature	Reexamining my theoretical framework and interview framework		

In summary, my choice of these three sites was guided by my intent on capturing a variety of perspectives and stories. In consequence, I felt that recruiting participants from these three major yet primarily different institutions was necessary. As indicated in the table above, I also undertook conducting interviews with education officials, educationists, and teacher unionists in order to construct a more complex picture of teaching and teacher education to help me understand the general political, social, and historical contexts in which these beginning teachers find themselves in Lebanon. Interviews were conducted with officials from the CERD (Center for Educational Research and Development), the Ministry of Education, the League of Public Secondary School Teachers, education advisors to former Ministers of Education, education

legislators, among others. All these data were considered as secondary sources to gain a deeper understanding of the context in which my research study is situated.

In June, I undertook a close examination of all the data and documents I had hitherto collected in order to identify possible gaps in the data collection process. This involved examining all the preliminary analyses and interpretations that were slowly emerging from the data collection and examination process. Through this, I was able to conclude that the data I had obtained was both diverse and thick enough to allow in-depth analysis and interpretation. At this point, I terminated the fieldwork process and commenced with data organization and analysis.

Data collection methods

In the literature review for this study, I elaborated on the complexity of studying the developing identities of beginning teachers. In it, I drew on relevant literature to expose the problematics of conceptualizing teacher identity as well as the consequent pitfalls of formulating a researchable definition of the concept. As a result, I drew on seminal literature and research studies in the area (Clandinin, 1986; Goodman, 1988; Calderhead and Robson, 1991; among others) to explore other theoretical lenses that can help me gain insight into how beginning teachers make sense of their choices and work. The following decisions were consequently made. First, I chose to work with the construct of ‘image’ since it allowed me to operationalize my definitions in more accurate terms which in turn facilitated the design of the interview questions as well as the data collection and analysis processes. For example, the concept of ‘identification’ and its subcategories ‘categorical’, ‘relational’, ‘self-identification’, and ‘identification by others’ (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) were operationalized into the interview questions that consequently evoked participant visualizations and images of teaching and teachers. In turn, the concept of ‘image’ also allowed me to go deeper into specific aspects of teachers’ identities; namely, visualizations and imagery that the participant teachers constructed to elaborate on how they make sense of their choices and motivations to become teachers. Issues regarding depth as well as focus led to my adoption and iterative conceptualization of the construct of ‘image’ as the main theoretical lens to understand the participants’ phenomenological experiences as beginning teachers. This decision informed the data collection methods that I thought were most suitable

for my study; namely; in-depth, semi-structured interviews. In summary, I developed an interview framework based on the various issues, recommendations, and methodologies that I encountered in relevant literature.

The interviews were designed to explore student-teachers' ideas, views, and perceptions about teaching through the following: (a) probing significant biographical information, (b) looking into student-teachers' motivations for applying to teacher education programs, (c) exploring how they see themselves as future teachers, as well as (d) gaining insight into their expectations and anxieties about teaching. In particular, the questions were geared towards exploring significant life events that occurred during the students-teachers' schooling and higher education experiences that could have influenced their thinking about teaching. Sugrue (1997) argues that beginning-teachers' perceptions are often shaped significantly by immediate family members, significant others or extended family, apprenticeship of observation, atypical teaching episodes, policy context, teaching traditions and cultural archetypes, as well as tacitly acquired understandings (p. 222). In effect, a segment of the interview questions aimed to explore the participants' family backgrounds and their personal and school/educational experiences before they embarked on their teacher education program. Several studies argue that such backgrounds influence beginning teachers' perceptions of their choices and affect their motivations. For example, Sugrue (1997) argues that "[the student-teacher's] background reinforces the perspective that identification with teaching is shaped by respect for, and the acknowledged status of, teachers within the community" (p. 216). The author adds: "This interpretation also lends further legitimacy to the socially constructed nature of identity where the influence of immediate family was crucial to ... [the beginning teacher's] decision to enter teacher education" (ibid). Furthermore, Goodman (1988) explains that the findings of his study suggest "that early childhood and school experiences had a significant impact on the informants' professional perspectives" asserting that "[a]s children, students developed images of what it meant to be a "teacher" and "teaching" ..." (Goodman, 1988, p. 130). Therefore, several interview questions were designed to probe these dimensions of the participants' background and history. Examples of the interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Other research studies further helped me formulate interview questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of the factors and contexts that influenced beginning teachers' images of teaching. Younger *et al.* (2004) argue that "Trainees' own thinking at the start of their teacher training shows sophisticated grasp of the type of teachers they aspired to become, based on their models of the outstanding teacher and the quality of the classroom practice they have experienced as pupils or observed as trainees" (p. 262). Indeed, a former director of the Institute of Educators at St. Joseph University explained to me in an interview that the motivations of many of her former student-teachers were often guided by their negative experiences with school teachers (LD, 2, p. 8). In effect, many of the interview questions probed the participants' experiences during their schooling years to explore their images of 'good' and 'bad' teaching.

Interview questions were also designed to explore the participants' favorite subjects in school since research studies demonstrate that some of the main reasons for students to be attracted to teaching as a profession were linked to their desire to continue to work with their subjects of interest as well as to communicate their enthusiasm for the subject (Edmonds *et al.*, 2002; Younger *et al.*, 2004; among others).

Clandinin (1986) suggests that watershed experiences are also crucial for understanding the images that beginning teachers construct about teaching. In addition to those, atypical teaching episodes such as "helping younger siblings with homework, teaching music, giving tuition to less able peers in school ... and baby-sitting" have important, albeit subtle, effects on beginning teachers' images and perceptions (Sugrue, 1997). Several interview questions were designed to probe watershed experiences as well as atypical teaching experiences that may have influenced the participants' choices, expectations and perceptions of teaching as an occupation and an activity.

Another track of questions was designed to explore the student-teachers' experiences of their current program. In specific, I was interested to explore the participants' perceptions of the teacher education programs in which they were enrolled vis-à-vis their own views of what it takes to become a good teacher. According to Weinstein's research (1990), "students [in teacher education programs she had examined] continued to emphasize interpersonal relationships and to

downplay the academic dimension” (p. 285). Sugrue (1997) joins Weinstein in contending that student-teachers who participated in her study generally believed that “there is a particular kind of personality which is ideally suited to teaching. Consequently, having a teaching personality is privileged over cognitive skills or pedagogical and subject-matter knowledge; having attitudes, dispositions, personal qualities augmented by particular talents are the essentials of being a teacher” (p. 217). Sugrue concludes: “Consequently, entrants to the primary teaching profession, as suggested by this cultural theme, already possess the necessary prerequisites to be teachers ...” (ibid). Interview questions were therefore designed to probe participants’ views of what it takes to become a good teacher in order to explore their underlying images of teaching. This was partially done by evoking metaphors and similes about teaching using such questioning techniques as: “What would you liken a good teacher to?” or “What is your image of a good teacher?”

Another segment of questions was designed to probe the participants’ perceptions of their practicum experience. This was intended to explore competing images of teaching as a ‘craft’, a form of ‘apprenticeship’, a ‘science’, an ‘innate ability’, among others. Furthermore, to probe the participants’ aspirations, I utilized such questions as: “Do you see yourself as a teacher say in ten years time? If not, what do you see yourself doing instead? Why?”

One of the major challenges I faced during this stage of the interview process was to reduce the number of questions which, based on the relevant literature that I explored for the design of this study, eventually developed to be considerably large. Furthermore, since this study adopts semi-structured interviews as the main data collection tool, I wanted to leave considerable room for probing questions. The interviews I conducted with the first two participants in this study allowed me to examine the feasibility of the overall interview process as well as to test the individual interview questions. Despite my attempts to reduce the number of questions, I decided not to adopt a finalized set of questions because I anticipated that the participants’ varying narratives and biographies would elicit different trajectories of questioning and probing. I decided to create an extended questions bank that provided me with a variety of tools as well as flexibility to respond to the demands of the individual interviews. My interview framework did not draw specifically on a well-established method or the theoretical work of a specific research

study. Instead, I drew eclectically on a number of relevant studies to synthesize a framework for developing the interview questions and process. Research studies that probed beginning teachers' motivations, anxieties, aspirations, metaphorical language, images, and perceptions of teaching provided the main guidelines for developing the interview questions for this study.

The total duration of a typical interview was, on average, approximately three hours which was conducted in two parts on two different dates often separated by a period of one week or more. This gave me time to examine the data of the first part of the interview in depth in order to steer the second part in desirable trajectories. I have included in every findings chapter a short introduction that describes the setting, environment and dynamics of the interviews. I did so because these aspects of the interview process varied among the target institutions. All of the interviews were recorded and later transcribed by the researcher.

It is important to note that the language in which all of the interviews were conducted was predominantly Arabic. However, many participants, specifically at the American and French universities, intertwined their speech with a foreign language (English or French or both). Since my French language proficiency had waned over the years, I had to ask students at the French university to use Arabic or English as much as possible. Despite this, many students still used French during the interviews. This was not a barrier however since most of the words and terms they utilized were familiar to me. Furthermore, my knowledge of the Arabic vernacular and the background culture of many of the students enabled me to establish quick rapport as well as gain insight into the participants' narratives, reflections, and concerns.

Furthermore, interview bilingualism (and at times, trilingualism) posed a challenge regarding the transcribing process. In effect, I undertook examining the recorded interviews of some of the participants to reflect on the problematics of translating these interviews into English. Although discourse analysis of such bilingual interviews could provide interesting insights into the role that code switching played in the construction of such narrative accounts, this, I decided, was beyond the scope of my study. This research explores teacher images through the personal portraits that participants construct during their interviews. Therefore, I used content analysis as my primary data analysis procedure. This was applied to the transcribed interviews which I

translated to English. The transcripts nevertheless retained some French terms as well as some Arabic words in transliterated form. I chose to do so when I detected that the participants were drawing on certain culturally-specific, religious images or particular political or technical discourses. Much more can be said about this ‘translation’ process. This, however, will be discussed later in this chapter.

My role as a researcher in the study

As a Lebanese who grew up in Lebanon, I did not, at the onset, face serious challenges in gaining access to the research sites and in establishing rapport with the gatekeepers, participants and informants of this study. Nevertheless, I did encounter several challenges along the way as a researcher and a ‘figure of authority’ (as perceived by some of the participants) on a subject (education) that the participants of this study were undertaking as part of their education and professional training. I felt that this perception of authority varied in degree among the different institutions. Although I was at the time an instructor at the Lebanese American University (LAU) teaching Humanities elective courses, most of the participants at LAU viewed me as a peer and a ‘role model’ that some of them aspired to emulate. Many of the students there, as the accounts demonstrate, aspired to pursue graduate degrees. In other words, a certain collegial attitude characterized my relationship with the participants at the Lebanese American University while my ‘authority figure’ was brought to the fore more starkly at the other two universities, especially at the Lebanese University. I felt that this was a reflection of the institutional hierarchies, ideologies, and cultures that differentiated the three institutions. Indeed, through my continuous visits to the other two universities, I detected that the gap between students and teacher educators was larger and the relationship was more formal than at the American university. In effect, I faced a few challenges in attempting to reduce the effect of my ‘image’ as an ‘authority’ in order to create an atmosphere that is more open, relaxed, and interactive during the interview process at the other two universities (the Lebanese-public and French-missionary universities).

Here, it is timely to briefly discuss an interesting observation I made at the Lebanese University which I mention in the corresponding findings chapter. Every participant at that university,

without exception, acted astonished that I, a researcher pursuing a doctoral degree in England, was interested in their stories in particular and in the Lebanese University in general. The interviews revealed that all students at the Lebanese University felt that they and their Faculty/Department were marginalized by the Lebanese government and, in effect, all participants profusely thanked me for, as some explained, “giving our issues voice to the outside world.” By the end of one interview, one participant told me that she had never had anyone ask her about her feelings, views, and aspirations vis-à-vis her choice to become a teacher and contrasted this with the lack of interest of most education officials in the experiences and ambitions of student-teachers at this university.

This provided me with both confidence and concern regarding my presence and position as a researcher in this study. Nevertheless, I was happy I could effectively establish rapport with these students and create an open space for exchanging views and perceptions.

In summary, my experience during the period of my fieldwork was both extremely rewarding and challenging. I felt that I had the opportunity to step both deeper into and, at the same time, farther away from the various ‘subcultures’ with which I had thought I was confidently familiar. This continuous inwards-outwards movement helped me develop higher degrees of reflexivity and self-interrogation which, I believe, contributed positively to the development of my research project.

Theoretical perspectives that have influenced the design of this study

I am well aware that the theoretical framework that I have developed for this study necessarily shapes and conditions how the teachers’ perceptions and views are represented in the findings chapters. Clandinin, in her study of teacher images, asserts that “Any particular theory is one of several possible starting points that could be used to give an account of a teacher. When the account is given in terms of the particular theory, it is at best a partial account of the teacher. Much is left unexplained” (1986, p. 14). Several researchers in this field argue that the corpus of research studies on teacher practice and knowledge focuses to a large extent on technical knowledge that is assumed to govern the work of teachers. However, as Clandinin (1986)

emphasizes, this trend extends from “a stance which views teachers as mere conduits of theoretical and cultural knowledge embodied in various curricula, teaching approaches and policies. Her [the teacher’s] experience becomes important only in understanding how she fulfils external demands” (p. 3). Clandinin identifies another possible reason for the lack of research on teachers’ personal knowledge about teaching; one that is epistemological in nature and that involves what is conventionally accepted as valid knowledge (ibid).

This research adopts a design and a set of methods that probe phenomenological, experiential knowledge of student-teachers expressed and negotiated in speech through images. This study also recognizes the impact of external forces and structures in which teachers find themselves as practitioners and the pressures these forces exert on the teachers’ phenomenological experience of their work. In consequence, for the design of this research, I take into consideration the phenomenological experiences of the teachers while recognizing how these experiences are continuously impacted by overarching structures. To gain further insight into the images that student-teachers construct about their experiences, I also explore other dimensions, such as curricula, teaching approaches and overarching policies, which influence these images. Hence, I avoid terming this study a phenomenological one *per se* since I am cautious about the ontological and epistemological implications of such a philosophical approach; namely, the claim of investigating essences. In other words, this study does not claim to excavate essences of experiences since this research is strictly couched in a socio-cultural, constructivist philosophy of experience and therefore avoids phenomenological-humanistic paradigms of subjectivity and identity. Instead, I propose, and based on theoretical arguments put forward by several cultural-historical theoretical perspectives, that the person-as-subject continuously and dialectically negotiates his or her identity in context. Therefore, this study does not regard the interview process as a means to capture essences of experience but rather as an ‘occasion’ through which participants negotiate their perceptions of their experiences as beginning teachers. Thus the notion of ‘articulating power’ that I theorize as a dimension of ‘image’ acknowledges that the images that the participants construct in speech not only attempt to integrate personal phenomenological experiences but also negotiate them and express them in oftentimes rhetorical ways that are influenced by the participants’ perceptions of my position in this process as well as their perceptions of the social, political and cultural contexts in which they find themselves.

Therefore, the interview questions were guided by literature as well as interviews with officials and activists in the field of education in Lebanon to evoke the teachers' perceptions of such overarching forces that impact their personal experiences of teaching. At the same time, the questions were designed to recognize and acknowledge the existence of teacher knowledge which is experiential, practical, and influenced by teachers' values and purposes (Elbaz, 1983). The conceptualization of 'image' as one component of teacher's experiential knowledge thus emerges from the analysis and interpretation of interview data obtained from three major teacher education programs in Lebanon.

In addition to recognizing the dialectical nature of meaning construction as it unfolds through the interview process, I am also aware of the role that the participants in this study played in guiding the progress of the interviews by discussing issues, incidents, biographical episodes, etc, that they deemed important for elaborating on their choices and motivations. My role as the interviewer continuously shifted between central and marginal positions. Having said that, I am nevertheless aware that my presence, whether marginal or central in the process of the interview, plays a significant role in how the participants interpret *my role* in this interview process. In his discussion on hermeneutics as *interpretation*, Palmer asserts that "all explanatory interpretation assumes intentions in those to whom the explanation is directed" (1969, p. 24).

I, as a researcher, acknowledge that the participants continuously assumed intentions *in my* presence and this in effect influenced the interpretations that the participants constructed. I did however continuously invite the participants, through the different questions I had designed, to 're-interpret' my intentions all through the interview process to evoke different layers of interpretation.

Ethical considerations

In every encounter with potential participants, gatekeepers, and informants, I made sure I communicated the purpose and aims of my study clearly after which I proceeded to gain consent from participants as well as authority figures and gatekeepers for conducting my research. I

continuously stressed that participation in this study is voluntary. Further, I clearly explained to all the participants that the data I gathered will be stored in a secure place and that all the information that I will utilize will be anonymized.

There were several occasions when participants would ask me about my opinion regarding certain policy issues or general political developments that have implications for education in Lebanon. Such situations proved extremely delicate as well as controversial for me. On the one hand, I was keen on establishing rapport with the participants as well as maintaining a transparent and interactive environment throughout the interviews. In certain instances, I felt comfortable reciprocating openness and sharing views about certain educational issues in Lebanon. However, I always tried to do so at the end of the interview. On the other hand, my recognition of the competing politico-sectarian discourses in Lebanon and their reverberations into different levels of Lebanese social life led me to be considerably cautious with my responses to the participants' questions about controversial and sensitive matters.

Throughout the interview process, I continued to develop the necessary tact and reflective abilities to modulate and properly direct many of my questions and answers to maintain rapport with the participants as well as continue to foster an open and transparent interview environment.

Data analysis procedures

The following discussion will focus on the data analysis process and the general frameworks or schemes that guided and shaped this process.

The interpretive framework of this study

The interpretive process was guided by several perspectives. It is partially influenced by Palmer's discussion of hermeneutics, which Clandinin (1986) also adopts in her study of images. This approach asserts that an interpretive process is "a loving union that brings to stand the full potentialities of the interpreter and his text" (Palmer, 1969, p. 244). Clandinin, referring to Palmer, argues that the "reading of a text is not merely a gaining of conceptual knowledge but an

‘experience’, a breaking down and breaking open of one’s old way of seeing” (1986, p. 28). In this study, I have developed such ‘texts’ from interview transcripts and field notes that I have collected throughout the duration of the study. Indeed, both Clandinin (1986) and Elbaz (1983) who are leading researchers in the field of teacher images and teacher personal experiences, adopt such a hermeneutic perspective of interviews qua texts.

Richard Palmer, in *Hermeneutics*, elaborates on the various ‘interpretations’ of the term ‘hermeneutics’ as utilized in theology and literature. He explains that the term can mean “to *express* aloud in words,” “to *explain*, as in explaining a situation,” or “to *translate*, as in the translation of a foreign language” (1969, p. 13). In this study, I adopt Palmer’s (1969) tripartite definition of hermeneutics; namely, hermeneutics as “to say” or “express,” “to explain,” and to “translate.”

Interpretation as saying

The first aspect of hermeneutics involves the act of interpretation as ‘saying’ or ‘expressing’. Palmer explains that “We use this nuance of the word “interpretation” when we refer to an artist’s interpretation of a song or a conductor’s interpretation of a symphony. In this sense, interpretation is a form of saying” (Palmer, 1969, p. 14). When I think of the interviews as evoking in the participants an “oral recitation” of their narratives or personal portraits, I cannot avoid recognizing the multiple interpretive layers that are evoked by the participants qua interpreters through their biographies. This multi-layered interpretive process does not, however, terminate in the actual expressions of the participants; it continues in my ‘textualization’ and ‘recitation’ of their accounts during the data analysis and presentation processes. In other words, I recognize that the participants’ oral accounts are performances. Therefore, I have partially committed myself to an ‘oral’ interpretive process of the transcribed interview texts. I did so to be able to interpret the text with the dynamism that the written transcript lacks. Therefore, one of the challenges I faced as a researcher was to be able to “express” and “say” the texts of the interviews as they were *expressed* by the participants of the study. In other words, I recognize that through my intonations of my expression of the participants’ accounts, I am re-interpreting

them. This process led to an interesting paradox that Palmer identifies as inherent in such modes of interpretation:

The process is a puzzling paradox: in order to read, it is necessary to understand in advance what will be said, and yet this understanding must come from the reading. What begins to emerge here is the complex dialectical process involved in all understanding as it grasps the meaning of a sentence, and somehow in a reverse direction supplies the attitude and emphasis which alone can make the written word meaningful. Oral interpretation thus has two sides: it is necessary to understand something in order to express it, yet understanding itself comes from an interpretive reading – expression. (1969, p. 16)

The recognition of this paradox was both liberating and constraining for me. On the one hand, it drew my attention to the constructive and dynamic nature of interpretation and therefore reminded me to avoid attempting to ‘extract essences’ from the text at hand. On the other hand, the subjective nature of such an interpretive process posed serious challenges for the nature of my research project in general and the validity of my research findings and the manner in which they are presented in particular. One of the greatest challenges for me entailed transforming these final oral interpretations into the written text that constitutes the findings chapters of this study. This is recognizably one of the limitations of this study. The annotations, interpretative discussions, and elaborations have attempted to revive some of the characteristics of the oral interpretations expressed by the participants. Yet, the final accounts as ‘written texts’ eventually succumb to the limitations of the written word.

As a consequence, one of the strategies I have decided to adopt to deal with such an interpretive paradox is to invite the reader of this dissertation to reflect on its nature and be attentive to its implications. I also invite the reader to evoke in the reading/interpretive process of this text the ‘oral’ dimension of interpretation. Palmer asserts that “every silent reading of a written text is a disguised form of oral interpretation” (1969, p. 17). I encourage the reader to exercise this reflectively during the reading of the participants’ accounts in the findings chapters of this dissertation. In fact, the oral dimension of interpretation was very crucial for my construction/interpretation of the participants’ images. In particular, several dimensions of the images that I interpreted, such as ‘affective’, ‘moral’, ‘interpersonal’, ‘religious’, among others, I

could only bring to life through an oral interpretation of the accounts rather than from as strict textual analysis. In other words, my interpretation constantly attempted to “put back in the work the dimensions of speech” (Palmer, 1969, p. 17).

In order to facilitate such an interpretive process, and to allow the text to ‘speak’, “the help of biographical, historical, or psychological background data” was needed (Palmer, 1969, p. 18). Therefore, as the reader will notice, the findings chapters provide such “data” in an attempt to build a ‘context of meaning’ (referred to by Palmer as a “hermeneutic circle”) out of which “a more adequate oral performance will proceed, even if in the guise of a more deeply interpretive silent reading” (Palmer, 1969, p. 18).

Interpretation as explanation

The second aspect of the meaning of hermeneutics, according to Palmer, is to “explain” (1969, p. 20). Palmer elaborates: “Words, after all, do not merely say something ... they explain something, rationalize it, make it clear” (ibid). Hermeneutically, according to Palmer, this suggests that “meaning is a matter of context; the explanatory procedure provides the arena of understanding. Only within a specific context is an event meaningful” (1969, p. 24). This is one of the main reasons why this research undertook shedding light on the background contexts as well as the imagined contexts in which the participants provided their *interpretation* of their motivations and perceptions; indeed, their personal portraits in general. Palmer adds: “Explanatory interpretation makes us aware that explanation is contextual, is “horizontal.” It must be made within a horizon of already granted meanings and intentions. In hermeneutics, this area of assumed understanding is called preunderstanding” (1969, p. 24). In effect, I recognize that both I and the participants were involved in multiple layers of interpretations based on a preunderstanding. As such, when I embarked on the interpretation of the transcribed interviews, I recognized my position as an interpreter approaching those texts with preunderstanding in order to be able to, as Palmer asserts, enter its ‘horizon of meaning’: “For the interpreter to “perform” the text, he must “understand” it: he must preunderstand the subject and the situation before he can enter the horizon of its meaning” (Palmer, 1969, p. 25).

The above acknowledgement might please a critic of such interpretive approaches in social science research; however, I contend that the recognition of this ‘hermeneutic circle’ without which “the meaning of a text cannot emerge” is crucial (ibid). As such, I understand this facet of interpretation as “an effort to lay the foundations in “preunderstanding” for an understanding of the text” (Palmer, 1969, p. 25).

Interpretation as translation

Palmer elaborates on the third aspect of the meaning of interpretation as ‘translation’. The author explains that “The act of translation is not a simple mechanical matter of synonym-finding” emphasizing that “the translator is mediating between two different worlds” (1969, p. 27). With this, Palmer draws our attention to the idea that translation “makes us aware of the fact that language itself contains an overarching interpretation of the world, to which the translator must be sensitive even as he translates individual expressions” (ibid).

For the purpose of my study, all of the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed by me. Since most of the interviews were multilingual, I would listen to the interviews repeatedly before transcribing them. For the transcription, I undertook the immediate translation of the interviews into English while, as I explained earlier, retaining certain words in Arabic or French which I thought communicated important nuances, discourses, or images. The strategies and principles that I adopted in this translation process follow Palmer’s hermeneutic principles whereby the act of translation was not understood as a simple mechanical process of “synonym-finding.” Instead, it was understood as a process that makes the translator aware of “the way that words actually shape our view of the world, even our perceptions” (Palmer, 1969, p. 27).

In conclusion, the multiple hermeneutic process that I undertook involved recognizing (1) the oral and explanatory interpretation that the participants performed on (and through) their images of teaching, (2) my (double)translation-interpretation of these oral interpretations into transcribed texts, (3) and my own oral interpretation of these texts as ‘research data’. This, in the manner that Palmer expounds, helped me develop my pre-understanding of the interviews as texts.

Throughout this interpretive process, I attempted to “grasp and be grasped by the text” (Palmer, 1969, p. 26).

Finally, I hope that the above discussion on the interpretive process that I undertook to ‘make sense’ of the student-teachers’ personal portraits as they themselves tried to ‘make sense’ of their choices for and perceptions of teaching will also function as a finding in this study. The complexity and multiplicity of the interpretive process aims to shed light on the complexities inherent in the processes and underlying (yet continuously negotiated) images that teachers draw on to make sense of their choices and situations. This in turn is intended to provide a critique against any monolithic discourses that attempt to represent teachers and their stories through narrow categories or perspectives. In the conclusion to this study, I argue that teacher education programs must recognize these complexities and embrace them. In fact, these complexities must be fostered in order to empower teachers to resist monolithic discourses that attempt to co-opt definitions and conceptualizations of teaching that often result in the loss of those elusive, complex and multiple dimensions that, although implicit in teachers’ images and stories, are nevertheless kernel for their motivations for becoming teachers. Student-teachers’ elaborations on their motivations, perceptions, and views of teaching could be understood by teacher education programs as hermeneutic endeavors that involve a dialectical, multi-layered, and heteroglossic⁹ process that these students carry out to make sense of their choices and experiences.

It is for reasons elucidated in the above discussion that I do not resort to the extensive literature on gendered choosing of teaching for developing the interpretive tools I use for the interpretation of the data. I must admit that this choice has contributed to both the strengths as well as the weaknesses of this research project. The reader will notice that many of the images I focus on in the findings chapters drew heavily on gendered dimensions and elements. Gender-critical discourse and analytical tools could have helped me unpack various aspects of gendered choosing to better explore the motivations and perceptions of the participants of this study. This is a limitation of the study that I was willing to risk for several reasons, the most important of

⁹ Heteroglossia is a Bakhtinian term discussed in the literature review chapter that refers to the multi-voiced nature of language.

which is the following. During the stage of my project when I was formulating my research focus and questions, I often encountered colleagues, educationists, as well as non-experts who quickly attributed the motivations of my prospective sample of participants to gendered choosing; often drawing on masculine and feminine stereotypes in Lebanese society. As such, teaching as a ‘feminine occupation’ was too easy a fit in the perceptions of motivations of female student-teachers in Lebanon. In consequence, I decided to design this study using descriptive and interpretive approaches in order to allow the complexities and multiplicity of dimensions to emerge without having to ‘read’ the participants’ portraits through specific discursive lenses. Again, I acknowledge that this decision contributed to both the strengths and weaknesses of this study.

Analysis of the data

In the literature review chapter, I have elaborated on the process of development of the theoretical lenses adopted by this study. In it, I explained that this process was intricately intertwined with the data collection, analysis and interpretation processes. In other words, the theoretical framework as well as the data analysis processes dialectically and iteratively shaped each other. The resulting findings and theoretical lenses (specifically ‘image’) were developed through a dialectical process of creative synthesis. I felt that this process was a necessary one in order to develop the construct of image that could creatively and dynamically depict how beginning teachers made sense of their experiences. The final interpretive lens retained traces of different *images* that every participant in this study constructed through their narratives and biographical accounts. These developing images were repeatedly used to shed light on deeper layers of imagery and identification that characterized many of the anecdotes and episodic accounts that the participants shared during the interviews. As such, the resulting theoretical construct that this study conceptualizes resists essentialist and positivist claims. This construct is intimately tied to the participants’ personal portraits and was utilized by this study to gain a deeper insight and make sense of the participants’ perceptions and motivations. In effect, this study stresses the ‘process’ and the consequent insights that were gained by it as the main research finding. Based on the overall theoretical and methodological perspectives that this

study adopts, I argue that issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability become less consequential.

Data management, preparation and analysis

All the names of the participants in this study were changed. I chose pseudonyms that I could easily relate to the original names of the participants. Despite this strategy, I developed a table in which I kept a record of the original names and identities of the participants and their corresponding pseudonyms. Furthermore, I did not adopt rigid data coding procedures since the nature of this study did not require that I reduce, collapse, or condense data into well-delineated and clearly-defined categories and themes. In contrast, since this study privileges vivid and rich descriptions as well as creative interpretations of the participants' sense-making accounts, the analysis process aimed at shedding light on the complexities inherent in the sense-making processes of student-teachers while providing 'image' as a theoretical lens to gain deeper insight into such processes.

The data analysis that I undertook was driven by a hermeneutic process of reading, analysis, rereading, gathering more data, analysis, and so on. In other words, I did not follow regimented stages in the analysis of the data. Every stage, so to speak, included a little bit of all the stages that constituted the logical flow of the data analysis process. As themes and patterns started to arise, they were used to gain further insight into the participants' accounts from the various universities. Along the way, I was continuously monitoring my analytical and interpretive process to identify gaps and devise consequent strategies for directing the overall process.

As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the (re)reading of the data involved a hermeneutic process that Palmer (1969) elaborates on in his text *Hermeneutics*. This (re)reading involved an oral interpretation of the interview data in order to regain the non-discursive dimensions that often get lost in a written text. This exercise helped me familiarize myself with the available data while undertaking preliminary analysis and interpretation. During this process, I utilized the construct of image that I had preliminarily developed in this study's theoretical framework section to make some sense of and provide some organization for the data. This process

involved examining different genres of speech such as descriptive statements, metaphorical language, and statements about experience colored with moral, affective, interpersonal or other intonations. In addition, episodic memories and watershed experiences were of great interest to me and so I attempted to flesh out from every account what seemed to be important biographical information that the participants shared about their motivations for and perceptions of teaching. Once I got through a large portion of the data, I started to explore ways that I could refine my theoretical lenses in order to shed more light on the emergent themes and patterns in the data. This process helped me organize these themes into general clusters. Initially, I was grouping metaphors, descriptive statements, episodic memories and watershed experiences under different themes; namely, ‘motivations’, ‘anxieties’, ‘perceptions of teaching and teachers’, and ‘aspirations’. Within those clusters, I labeled the data, as Clandinin does with her concept of image, according to a spectrum of dimensions which was iteratively expanded and modified. This spectrum at first included: affective, moral, interpersonal, technical, religious, among other dimensions that ‘colored’ the participants’ statements. The developing of these categories or clusters involved transforming my data from a relatively continuous narrative into discrete fragments that were organized under different themes and dimensions. These themes, however, started out as general loose categories and slowly aggregated into more defined ones. These emerging categories facilitated preliminary sorting of the data. Again, I would like to emphasize here that the abovementioned methods and strategies do not suggest that the final categories were arrived at because underlying essences were revealed. Instead, I acknowledge that these categories are expedient constructions to make sense of the data at hand. Of course, a rigorous hermeneutic and iterative process that was nevertheless theoretically informed was undertaken to generate such categories.

I did not adopt any strict systematic or mechanical techniques for examining the data. Instead, I was committed to immersing myself deeply into the accounts provided by the participants while also regularly zooming out to get a broader view of the contexts within which these accounts were situated in order to make connections and draw images that vividly and thoughtfully depicted those of the participants. I will clarify this with the following example. When a metaphorical image was expressed in a participant’s account, the notion of *articulating power* was explored through probing, at different instances, information about the participant’s

personal, professional and educational experience. Furthermore, I would try to gain an understanding of how the participant made sense of her or his choices and aspirations to become teachers and see how this could be connected to some of the experiences they shared; experiences that involved episodic memories, watershed experiences, among others. Through this, I would try to understand how a certain image allowed the participant to make sense and connect among all those dimensions of their motivations as well as to express such motivations in speech during the interview. For example, Rami's (a student-teacher at the American university) image of the teacher as 'midway between priest and rock star' might have been, at first, construed as a creative metaphor of Rami's perceptions of teaching. However, as the interviews unfolded, I was able to identify deep connections that this image allowed Rami to make amongst watershed experiences (such as considering pursuing priesthood at one point in his life), his anxieties about his inability to pursue his musical aspirations (as a guitar player), the challenges he faces as a male in Lebanese society regarding his choice to become a teacher, among other dimensions. This image allowed Rami to incorporate charismatic male characters such as a priest and a rock-star into his image of teaching. This image also helped Rami negotiate broader cultural images of the teacher as a demi-prophet which is prominent in Lebanese society. Therefore, the image of the teacher as 'midway between priest and rock star' was interpreted to provide Rami with high 'articulating power' to link amongst the competing dimensions of his personal, educational, and professional experiences, his motivations and aspirations, his anxieties, and the broader cultural images of teaching. This image also allowed Rami to express all this (rhetorically) in speech.

This in-depth exploration of anecdotal accounts, memories, experiences, aspirations and anxieties, which coalesced in images, provided me with different insights into the participants' lives and sense-making endeavors. Such images, the accounts revealed, were rooted in different experiences and memories. The images also integrated and facilitated the expression of such experiences in speech during the interviews. 'Articulating power', as an interpretive lens, provided me with the tools to understand how such images integrate as well as facilitate the expression of the participants diverse and at times competing experiences during the interview process. In effect, I found out that the construct of image was very helpful and at the same flexible and malleable for making sense of the participants' choices and motivations as they

expressed them in their personal portraits. Although such portraits were at times disjointed and fragmented, images helped me read into such portraits as though they were mosaics of the participants' lives and experiences.

During the latter stage of the fieldwork, I was able to share some of these images with some of the participants (though not all) and ask them how they felt about my interpretations. Many of the participants expressed genuine interest and at times fascination at how such images did in fact spring from so many aspects of their lives that they, until that point, did not see as connected. Other participants, however, felt that this approach was creative in making sense of what they said but that the result was not necessarily true.

In summary, one of the main aims of this study is to provide a fresh and useful conceptualization of 'image' to make sense of beginning-teachers' choices and perceptions. Therefore, the various themes and categories that emerged during the data analysis also informed the development of such dimensions of image as 'articulating power' and 'rootedness'. These dimensions were in return used to gain deeper insight into the data at hand. This dialectical process continued throughout the data analysis stage. Once the conceptualization of 'image' along with its dimensions was final, I used this lens to reexamine all the data to see how much interpretive efficacy or power this construct provided me. In this process, further insights were gained and deeper connections and comparisons were made within the individual participant portraits as well as across the different accounts.

A short, reflexive account of my final choice of the 10 main participants that are presented in the findings chapters of this study

This study presents the portraits of ten of the twenty student-teachers that participated in this study. The choice of these ten participants was minded by a number of criteria and concerns. A number of in-depth interviews I conducted were not as successful as desirable in evoking narratives, metaphors, and imagery about teaching and teachers. Some of the participants (ex. Mona, Rita, and Lana) often resorted to very short, descriptive, and at times formulaic answers to the many questions that I had designed. The same questions that proved effective in evoking

images and visualizations and prompting biographical accounts and narratives in interviews with certain participants were not successful in doing so with others. This is in part characteristic of qualitative social research in general and interview methods in particular. This is not to say that the interviews were not informative or useful for the purpose of the research. In fact, many of these interviews helped me refine certain questions I had already designed in addition to developing other questions that proved very effective in other interviews.

Furthermore, a small number of interviews mainly exposed overarching images and representations of teachers in Lebanon that were evoked in most of the other interviews in this study, especially the ones I chose to present in the findings chapters. As a result, data management concerns as well as data presentation factors led me to select the interviews that evoked a breadth of dimensions (personal, education, professional, etc) from the participants accounts while still being minded by the images and representations that were expressed in other interviews. For example, in Lana's and Mona's interviews, there was too much focus on such broad representations of teaching as a message and a form of social change. These were recurrent in many of the presented accounts and therefore deemed valuable but redundant. Therefore, the final portraits that I chose to include in the findings chapters provided the thickest and most vivid descriptions that allowed me to build vivid portraits of the participants' motivations and perceptions.

A final criterion for my choice of portraits to include in this dissertation extended from the availability of the participants during my data analysis stage. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, I undertook discussing some of the emergent images of teachers with the participants and asking them to further reflect on them during the analysis part of the study. The availability of such participants during this stage of the research also played into my final choice of the accounts that were to be presented in this dissertation. The participants that were available at this stage of my project are included in the findings chapters of this study.

It is important to note that in addition to all the aforementioned criteria that guided my choice of the final portraits to be presented in this dissertation, an element of subjectivity was nevertheless at work in this process. In this chapter, I reflectively and self-critically discussed the impact of

my role as a researcher on the design and findings of study. My presence as a subject during the interviews and data collection process, during the analysis stages of the study, as well as during the writing up of the findings considerably influenced the choices and decisions I made in developing my research project. This, I argue, is characteristic of all qualitative social research. Throughout this study, I adamantly attempted to be an active and genuine story-teller in order to provide rich portraits of the participants' views and perceptions. My recognition of my active role in this study has also led to the following short discussion regarding the 'findings' of this research.

A note on the presentation of 'findings'

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to reflect on a term that I had hitherto used routinely to speak about the part of this dissertation that presents the 'outcome' of this study; namely, the 'findings chapters'. I must admit that I struggled with this term for the following reasons. In the above discussion, I made sure to stress that the main theoretical and methodological perspectives that this study adopts adhere to constructivist epistemological perspectives in social science research. As such, the notion of a 'finding' makes several ontological and epistemological claims that are incongruent with this study's main perspectives. Furthermore, such a term also assumes an artificial distancing between the researcher and the 'findings' of the research. In several parts of this dissertation, I emphasize that the 'knowledge' that this study generates is tentative, co-constructed, and contextual. Although I do utilize the term 'finding' in different parts of this dissertation, this however is merely due to convention. I would like to frame the following three 'findings' chapters of this dissertation as 'personal portraits' of the participants in this study. Thus, the following three chapters function as representations of collaborative and creative interpretive processes that yielded these portraits of the participants' sense-making process. In an attempt to further clarify what is intended by 'portraits', I provide the reader with the following short discussion on the term.

Mills, in "Ethnographic portraits and the challenge of writing change," compares ethnographic portraits to visual portraits stressing that they both "illuminate and evoke" as well as "hint at what lies beyond the frame" (Mills & Morton, 2013, p. 1). According to Mills, ethnographic

portraits can be understood as short, vividly crafted vignettes that aim to capture lived experiences and everyday practices adding that such portraits often rely on “brevity for their effect, on evocation rather than explanation” (Mills & Morton, 2013, p. 4). The following chapters provide the reader with such vignettes that aim to capture the everyday practices and lived experiences of beginning teachers in Lebanon. As such, the chapters aim to go beyond life-histories and biographies since they frequently and freely associate with the past and the future and avoid “smooth[ing] over contradictions or paradoxes” (ibid). They are also intended to “communicate and engage with political concerns” that enliven “faceless bureaucracies and disembodied discourses” (Mills & Morton, 2013, p. 6).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a discussion on two general aspects of research design. First, I discussed the adopted research design and methods for this study. This discussion elaborated on how the theoretical framework and research questions adopted by this research informed the development of its design and data collection methods. Second, I discussed issues of access, sampling and data collection schedules as well as personal and ethical considerations that informed the whole fieldwork process. I concluded with a discussion on data analysis procedures focusing on data organization strategies and ending with how the general themes and the final conceptualization of ‘image’ were arrived at. The three chapters that follow provide personal portraits of the student-teachers from three major teacher education programs in Lebanon.

Chapter 4 – Student-teachers’ portraits at the American university

Introduction

This chapter presents the portraits of the student-teachers from the Lebanese American University in Beirut that provides, among other things, teacher education. Seven students were interviewed at this institution. The student sample I had chosen included three males and four females. For all of the participants from this institution, education was not originally their first choice. They came from eclectic and in some cases international backgrounds. For an overview of the institutional setting, the reader is referred to the introductory chapter of this dissertation.

Section 1 of this chapter provides a short reflection on the interviews. For a detailed discussion on the interview process, the reader is referred to the data collection section in the Methodology chapter. Section 2 presents the portraits of three of the seven student-teachers from this university while highlighting and making connections with the main images that emerge in the portraits of the other four participants. Here, I would like to remind the reader that the concept of portraits that this study utilizes emphasizes an interpretive process that does not conform to formulaic, rigorous, or linear approaches to data presentation. Therefore, the portraits that are presented in the current as well as the following two chapters are intended to involve the reader in a hermeneutic process that avoids smoothing over contradictions and paradoxes (Mills & Morton, 2013, p. 4). As such, all the student-teachers’ portraits also function as interstices and occasions to draw links from within these portraits into the general socio-political contexts for teaching and teachers in Lebanon.

Section 1: a short note on the interviews

The interviews

All of the interviews with the participants at this university were conducted in empty classrooms on campus. The rooms were quiet and no or very few interruptions took place. In every interview, the participant and I were seated facing each other, however, with a slight angle. We

were both seated in student desk-chairs. The rooms were well lit, comfortable and the doors were shut at all times during the interviews. I commenced every interview by handing out the research information sheet, explaining its content, asking whether the participant had any questions, obtaining consent to record the interview, and summarizing the ethical responsibilities I have in regards to the interview content, including criteria for confidentiality and anonymity. After asking the participant to state his or her name and age, I would normally start by the general open-ended question: “So why did you decide to become a teacher?” Although this question and many similar ones recurred during the interview, the main purpose of asking it at the onset was to prompt the participant’s narrative before I started asking specific questions about personal biographies, educational and professional experiences, views and perceptions about teaching as well as motivations and aspirations for becoming a teacher. The dialectical hermeneutic process that I adopted to interpret the data resulted in the below portraits. This process also helped me further conceptualize ‘image’ as the main interpretive lens that this study adopts.

Section 2: The student portraits

This chapter focuses on three of the seven portraits of the student-teachers I interviewed at this university. However, in the conclusion to this chapter, I forefront some of the main images about teaching and teachers that emerge in the portraits of the other four participants. I do this in an attempt to balance between exposing the in-depth interpretive process that resulted in the participant portraits as well as providing an overall picture of the various images that emerge in the portraits of all the participants from this university.

Rami’s portrait

I was introduced to Rami by a teacher-educator at LAU. The teacher-educator provided me with Rami’s phone number and asked me to call him and ask if he would be interested to sit for an interview. When I called Rami, he seemed very eager to participate. We scheduled to meet a few days later. Rami’s interview was conducted on two different dates separated by one week.

We met on campus and sat for the interview in an empty classroom. At the time of the interview, Rami had long black hair, a short beard and was dressed in casual clothing. He seemed very relaxed during the interview. When I provided Rami with the information sheet that introduces my study, he immediately skimmed through it and did not wait for me to ask any questions; he started to tell me his story. Rami alternated between Arabic and English; however, the greater part of the interview was in English which was Rami's preference. He did switch to Arabic occasionally, especially when talking about his background and family. The metaphors and linguistic images that ensued from the interview were mixed. Some were expressed in English while others in Arabic. It is interesting to note that most of the 'positive' images expressed by Rami about teaching were expressed in English while many of the 'negative' ones which alluded to traditional or popular conceptions of teaching and teachers in Lebanese society were generally communicated in Arabic. After Rami shared a short account of his reasons for pursuing teaching, I began to ask questions to gain more insight into and probe some of the experiences and ideas that Rami had expressed. As was anecdotally mentioned in the reflective account provided in the methodology chapter, Rami, at the beginning of the interview process, acted as though he was anticipating my questions. He would first smile and respond to my questions with such statements as "Oh yes, I thought you would ask this" or "I see where you are going with this." In effect, I had to stop and very affably yet cautiously inquire about Rami's reactions to my questions. Rami explained that he was taking a course in educational research methods at the time of the interview and was reflecting on it as he sat through the interview. This further indicates, as I explain in the reflective account mentioned above, that students from this university regarded me as a peer and a role model. Therefore, a collegial attitude characterized many of the interviews I undertook at this institution. This was not the case at the other two institutions where I consequently had to take other measures to negotiate my presence and role in the interview process. Since Rami was familiar with many aspects of the research process, I briefly discussed with him the purpose of the semi-structured interview questions and continued the interview. I did this because I was concerned that Rami would misconstrue the nature of my research study and perhaps unintentionally project on the interview process certain conceptions of qualitative research methods that he had encountered in his course. In general, the interview process proceeded very smoothly.

Rami's account provided me with the following biographical information about him. Rami is a twenty-four-years-old male Education student at the Lebanese American University. At the time of the interview, he was pursuing his graduate studies. Rami was born in a southern coastal city in Lebanon from a mixed marriage (Catholic Christian mother and Sunni Muslim father). His father is a retired bank manager and his mother is a 'housewife': "Mom was always a housewife; [she only] reached fifth elementary. Dad was not that bright either ... this is private but I don't mind talking about it. I am proud of them as people; they are very nice and they understand me" (R., 1, 3). Rami's sister had completed her undergraduate degree in English Literature at the Lebanese University, however, and as Rami dismissingly explained, "She does not use it now ... stupid mentalities" (R., 1, 3). His brother had completed his undergraduate degree in Political Science at another American university in Beirut that is, similar to this one, considered prestigious and expensive. During the interview, Rami spoke with an unimpressed tone about what he considered were 'traditional' academic and career routes that his siblings had undertaken, especially his sister. I could detect that Rami contrasted himself with his siblings by expressing throughout the interview his unconventional and rebellious character especially in regards to what he considered were 'traditional' modes of thinking and living. Although he expressed his admiration for his family especially his parents, he emphasized: "I don't have these [tight] family ties" (R., 1, 3).

The first statement that Rami offered before I could ask any questions was: "Let me start by saying this, and I love saying this; if my high school experience was that good, I wouldn't have become a teacher right now" (R., 1, 1). In response, I asked Rami to clarify his statement and consequently, Rami started to recount his schooling experience. He had graduated from a local private school in his hometown. At first, Rami was apprehensive about revealing its name to me. The reason, I had understood later, was because of Rami's aversion for the political coloring that he perceived the school to have. Rami explained that he had never felt he belonged to that school in particular and to the city where he was raised in general. He had always identified with his mother's immediate and extended family who live in a predominantly Christian village south-east of his father's hometown. In regards to schooling, Rami describes his overall experience as negative. He explained that during his middle school years he was "obese": "Socially in school it was okay; however I was obese. Okay, again, I was the only guy among ten females in the humanities section; as usual, no guy would do that [expressed skeptically]"

(R., 1, 2). Rami had chosen the humanities route for his last year in high school¹⁰ which is considered somewhat unconventional for male high-school students, especially in Rami's hometown. He explains that he had always sought recognition and popularity in his school; however, he often felt that he was the 'popular guy's' side-kick. He later took interest in music and started a band in his school which gained much popularity. He grew his hair long and started to lose weight. This experience, he explained, helped him gain popularity and recognition among his peers, but not as much among his teachers:

Teachers used to ridicule my looks and say where will this get you? I mean, this does not really help; they did not understand and did not motivate and support me, even morally; I needed moral support. They only cared about grades; if you get a good grade it means that you are a good student. If you don't get a good grade, they don't care; it means you're not a good student. They don't understand the effort that I used to put in. I used to study every single day; I used to put in so much effort. And the atmosphere in class; I was the only male in class; still I used to feel that teachers in humanities preferred the females over me. (R., 1, 2)

Rami explains that he did not like most of his teachers. He felt they were not genuinely interested in him and never really encouraged him. They were satisfied with his average achievement and that made him feel that they did not expect more of him. Noting that Rami was specializing in teaching English at this university, I inquired about his experience with his English teachers in school. He replied:

I just noticed this, you know when you asked this, I just noticed it. So I think, yeah, you know something? I still remember things and exercises she used to give us and I do them with my students today; this was nine years ago. To be honest she left a trace. (R., 1, 4)

I asked Rami if he could speak more about the English teacher he had in mind. He paused and explained that his high-school English teacher was an important figure in his life. She encouraged him to write poetry, challenged him and had high expectations of him. He added:

I still remember English Lit. and a session on creative writing. I combined different characters from different stories and created my own story back then and the teacher loved it. She was

¹⁰ In Lebanon, for the last year of schooling, students are asked to choose one of four basic available routes: mathematics, natural sciences, socio-economics or literature/humanities.

young. She was 27 and I was 17. Her homework was challenging and I like that although she used to give us a lot of work to do. Now I understand why. (R., 1, 5)

Rami singles out another experience, this time as a pupil in grade ten, to express his idea of a good teacher:

In grade ten, we had to write a reflection paper [assigned by the abovementioned English teacher] about the movie *Dangerous Minds*, and I said to myself: if I ever become a teacher, I want to be like Michelle Pfeiffer. She was the teacher I wanted in my class; patient, would understand me and stand up for me and understand what we are passing through; cause I had a lot of problems back then. I just needed attention; someone to talk to. (R., 1, 7)

The above account draws on Rami's schooling experiences, specifically with his English teacher whom he admired and with whom he identified, as well as the image of a caring, patient, passionate and, very importantly, 'rebellious' teacher that Michelle Pfeiffer depicts in the movie *Dangerous Minds*. Rami draws on the latter image, his own self-image as a rebellious and unconventional person, and his experience with his high-school English teacher to articulate his idea of a 'good' teacher. Underlying this composite image of the teacher, which Rami draws on recurrently in his account, are charismatic, interpersonal, and moral dimensions, as the above short account by Rami reveals. In fact, the themes of 'understanding', 'concerned' and 'inspiring' recurred in Rami's speech.

Rami also draws on his experiences as an undergraduate student at this university to elaborate on his motivations for pursuing Education. His undergraduate degree was in Business. Rami explains that he had never felt he belonged in Business although he was doing considerably well in the course. It is important to note that the word 'belong' recurs in Rami's interview and is used frequently when he speaks about his experiences in school as a pupil. Rami emphasizes that the few "joys" he had experienced during his Business course involved tutoring or helping colleagues with courses and projects. Such 'atypical' teaching experiences, as Sugrue (1997) would argue, seem to highly influence student-teachers' motivations and perceptions of teaching. As I mention earlier, several interview questions were designed to evoke such experiences in the participants' accounts in order to probe their motivations for becoming teachers. Rami repeatedly alluded to such experiences to explain his motivation for teaching.

After graduating with a degree in Business, Rami wanted to explore the professional world by applying to a job at a shipping company. He explains that the whole experience was not rewarding whether financially or emotionally. Rami explained that his self-image, which he had developed during high school (as a rock-star with long hair), did not resonate with the career path that he felt was expected of him by his family and society. Rami expressed aversion towards the stereotype of a business employee who has to “wake up and be at his desk every morning working for nine hours” (R., 1, 8). He adds:

[At university] I was so into music and playing in bands and I could not imagine myself with short hair in a suit sitting down on a desk in a company all day. So I tell you, it's physical appearance, that's number one. Number two, if I say that I have a very good conscience you'd think I'm exaggerating but in business I couldn't do it! My friends speak proudly about ripping people off in business! I can't do it! My reward [from teaching] was people I'm helping being happy and saying thank you. Maybe I was too idealistic; I was 19, but no! I still believe to a certain degree in these things. (R., 1, 8)

Experiencing a high degree of dissonance between his self-image, both on a physical and a moral level, and the image of a businessman, Rami explains that he “got so depressed. I quit my job, kicked out my roommate, broke up with the girl I was seeing; I left everything I had” (R., 1, 9). I asked him about the reasons he decided to pursue Education. He responded: “I envisioned sitting again in a classroom and attending courses” adding that “When you have this vision that, okay, I was able to see myself as a teacher in the classroom but I was not able to see myself as an employee or a manager in a company” (R., 1, 10). Here, the influence of imagery and visualization is highly visible in Rami's expression of his motivation for becoming a teacher. Rami further adds: “My dad started calling me ‘teacher¹¹ Rami’ and was proud! They [his parents] started sharing the same vision and trusted me! To be twenty-four and becoming at teacher, people respect you back in my mother's village” (R., 1, 12).

As discussed in the literature review chapter of this dissertation, such visualizations that emerge from identification (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) draw attention to both self-identification and the identification and categorization of oneself by others. In the above quotations, Rami seems to

¹¹ Rami here uses the Arabic word ‘ustādh’ which connotes a (male) teacher, an expert, as well as a title that carries cultural undertones of respect similar to the word ‘Sir’.

draw on images and visualizations that he has of himself as a teacher as well as how he envisions his community to see him. I was interested in probing this image that Rami was expressing through such words as ‘see myself’, ‘envisioned’, ‘vision’, among others. In effect, I asked him what his personal conceptions of a teacher were and how he saw himself as a teacher. In response, Rami provided the following intricate and highly metaphorical self-portrait that deserves quoting at length (the whole account below was expressed in English):

Okay, I have faith in God, don’t ask me why, it’s a feeling; it’s something I can’t explain. I am not an atheist. Do I believe in religions? I don’t. Okay more or less yes more or less no, I wouldn’t know, I am still looking for the truth plus you know my [interreligious] background affects me. Now I had those two visions: becoming a priest; my own kind of priest, or becoming a rock-star. Now I reached this stage that made me become a teacher. Okay, so a priest is someone that, hum, okay, leave everything I’ve done to become a priest? It’s nice but not for my parents so I was willing to stop it. Number two, with being a rock-star I believe I reached the peak; I lived the life of a rock-star, toured and then, I couldn’t [continue] once you bump into reality! But if you think about it, the teacher is an artist, so here comes the rock-star; and he’s the miracle maker, so here comes the priest. That was my midway; I combined both things to become a teacher. I can’t be a rock-star but I can teach music; I can teach other stuff; I can be more artistic in my classes! Okay I can’t be a priest but still I can be a miracle maker; I can make the student believe in himself and get somewhere in life. (R., 1, 12)

Rami then adds that this image has somewhat helped him pursue his aspirations while evading the consequent pressures of society:

If I became a priest, they [alluding to people in his immediate community] would say ‘ah! You! A priest?’ But what do you know about me to judge me? But I’m fine; I learnt how to deal with society. And a rock-star? Okay fine! They would think ‘Look at you! In this country a rock-star!’ Okay, I don’t need that. Ah! A teacher! Fine; they will accept that. I never tell them [people] though that I frame it that way! I don’t talk about it this way. Ever since I was a child I kept stuff to myself. (R., 1, 9)

The above account is imbued with imagery and metaphors. The composite and personal image of the teacher as midway between a priest and a rock-star plays an important role in Rami’s perception of teaching. Rami explains that a teacher is both an artist and a miracle maker. His image of the teacher reflects charismatic, interpersonal, and moral undertones. Thus the

transformative and charismatic archetype of the teacher is highly visible in this image; which also resonates with the image of the teacher represented in the movie *Dangerous Minds*. On another occasion during the interview, Rami draws on the character of Socrates as an example of a rebellious teacher who was condemned for “corrupting the minds of the youth” (R., 1, 6). Rami reflects on this by explaining: “I was always a rebel” adding: “I like Socrates’ arrogance. He was rebellious. I like the idea that he was ‘corrupting the youth’, I want to be like him to be honest” (R., 1, 6). In effect, the image of the teacher as midway between a priest and a rock-star allows Rami to link among and connect many aspects of his life experiences and express or articulate them in speech. This image provides Rami with high articulating power to synthesize many competing aspects of his choice to become a teacher and consequently articulate (and negotiate) his choice and motivation in speech. The image of the ‘priest’ further synthesizes other dimensions of Rami’s identity that also create tensions for him on a cultural and social level. Coming from an interreligious background as was mentioned above (Christian mother and Muslim father) and growing up in a predominantly Muslim society characterized by escalating sectarian tensions in general while still identifying, as Rami states, more with his mother’s family and community, the image of the teacher-as-priest seems to also provide Rami with further articulating power to integrate this dimension of his identity.

Moreover, this complex metaphorical image, albeit quite personal and customized by Rami, nevertheless links with and synthesizes broader cultural images of teaching that are prevalent in Lebanon. For example, at one point in the interview, Rami quotes a famous verse from a poem by a famous early 20th-century Egyptian poet by the name of Ahmad Shawqi that states: ‘Rise to the teacher and praise him for a teacher is almost a prophet’. This religious-cultural dimension of teaching, which is also couched in the history of teaching as intimately tied to religious institutions in Lebanon, reverberates with Rami’s image of the teacher-as-priest. Therefore, I could detect that Rami’s image of the teacher as ‘midway between priest and rock-star’ carries religious, moral, interpersonal, and charismatic colorings and provides Rami with high articulating power to synthesize a large body of experiences, memories, and motivations while cogently articulating them in speech.

At this point, I would like to draw attention to an image expressed by another participant in this study; Mira, which foregrounds ‘articulating power’ as a crucial dimension of images. In her

account, Mira explains: “I have always viewed teaching as a sort of “creative communication” (M., 1, 5). Later, Mira’s account revealed previous career aspirations involving Journalism and Music before she finally settled on Education. In her portrait, Mira drew on her aspirations to become a journalist as well as a musician and then related the creative and artistic dimensions of these two fields to teaching. As such, Mira’s image of the teacher as a ‘creative communicator’ provided her with high articulating power to both synthesize various aspirations and career paths while also allowing her to negotiate her choice to become a teacher with parents, relatives, and members of her immediate community.

While exploring Rami’s career aspirations, I found out that his image of the teacher as midway between a priest and a rock-star was contrasted with his perception of a ‘school teacher’. Rami explains:

Schools will limit me. I love to teach students but when it comes to the administration, I don’t want to deal with that; I don’t want to hate education because of the administration of a certain school. And we all know that in this country, school administrations are not that good. They are not flexible to change. If you try to implement something new in their school, they wouldn’t allow you to do that. (R., 1, 18)

The image that Rami draws on appears to be dissonant with a certain imagined school setting. In a similar vein to Salwa and Ruba (the other two participants from this university), Rami locates his charismatic, transformative, and rebellious teacher-self image either within the strict context of an imagined classroom, interacting with students and impacting their lives, or beyond the school context altogether, interacting with members of his community. The reader will detect the same posture or attitude in Salwa’s and Ruba’s accounts, albeit in regards to other dimensions and colorings of their self-images. Through this, I could detect that the images as well as the contexts (both experienced and imagined) in which the participants’ images were *rooted* played a crucial role in regards to the student-teachers’ motivations and choices. The images that the participants constructed allowed them to identify with classroom as well as extra-scholastic settings but not with school-specific settings.

Rami, throughout his account, recurrently communicated aversion towards working in school settings and elaborated on several scenarios regarding his future plans and aspirations. These

seemed to be informed, to a certain extent, by general gender stereotypes regarding career choice in Lebanon. Rami singles out one episode to expound his views:

Concerning teachers in Lebanese society; you often hear people say: ‘there is nothing disgraceful about work [labor]’¹². Once I told someone I am studying to become a teacher and the response from this sixty-year-old guy was: ‘ah, so you’re not planning on getting married!’ The guy added: ‘Come on! Teachers don’t make money; they don’t gain respect’. I started laughing and I thought how would this sixty-year-old man sitting behind a counter all day know what education is all about? (R., 1, 8)

Later, when I asked Rami to further elaborate on this image of the teacher, he said the following:

In this country a teacher is a beggar. Okay I know they say because they don’t make enough money although I have another idea about this. But notice that just like a beggar that sits on the street and begs for money, a teacher goes to classrooms and begs for more hours and therefore more money; this is the negative aspect of the way they see teachers in this country. (R., 2, 17)

Then Rami expands on this image of the teacher through his image of a ‘bad teacher’, emphasizing that a bad teacher is usually “in it just for the money” (R., 2, 17). He then contrasts this with his own motivation for becoming a teacher by stating that “money was never a problem cause I never cared about money” (R., 2, 17). Yet, at another point in the interview, when I asked Rami whether he would ever consider teaching in a school, he explained that he would only do so in “American schools, such as ACS [American Community School in Beirut]; I would only teach there for the money cause they pay a lot” (R., 2, 19).

One can detect in the above accounts various tensions and contradictions that Rami attempts to grapple with as he elaborates on his motivations and aspirations for becoming a teacher. The cultural image that recurs in many of the accounts expressed by the participants of this study involves the ‘ideal teacher’ who is selfless, not materialistic, altruistic, and almost martyred for his/her ‘mission’ or ‘message’ which is usually pitted against an image of a selfish ‘bad teacher’ who is merely ‘in it for the money’. Such binary images are also expressed in Salwa’s and Mirvat’s (two other participants in this study) portraits below. In the third findings chapter of this dissertation which focuses on the portraits of the participants from the Lebanese public

¹² Rami here recites a common Arabic phrase that is often used when a person resorts to low-paid labor work for lack of better options.

university, Mirvat enthusiastically recounts how one of her teacher-educators used to always stress that teaching as a ‘message’ should be regarded as a service to society and that teachers should offer to do it for free (Sd. & Mv., 1, 9). Although I will discuss this image in more depth in the conclusion to this study, I would like to briefly unpack the image of teaching as a ‘noble message’ and therefore a ‘free service’ that seems to be prevalent in various cultures and settings even beyond Lebanese society. I do this here in order to link this dimension of teacher representation to another image that emerges in Rami’s portrait below. Chris Higgins, in *The Good Life of Teaching*, criticizes binary images of teachers that represent them as either ‘selfless saints’ or ‘selfish scoundrels’. In his work, he calls for a more realistic understanding of the complexities inherent in teachers’ motivations, daily work and developing identities. He foregrounds an important factor that contributes to such dichotomous perceptions of teaching; namely, the framing of teaching as a ‘helping profession’. Higgins goes on to argue how ‘helping professions’ in the past were mostly associated with feminine jobs such as nursing and teaching that privileged such values as intrinsic motivation and self-sacrifice. Any calls for extrinsic rewards were historically dismissed as selfish acts. Higgins explains: “Indeed, we can offer a fairly precise sociological definition of the ‘helping’ professions: they are those forms of work, historically associated with women, combining difficult working conditions and a caring attention to the client’s whole person” (2010, p. 196).

From such a representation of teaching as a helping profession extends a binary image of teaching that further compounds this problem. Higgins exposes such an image in an eloquent and dramatic style: “Enter stage left—the selfless saints, devoted to nothing but the welfare of their students and martyred for the cause. Enter stage right—the selfish scoundrels: narcissists, lechers, and petty dictators of their classroom worlds. What seems clear is that these two characters and, correspondingly, the two main discourses about teacher motivation—the inspirational and the suspicious—are but two sides of the same coin” (2010, p. 189). Then Higgins adds:

What these seeming rivals share is their attachment to the stark opposition between a lofty altruism and a base self-interest; neither lends itself to a believable portrait of teaching. Inspirational accounts ring hollow when they gloss over the immense difficulties and frustrations inherent in the life of a schoolteacher. They portray teachers as having no personal agenda, conveniently wanting only what students need, and needing only to give that. Suspicious

narratives do offer a more believable psychology, helpfully acknowledging our human-all-too-human desires, needs, and weaknesses. However, they tend to assume that teachers have only a personal agenda, which they merely disguise with their talk of educational aims and student needs. (2010, p. 190)

In fact, more and more criticism is being voiced by Lebanese unionists and educationists alike regarding such ‘lofty’ images of teachers as ‘demi-prophets’ (ex. see Wehbe, 2003). Such binary oppositions inherent in how teachers are represented in Lebanese society further add to the tensions expressed in many of the student-teachers’ portraits in this study. In the case of Rami, his self-portrait seems to foreground such tensions especially as a male student-teacher in Lebanese society. Rami’s account reveals his attempts to negotiate the feminized image of teaching as an underpaid, altruistic helping profession through rearticulating his motivations and his images of teaching through masculine charismatic and entrepreneurial terms that are sanctioned by society. Although Rami identifies with the image of Michelle Pfeifer as a charismatic teacher who ‘saves’ her students, he nevertheless constructs a masculine image of the teacher as part priest and part rock-star that he later in his narrative colors with entrepreneurial tones. As was mentioned earlier, Rami’s undergraduate degree was in Business. When I asked him further about his career aspirations, Rami draws on his business background, along with his image of the teacher, to elaborate on his future plans. Rami explains:

Basically I have two main projects. I like opening my own business involving cartoons. My Masters thesis is about the effect of cartoons on children’s behavior. So, that would be something. I will write the scripts and my friend does the animation. I’m going to start selling these cartoons; we have everything but still we need to finish other parts. Also, and most importantly, I want to invest in something called Rami’s Music Academy. Now if I can include other things such as teaching English or philosophy in it, I wouldn’t say no. But mostly it’s going to be related to music. I might not be a teacher in it; I’ll be the principal, and I’ll get teachers. There are so many students graduating with musicology degrees and cannot find jobs in this country. (R., 2, 13-14)

This image of the teacher-entrepreneur is prominent in Rami’s account and helps him synthesize images of teaching as a feminized helping occupation with the socially sanctioned masculine image of an entrepreneur or businessman. This entrepreneurial image of the teacher seems to have gained more currency not only in Lebanon but also globally. On the one hand, such

initiatives as Teach for America (and its local Lebanese counterpart Teach for Lebanon) seem to foster such an entrepreneurial image in high achieving graduates in Lebanon who want to develop the ‘right’ leadership skills to move on to ‘better’ professions while fulfilling their ‘mission’ of helping those who are deprived. Therefore, the image of a teacher from such settings as Teach for Lebanon is imbued with the desired charismatic, moral, missionary/pastoral, and at the same time entrepreneurial undertones which attract graduates from top-ranking universities in Lebanon and worldwide. I was able to detect similar images with such entrepreneurial and moral colorings in several exploratory pilot interviews that I had conducted with fellows (teachers) from Teach for Lebanon in October, 2009 when I first started my fieldwork.

Similar initiatives and organizations have also proliferated both internationally and locally in Lebanon that further frame teaching as a springboard to other, more ‘lucrative’ professions. Furthermore, this entrepreneurial image of teaching has developed to become more intimately tied to another modern image of the teacher that Menter (2009) expounds; namely, the ‘migrant teacher’ as the “travelling teacher” (p. 224). This image is prevalent in Salwa’s and Ruba’s accounts below. The promise of high-paid teaching positions in Dubai or other Arab Gulf countries has attracted many female students into teaching predominantly from this university since the highest paid teaching positions are at American schools in these Arab counties. Therefore, such images of the teacher as migrant/mobile/entrepreneur are becoming more appealing to student-teachers as the portraits of the participants from this university reveal. Such ‘new’ images seem to challenge older images of teachers as nation-builders that were prominent in the ‘Golden’ 50’s in Lebanon. Indeed, this phenomenon is not particular to Lebanon and can be understood as a consequence of current public sector reform trends that are taking place globally. Menter argues that this ‘new’ image of the mobile teacher seems to challenge older images of teachers that are intimately linked to nationalistic identities:

The point that arises from this discussion of teacher mobility is that in the past it has been common for ‘teacher identity’ to be closely linked to some notion of ‘national identity’ ... When a teacher migrates ... it is likely that significant processes will ensue that affect their professional identity. (2009, p. 224)

In summary, Rami draws on several images in his portrait in order to articulate his motivation for becoming a teacher. The teacher as ‘midway between priest and rock-star’ as well as the ‘entrepreneurial teacher’ provide Rami with articulating power to synthesize various competing dimensions of his identity as well as to cogently express his motivations and aspirations in speech. Artistic, male-charismatic (priest, rock-star, ustādh), rebellious and entrepreneurial dimensions characterize Rami’s main images.

Salwa’s and Ruba’s portraits

I was introduced to Salwa and Ruba through a student-teacher at LAU. I introduced my research project to them and asked if they would be interested in participating. Both Salwa and Ruba volunteered to sit for an interview. We immediately set different dates for their individual interviews which were a few days following our first encounter. The interviews took place in an empty classroom as was described above. Both participants were dressed in casual clothing and seemed comfortable sitting for the interviews. Both Salwa and Ruba alternated between using Arabic and English to express themselves during the interviews. At times they felt more comfortable using Arabic, especially when relating their childhood and school experiences. However, Salwa and Ruba drew more on English when they referred to academic discourse as well as when stating their opinions and views about what they thought constituted ‘good’ teachers and classrooms.

Salwa’s portrait

Salwa is a twenty-two-year-old female Education student. She had completed her undergraduate degree in Education at this university focusing on teaching English at the elementary level. At the time of the interview, she was undergoing her Teaching Diploma course which is a one-year, post-graduate program. Salwa is Lebanese; she was born in Lebanon and received all of her schooling there. Both of her parents are Muslims by birth. Salwa’s father works in a bank and her mother is an accounting director at the Lebanese University. She has one younger brother who is studying Business at the Lebanese University. Salwa had changed several schools before

starting her higher education studies. All of the schools she had attended were private and predominantly Muslim.

Salwa recollects her schooling experience as full of turmoil stating, laughingly, that she was a ‘problem child’: “I was a naughty child [laughing]. In school, I did not study a lot but I used to pass. The things I liked I used to study, but if you tell me to memorize and stuff, no way. Even in the official exams I did not do well; in these things like history and that, I received very low grades. So I cannot memorize” (S., 1, 3). Recounting her experience in high school, Salwa emphatically states: “I hated my final year English teacher and she did not like me either. Maybe because when she made a mistake, I used to correct her and she used to get mad at me. So at the end, I started to keep quiet and ignore her. And she did the same with me” (S., 1, 3). However, Salwa recalls that when she was in grade nine, “I used to love my English teacher. She was really good. The way she [pauses]... she was enthusiastic, active, and she always had new stuff and, yeah she was very ... [could not find the words]” (S., 1, 3). Then, Salwa shifted back to recounting ‘negative’ experiences she had had in elementary school:

In grade 2, I was in HS [a private, predominantly Muslim school in Beirut]; we had a math teacher who, I don’t know why, used to hate me. She would walk into class and say ‘Salwa, go out’; if I did anything, if I turned around in class, anything. So my parents hired the other section’s math teacher to tutor me, so when the other one knew, she started to claim that I was getting copies of the exams and whatnot, so she kept failing me. So she put me through remedial, in grade 2, although I was the second in class, she put me through remedial, so the school principal, because my mom is well connected, told her to just send me to sign my name on the exam and that they would take care of the rest. I was in grade 2 and that is what the teacher did to me! So in grade 3, I had to change schools because I couldn’t continue there. And now she [the math teacher] is still there and they have promoted her to principal since she had done terrible things with teaching students. (S., 1, 3-4)

The above account reflects Salwa’s experiences with what she now considers a ‘bad’ teacher as well as provides insight into her aversion for school administrations as will be elucidated through her personal portrait later. Salwa adds: “I still remember how she used to shout at me and send me out of class; you know I was in grade 2; what did I know? And since then I started hating math actually. Although I was good and second in class, after this experience, I stopped being of the top five in class” (S., 1, 4). When I asked her about her positive experiences in school, Salwa

singled out her 9th grade English teacher: “I once did a presentation in class and she was fascinated with it and she encouraged me so much and such. It was really good” (S., 1, 4).

Salwa explains her choice to become an English teacher through drawing on her schooling memories, her experiences with English teachers, both negative and positive, her previous academic choices, as well as the influence of her mother. Salwa begins her portrait by drawing on her experiences at the first university in which she had started her higher education studies:

I started as a Business major at the Arab University [in Beirut]; I didn’t like it at all. The English is Egyptian there [smiling; intending by this statement that since most professors at the Arab University are Egyptian, they spoke English with a very heavy Egyptian accent] and the quality of students is terrible. I mean I didn’t feel like it; to go there especially that the doctors [professors] there are miserable, I mean. So I left and came to this university. (S., 1, 1)

Originally, Salwa’s major was Business. When I asked why she had chosen this field to begin with, she replied:

Because I was in socio-economics in high school, so they always told us you are going into Business, Business, Business! Enough of Business! And when I entered the major I did not like it at all. And so I dropped out and I applied here without telling my parents. And when I got accepted I told them. First they refused and then I convinced them and it was okay. I started my English Language degree here but I did not like literature courses. I thought it would be different from literature, you have English courses and literature courses, and I thought that English would be different from just literature; it turned out to be mostly literature. I hated it and I turned to Education and Dr. B [a teacher educator at this university] helped me do this. (S., 1, 1)

Some of Salwa’s parents’ objections in regards to her choice to apply to this university involved the considerably expensive fees that this university charged in comparison to the Arab University; in addition to the fact that Salwa’s brother was going to start university the year after and, it was implied, as Salwa explains, that her parents would rather save the money for her brother’s education. Her parents were also worried about her ‘wasting’ a full academic year moving to a different field. She recalls her parents telling her: “‘First you were in Business and now Education, what do they have to do with each other?’ Then Salwa adds: “I know; because it is this [American] university and it is expensive; and because the year after my brother was entering university” (S., 1, 2). In Lebanon, gender stereotypes inform family decisions in

regards to their children's choice of higher education institution. This issue is prevalent in the narratives of the female Education students at this private university, especially in the case of those who come from middle or lower-middle socio-economic classes. This, for example, is also detected in Ruba's portrait, as will be discussed later. When I asked whether her parents ever bring up this concern to her, Salwa responded:

Well sometimes they do bring up the matter. For example if I nag about something a lot, they say 'stop nagging, it is enough that you went to the Lebanese American University while your brother is at the Lebanese University'. I reply by saying 'so what, what do you want me to do? It's your problem! Jad [her brother] can finish his studies at the Lebanese University and then do his Masters at this university; it's not the end of the world. And after all, Jad never wanted to enroll at this university because he believes that a Business degree from the Lebanese University is much better'. (S., 1, 2)

As can be detected in the above account, several factors, involving gender stereotypes and the perceived status of disciplines and universities, are at play in students' career choices in Lebanon. Prominent in many of the student portraits on which this study draws is an awareness of the perception of Education as a feminine occupation in Lebanon. Consequently, many of the participants' of this study understand that in general, females are encouraged to pursue Education as a field at the Lebanese University since the latter is a public institution and charges very low and affordable tuition fees. This, however, is not the case for all female higher education students in Lebanon majoring in other disciplines. For example, if a female student is accepted in what is considered a 'prestigious' discipline or major at a prestigious university, gender stereotypes might not play as consequential a role as with other 'less esteemed' disciplines and institutions. Therefore, the combination of discipline/field of study with the institution of choice contributes to constructing the status of disciplines vis-à-vis gender stereotypes in Lebanon rather than the field of study alone. These factors and the resulting tensions can be detected in Salwa's account above.

Other objections that Salwa had faced from her parents had to do with her choice of major/field of study: "They complained: 'you want to become a teacher all your life, is that what you want?'" (S., 1, 2). In response to their objection, "I said no; first I'd teach for a couple of years and then I would do a PhD and then I would teach in a university and that I will not stay as a

school teacher all my life for sure. So they were convinced and now they love it, I mean” (S., 1, 2). She further explains that her mother finally encouraged her since she (her mother) “had originally majored in English Literature. She liked the idea although she had never really worked in her own major. She did not like the idea that ... she used to teach at IC [an international and prestigious private school in Beirut] and then she left and did not like the amount of work and effort and correcting papers and, and, and; so she preferred to work in an office, finish her duties, go home, and that’s it” (S., 1, 2).

Salwa also recounts the pressures that her family seems to continuously face from their immediate community about their decision to send Salwa to this private university to major in Education:

Well first, they would tell dad ‘you’ve put your daughter at LAU and your son at the Lebanese University!’ [expressed with a reproaching tone]. So my dad would reply ‘Well yes, what’s the problem?’ Ah ... and the second thing is when I used to tell them [relatives, parents’ friends, members of immediate community, etc] ‘I am doing English’ they immediately reply ‘Ah, so you want to become a teacher!’ Who told you that that is what you can only be? Or they tell me ‘why did you not apply to the Faculty of Pedagogy at the Lebanese University?’ So I look at them and think; the Lebanese University or the American University [with astonishment]! So I really don’t know how they think but these are most of the reactions I get from people. But I never get ‘wow’ [as an encouraging response] or something like that. No one ever tells me this. (S., 1, 4-5)

These, among other objections from Salwa’s environment, resonate with Salwa’s anxieties about remaining an elementary school teacher all her life. In articulating these anxieties, Salwa draws on the following image: “I do see myself as a teacher, but I do not imagine my world to be restricted to the school; I do not want to repeat myself or be stuck with that. I always love new things. So if I stay teaching in school; okay students change every year, but after all the materials are the same and the thing is the same. So change is nicer” (S., 1, 2). The above ‘negative’ image of the teacher being ‘stuck’ in school accentuates a contrast between, on the one hand, Salwa’s image of herself as an active and enthusiastic ‘classroom teacher’, as will be expressed later, and on the other, ‘being stuck’ and having her ‘world’ restricted to the school. Salwa’s portrait of teaching seems to contrast her image of a ‘school-teacher’, which she colors with negative tones, with that of a ‘classroom teacher’ which is depicted in positive terms. One

of Salwa's main anxieties about becoming a teacher involves this image of being 'stuck' and 'restricted to the school'. This is further compounded by her parents' preliminary objections to her decision: "As I told you, [her parents complained] 'do you want to just be a teacher? How much do you expect to get paid? And such things like the salary; like always being a school teacher, 'you will never progress or move forward' and here I said I could do a Masters, a PhD, I could travel, and you know these things and this got them very excited" (S., 1, 4).

This, as will be discussed later, resonates with Ruba's concerns and anxieties about the school in which she intends to start her career. In her portrait, Ruba emphasizes wanting to be like the teacher she had observed who is very protective of her students and classroom space. In other words, Ruba imagines her future teacher-self within the classroom context where the latter becomes her personal space protected from external interference. I would like to propose that the context or 'background' in which the 'teacher' that is portrayed in both Salwa's and Ruba's portraits, as will become gradually evident, is the classroom and not the school. This point will be discussed in more detail below.

In addition to *seeing* herself as a teacher in the classroom context, Salwa provides another image of herself as a teacher that she locates beyond the strict context of the school. Salwa explains: "For example, when I speak about my major to people, I know every point [aspect] of it. I know, for example, how to discuss this with people. I know if I want to speak about *measurement* what to say; if I want to speak about *technology* what to say, about *strategies* ... about ... about everything [italicized words were related in English]" (S., 1, 10). At a different occasion in the interview, Salwa explains how her knowledge of education has provided her with more confidence than when she was a pupil in school. However, elaborating on this point, Salwa makes another allusion to her image of herself as a teacher that she locates in contexts that exist beyond the school: "Of course! It has provided me with more self-confidence; many things have changed. Before I did not have much ... you know, much ... umm, I wasn't very ... how should I say it: *interactive* and all these things; now I have changed and now I have things to talk about that I am sure of what I am saying; for example if I see someone shouting at his son, I discuss it with him that he cannot do this, and I explain why, and whatnot. Some get convinced, others don't" (S., 1, 6).

In the above two short accounts, Salwa foregrounds an image of herself discussing educational matters with people not strictly in the school context but rather in her immediate community such as with parents, parents' friends, extended family, among others, while feeling confident about being equipped with the technical knowledge to do so. This image of herself as a teacher extends beyond the classroom into her immediate community where she imagines herself engaging in meaningful and important conversations with people outside of the school context. I could detect that in Salwa's portrait, her teacher images, specifically the 'positive',¹³ ones, were evoked either in classroom settings or within her larger community context. Furthermore, her images of teaching within the school context were to a large extent expressed 'negatively'. In fact, in most of the portraits of the student-teachers that participated in this study, the contexts in which the participants *imagined* themselves as teachers played a crucial role. In other words, images of themselves as teachers did not exist in isolation. They were always *rooted* in specific contexts. These contexts were not always formal. As was expressed in the above short account, Salwa's image of herself as a teacher is *rooted in informal*¹⁴ settings as well. The relationships these images have with their underlying varying contexts seem to influence, in varying degrees, the participants' views and perceptions of teaching as an activity and occupation in general.

Most of the participant portraits that this study presents seem to differentiate amongst images of the 'classroom teacher', 'school teacher' and 'teacher in the community'. Each of these images is imbued with different colorings and carries different tones in the participants' portraits. It is the hope of this study to influence teacher education programs to become more attentive of beginning teachers' images of teaching that emerge in informal and personal settings. It seems that the way beginning teachers imagine their teacher-selves in such contexts (informal, personal and social; with friends, families, neighbors, acquaintances, etc) also influences their images of teachers and consequently their attitudes towards teaching as an occupation.

Salwa's portrait also contrasts her images of 'old' or 'traditional' with 'new' or 'current' teachers. Drawing on her schooling experiences, her parents' narratives, and general cultural

¹³ The terms 'positive' and 'negative' are intended to communicate the participant's attitude towards images and experiences and not the researcher's.

¹⁴ This term is intended to designate settings beyond the school environment that are not strictly formal educational or academic.

images of teachers in the past, she contrasts this with her image of ‘new’ teaching and of the teacher she is aspiring to become:

Teaching is not like in the past; it’s new. Now we have *technologies*, there is *integration of technology*, there are *new strategies*, *new techniques*, we no longer have: ‘just sit down and study, this is the lesson, this is it, you did it; you get a hundred, you did not do it, you failed’ [drawing on images of ‘traditional’ methods of teaching from Salwa’s own schooling experiences]. Now you have; if you couldn’t do this exam, you can do a presentation, you can do homework, you can do class work, you can do many things. He cannot sit down and take an exam? He can do many other things! They [Salwa was implying members of her immediate community such as extended family, friends, parents’ friends, and others] think that the teacher goes for a couple of hours and just passes time, says what he has to say and leaves. They think things are like the old days; they don’t know that things have changed. Yes, it’s totally different now; where we were and where we are today. So many things, especially when you have such things as *smart classrooms*, you can’t have classrooms like before, everything has changed” [italicized words were expressed in English by the participant]. (S., 1, 5)

As was discussed earlier, this technically- and discursively-laden image of her teacher-self emerges more clearly when Salwa locates herself in the broader, supra-school context; as she interacts with members of her immediate community and of society at large. Furthermore, evident in the above account is an explicit comparison between Salwa’s perceptions of ‘traditional’ or ‘old’ and ‘current’ or ‘new’ teachers and teaching approaches. Salwa draws on her own experiences as a pupil to elaborate on her perceptions of the old ways of teaching. Salwa explains how rigid her teachers’ methods were and how, as a student who could not memorize in order to do well on exams, she had wished for more flexible teachers who would resort to more accommodating learning and assessment methods. Talking about her favorite teacher, Salwa singles out her experience with giving a presentation in English class in grade nine and getting much encouragement from her teacher: “It was my grade 9 English teacher; I once did a presentation in class and she was fascinated with it and she encouraged me so much and such. It was really good” (S., 1, 4). She also draws on her teacher education program experience and how her favorite teacher educator allowed her to make up for an exam by giving a presentation in class and doing well on it:

[My] favorite [teacher educator]; she was special, her courses were different. They are the ones I really benefited from. You feel free in them and not pressured. I mean okay, if you did not do this, you could do this; you could do better. I mean once, this is where I got the idea, [she told me] ‘if you did not do well in this exam perhaps you could do well in this presentation’. She always encourages us, she always gives us ways, her exams are ... nicer. (S., 1, 12)

In the above accounts, Salwa identifies both with her English school teacher as well as with a specific teacher educator and draws on this identification to contrast her images of ‘traditional’ and ‘new’ teaching approaches. As such, interpersonal and affective dimensions are prominent in her image of the ‘new’ teacher.

I wanted to explore how the abovementioned dimensions of Salwa’s self-image informed her motivation and choice to become a teacher. In effect, I asked her about what other choices or preferences she had had before she embarked on her teacher education program. Salwa explained that she sees herself as someone who is very “energetic” and “lively” and feels that her character better fits that of a graphic designer, stating: “Ah, actually, if I could go back to the beginning, and did not waste all these years, I would go into graphic design. I really like to be, like ... a graphic designer. And I am still intent on doing it!” (S., 1, 5). Her friends, she adds, further reinforce this self-image: “My friends, they see me more in graphic design and tell me we don’t really see you as a teacher. You know I am always, you know ... wow [laughing, intending to describe herself as active or energetic]. But you know I think this is now good, with the *new technologies* and the *new techniques*, it is better to not be just a teacher who is just a *lawh* [an Arabic word which literally means board or blackboard and is sometimes used in a derogatory manner to describe someone as dull and rigid, especially in the case of teachers] sitting in class! You see I had many of those [teachers]” (S., 1, 5). Salwa’s wish to be a graphic designer stems from an image she has of herself as someone very energetic, flamboyant and colorful, which is reinforced by how her friends see her. This image stands in stark contradiction with her image of a ‘traditional’ teacher. The manner in which Salwa paused and said “to be, like ... a graphic designer,” reflected a certain self-image on which she drew to describe her alternative career aspirations. However, the image of the ‘new teacher’ is summoned by Salwa to reconcile some of the tensions in her self-image. Salwa thus provides a self-portrait that connects her personal characteristics as someone enthusiastic, colorful, creative and active, which she identifies with graphic design, with her image of ‘new teaching’. Such an image also

emerges in Salwa's imagined future classroom. She asserts that her classroom will "Definitely be colorful and not as dull and white and with [fluorescent] lights as the ones we are in now [smiling, referring to the classroom where the interview took place]" (S., 1, 14). She adds:

Definitely I would not want the class to be a quiet one where everyone is just sitting quietly, you know the kind of scene I'm talking about. I want it to be active, a little hyper [intending 'lively'], I wouldn't want them to feel they are just sitting in class and not wanting to be there. I have no problem if we get tired of the classroom to go to the garden and read a story; it's okay, we change, we can go to the library; we don't need to stay in the classroom. I mean I recall hating sitting in my chair all day and if I wanted to recline it, I would be scolded by the teacher. Well you need oxygen, you need to move. (S., 1, 14)

Salwa also explained that she anticipates conflict with school administrations in regards to how she saw her future classroom asserting that "they only care about quiet classrooms although this is wrong; the students could be asleep as far as they are concerned!" (S., 1, 14). Salwa repeatedly locates her 'positive' image of herself as a teacher, as well as the image of the 'new' teacher, in her classroom on the one hand, and in her immediate community on the other, whether experienced or imagined, while expressing a 'negative' image of teaching within the context of the school.

The articulating power of the image of the 'new teacher' equipped with 'new' teaching approaches also emerges when Salwa describes her perception of Education as a field:

It is not just Education; it is everything. It is all majors [disciplines/subjects]; it is really everything: it has business, it has graphics, it has ... the science, the math, the engineer; it has ... it has everything! Because you have to do projects, you have to do ... there are so many things you can do. Education means everything. To start with, Education led to business, to engineering, and got us to everything. (S., 1, 5-6)

The 'graphic designer' reemerges in the above account. Through this image of Education as everything, Salwa locates her alternative aspirations. Her recurrent focus on teaching as involving 'graphics', 'colorful' methods, creative 'presentations' and 'technologies' resonates with her self-image as a lively, flamboyant, enthusiastic and creative individual which, in turn, matches Salwa's image of a graphic designer. Later on, she also draws on her Business major experience before she had switched to Education as also relevant to the field of education. In

effect, this image links and articulates among her desires to be a graphic designer, her anxieties about having ‘wasted’ a year studying Business before switching to Education, as well as her self-image as lively, active, and creative. Finally, this image of ‘Education as everything’ is contrasted by Salwa with a stereotypical image of the teacher that is expressed in the popular English phrase: “those who can’t do, teach”:

Yes, [you end up in] Education, for example ‘you are not good in Math, so you went and did [Math] Education. You are not good at ... whatever, so you went and did English Education ... or couldn’t do Engineering because ... you know, that stuff. (S., 1, 6)

By asserting that “Education is everything ... [and that] Education led to Business, to Engineering, and got us to everything,” Salwa expresses an image of teaching that challenges that which is portrayed by the saying “those who can’t do, teach” while providing her with articulating power to link amongst various personal experiences, choices, and life transitions. In the final discussion of this study, I make a case for the importance of fostering such ‘inclusive’ images of teaching as encompassing many other occupations and disciplines while empowering student-teachers to rearticulate them in teaching and learning terms. In other words, I foreground the need for teacher education programs to work on developing and nurturing the personal images that student-teachers bring with them to their programs instead of attempting to supplant them with other images deemed ‘more consistent’ with formal educational discourse and policy.

Finally, Salwa draws on the politico-sectarian climate and the political situation in Lebanon to articulate her image of the ‘new’ teacher as someone who is ‘not religious’ [in her speech, Salwa uses the terms ‘religious’ and ‘sectarian’ interchangeably]:

If you are a teacher, you cannot belong to any race or sect, or all these things because you might end up teaching at a school. For example, the school I was teaching at, you had Christians, Muslims, you had the ... everything. But if I am a teacher, and I am a Muslim and I want to think that way, I can’t be a teacher if I think that way! I will be biased without recognizing it. I don’t follow anyone and I do not think I will follow anyone because simply my *career* tells me not to do this because if I do this, there will be a *huge gap* in class. I will start to differentiate those from those [children] and that becomes a problem. And you are a *role model* to the students. If your students see their teacher doing this, it is a catastrophe. They will start liking those students

[of the same sect] and hating others. I mean, we've had enough; we've had enough of what we already have in Lebanon [all italicized words were expressed in English]. (S., 1, 13)

The above somewhat prescriptive image of the 'new' teacher as having to be 'a-religious', especially in a country such as Lebanon, is very complex and is most likely imbued with inherited narratives as well as witnessed and personal experiences of politico-sectarian conflict and violence in Lebanon. A little over a year before I had interviewed Salwa, when I assume she was close to completing her undergraduate studies in Education, armed clashes erupted in different areas around Beirut; one of which was the area where this university is located. Although disputed as such, the violent clashes were represented by many media and political channels as a religious conflict between Sunni and Shiite factions in Lebanon. As a lecturer at this university during the clashes, I recall dedicating a few sessions after the incident had subsided to discuss with my students their impressions of what had happened. Needless to say, these events had serious effects on the perceptions of the youth of the nature of the violence in Lebanon as well as the role that sectarianism plays in it. It is possible that Salwa's experience of these clashes and the ensuing politico-sectarian repercussions play an important role in her perception of what a 'new' teacher should currently look like in Lebanon. Salwa somewhat equates her perceptions of the 'new' teacher in Lebanon to a teacher that does not *identify* with his or her 'religious group' or sect.

Furthermore, Salwa states at the end of the above quote that "we've had enough in Lebanon." Taking into consideration Salwa's age, it is apparent that Salwa had not personally witnessed the Lebanese civil war which ended, in principle, in 1989. Therefore, Salwa's image of the 'new teacher' as a-religious seems to be influenced by inherited narratives and images of the civil war as a sectarian war. Salwa thus defines herself as a 'new teacher' in contrast to images of 'traditional' sectarian and partisan teachers in Lebanon.

In conclusion, Salwa draws a portrait of her teacher-self through her images of the 'new teacher' and 'Education as everything' which she seems to locate either within classroom settings emphasizing affective and interpersonal coloring or within her immediate community and larger social contexts stressing technical and 'non-religious' undertones. However, Salwa's images appear to be dissonant with imagined and experienced school settings.

Ruba's portrait

Ruba is a twenty-two-year-old female Education student at LAU. Her nationality is Lebanese, however, she was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and received part of her schooling there before her family decided to move back to Lebanon. Both of her parents are Muslims by birth. Her father is an accountant who, at the time of the interview, was still working in Riyadh. Her mother was an English teacher who had retired in 2001 after teaching English both in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. Ruba has two sisters and one brother. Her eldest sister is preparing for her Masters thesis in Arabic Literature at the Arab University in Beirut after earning her B.A. in Arabic literature from the Lebanese University. Her brother recently completed his MBA at LAU after earning his B.A. in Business from the Hariri Canadian University in Lebanon which is a small, private polytechnic college that offers Business and technology degrees. Her youngest sister is in her last school year. Ruba explained that her youngest sister wants to pursue Medicine; however, her parents will not be able to afford it at this university and will most likely encourage her to pursue it at the Arab University in Beirut where tuition fees are more affordable.

Ruba moved to Lebanon in eighth grade. She had changed several schools before her graduation. She first attended a private, predominantly Muslim coed school in her parents' hometown. However, after failing the eighth grade because of her "inability to acclimate," she moved to two different public all-girls schools before her final graduation. Ruba explained that she "ran away" from the first school because she "hated" it (Rb., 1, 1). She adds that she then moved to whatever school would accept her. Ruba indicated that she was against her parents' decision to move back to Lebanon and that she had preferred to continue living in Saudi Arabia. However, she had to return with her mother and siblings after her elder sister's graduation from school and her intent on pursuing higher education in Lebanon. She added: "I was happy there [in Saudi Arabia]; I loved the atmosphere and my friends. I did not want to come back; and I was not comfortable with the new school [in Lebanon] for many reasons one of which was the fact that it was coed and I was used to an all-girls school there [in Riyadh]" (Rb., 1, 1).

I inquired about her teachers in Saudi Arabia and what she thought was special about them. Ruba explained: "They used to be very lovely and made you feel 'if you want anything just come and tell us; if you did not understand anything, just come and tell us and we'll explain it again to you'. Even outside the classroom they'd approach you and ask if you didn't understand anything

‘we can explain it again to you’” (Rb., 1, 8). To elaborate on her motivation to become a teacher, Ruba singles out an incident with her math teacher at the first school she had attended upon her return to Lebanon and contrasts it with her general experience with her teachers at her previous school in Riyadh:

I was most influenced [to become a teacher] by teachers in Saudi [Arabia]; that is English teachers. I came to Lebanon and the Math teacher was the worst teacher. I was very bad in Math. My mother sought help from that teacher and apparently she was after the money and offered to give me private tutoring. I hated her and Math. She did not like people to ask her to repeat. You can’t ask her questions; although I was in a private school. In the public schools I attended, they used to repeat again and again and did not mind to repeat. (Rb., 1, 2)

Ruba then explains:

When I moved to the public school, I felt better. I loved the atmosphere although I felt weird that I am in a public school not because I am conceited or anything of the sort, but I was not used to being in such an environment. Most girls were from very low [socio-economic] classes. First, I felt strange but then all the students were kind to me and I liked that so I adapted quickly. The educational level was terrible however. I spent two years there. For the [government] official exams in the 9th grade, I had to get private tutors since we never learnt anything at school. So I failed the official exams. (Rb., 1, 2)

Ruba further explains that most of her classmates at this public all-girls school were not interested in learning; most of them were already engaged awaiting marriage. Ruba adds that the teachers knew this and did not invest much time and effort in their education. Ruba then contrasts this environment with the one at the other public school to which she had later moved:

I moved to another public [all-girls] school and it was great. You wouldn’t think it is a public school; the teachers were great and the level was very high. It was great. I loved the atmosphere and so I graduated from it although it was a public school. I changed my perspective on public and private schools after I had experienced both. (Rb., 1, 2)

At this point, I could notice that Ruba’s narrative stressed the recurring crises that she had faced when her family decided to move from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon. She repeatedly expressed her feeling of not belonging in Lebanon in general and in the schools she had joined in particular:

I did not feel I belonged here. They treated students there [in Saudi Arabia] very differently. It was a Saudi school but one of the best schools in Riyadh. They knew how to treat students. When I came back, I was shocked at the difference and how they treated students here; cursing at them and at times hitting them! There, teachers cannot make such mistakes with students. (Rb., 1, 1)

To elaborate on her perception of a ‘good’ teacher, Ruba draws on both her schooling experiences as well as her practicum experience to emphasize the importance of interpersonal and affective qualities for teaching. She then articulates her motivations for becoming a teacher through such qualities: “In Riyadh, English teachers influenced me positively the most. I don’t know why? Maybe because they explained very well, maybe because they paid attention to me, I used to feel I wanted to be an English teacher because they affected me so much; because of them really” (Rb., 1, 2). Describing her practicum experience at the American Community School in Beirut, Ruba explains:

It was amazing. It was so good. It was different from my experience at school. When I was in grade one, it was not like this. Now they have so many activities; the teachers are amazing, the teacher I was observing during the practicum was amazing. I mean, I felt I wanted to be like her, and deal with students like her all day. You feel she is very hyper [energetic] and excited all the time in her class; she loves her students as if they are her own kids, it is like they are her dolls and no one is allowed near them. For example, if a student fell down she rushes and says [affectionately]: ‘my darling, why did you fall down? Get up’ and such. Now I was observing for two days teachers at another school where I will be working after I graduate and they are very different. I felt depressed that I will be working at that school. I don’t want that. I want to teach the way they do at the American school. At the other school they shout, telling students ‘you did not understand, I just explained’ and they are KGs [Kindergarteners]! At ACS [The American Community School in Beirut], if you fall down, they rush and say ‘Oh my darling, you fell down’ and such; I feel they are more caring than there. Also at ACS they care a lot about students; care that students understand and comprehend everything, not just understand but more, and stuff like that. (Rb., 1, 2-3)

In the above account, Ruba, as a beginning teacher *observing* her cooperating (mentor) teacher, seems to evoke visualizations that go beyond observations of pedagogical skills, teaching methods, and classroom management strategies. Ruba seems to identify very closely with her mentor-teacher; her actions, demeanor, affect, and relationship with children, among other

things. For this reason, it is important to explore imagery and visualizations for understanding beginning teachers' developing identities especially in a context where 'observation' (and therefore visualization) is central to developing practice. All students from the various universities that this study investigates had to go through an observation stage before moving to the assistant-teacher and beginning-teacher stages of their practice. In effect, visualization and imagery that ensue from observation, which is a central feature of teacher education, become important facets of the developing identities of beginning teachers. Ruba's vivid and anecdotal recounting of her mentor's actions and demeanor in certain situations in the classroom is highly visual. Ruba's use of such adjectives and phrases as "excited," "she loves her students as if they are her own kids," "they are her dolls and no one is allowed near them," and "if a student fell down she rushes and says [affectionately] 'my darling, why did you fall down? Get up'" express very vivid visualizations and identifications. These visualizations are predominantly colored by affective, interpersonal, maternal and custodial tones in Ruba's portrait of her teacher-self.

Moreover, I was able to evoke a very interesting visualization when I inquired about Ruba's views of a good teacher:

Um, smiling! I believe that if a teacher kept smiling, students will feel that everything is going to be okay, I'm going to be fine. For example when I enter a classroom and see a teacher smiling as if he is trying to convey this message that 'everything is going to be okay', 'don't worry' although he [the teacher] is not [necessarily] saying this out loud. (Rb., 1, 8)

On a different occasion during the interview, Ruba again stresses: "I feel the most important thing is for the teacher to smile to the students" (Rb., 1, 7). This expresses Ruba's emphasis on the importance of the affective and interpersonal dimensions of teaching. Here, I would like to focus on Ruba's choice of such images and their possible underlying potential to link or connect (and thus articulate) certain aspects of her views about teaching with specific personal schooling experiences. Throughout her narrative, I detected a link between Ruba's emphasis on affective and interpersonal dimensions of teaching with her life story which stressed several watershed experiences and crises; namely her family's relocation and her challenges with changing several schools. These experiences and challenges were expressed in the very images Ruba articulated about teaching. For example, one of her main challenges as a pupil was to acclimate to the new schooling and general environment in Lebanon. Her portrait and dominant images seem to focus

on the importance of emotional support that teachers could offer students. When I asked her about her perceptions of a ‘good’ teacher or her experiences (personal, educational and professional) with what she thought were ‘good’ teachers, Ruba seemed to single out incidents where teachers provided emotional support. Ruba emphasized that she wanted to be like her mentor at the American Community School as was mentioned above. Her image of her mentor-teacher at ACS rushing to pick up a child very lovingly when it fell down recurs in her account. This image which emerges from Ruba’s classroom observations seems to express not only her identification with the mentor-teacher whom she wants to emulate, but also the child who needed emotional support in this incident. Thus, Ruba’s recurring image of teaching expresses affective and custodial/maternal tones.

Ruba’s account also reveals that this image resonates with her original motivation for becoming a teacher: “When I was in elementary, I used to say I want to become an English teacher when I grow up just like my mom. I liked teachers and I liked her friends who were teachers. So I used to say I want to be an English teacher when I grow up” (Rb., 1, 8). In general, I could detect that maternal and affective tones colored most of Ruba’s images of teaching. Such statement as “deal with students like her babies all day,” “loves her students as if they are her own kids, it like they are her dolls and no one is allowed near them,” all highlight such affective and maternal tones.

These experiential visualizations of a caring, compassionate, and protective teacher, which Ruba isolates from her classroom observation experience, is also expressed in her emphasis on the importance of smiling in order that students feel everything will be okay: “I believe that if a teacher kept smiling, students will feel that everything is going to be okay, I’m going to be fine” (Rb., 1, 8). In summary, Ruba draws on several experiential images of a ‘good’ teacher that are rooted in her personal, educational, and professional experiences in order to *visualize* the future teacher she aspires to become. These images are, in part, motivated by Ruba’s attempt to recapitulate the positive childhood experience she had in Saudi Arabia. These maternal and affective dimensions of her teacher images reemerge when Ruba speaks about the teacher she had observed and wanted to emulate during her practicum; a teacher who treated her students like “her own children” and who would “pick them up” when they “fell down.”

Ruba draws on her practicum experience to express a distinction between what she considers are ‘traditional’ teachers and ‘real’ teachers. This distinction was instigated by the following

question I had asked: “How do you think teachers are generally regarded in Lebanese society?” Ruba’s explained:

There are differences among schools in Lebanon. For example, in my hometown, I do not feel that there is much ... you know [they’re] just teachers. In Beirut for example, at IC [International College] or ACS [American Community School], I feel they are real teachers, but in my hometown I feel they are still traditional. For example I was observing a KG class there [in her hometown school] yesterday and the assistant teacher did not even smile once! She was always shouting at 5 and 6 year olds; she was shouting ‘go back to your place; I have already explained this a 100 times!’ She was shouting at them and they are KGs; I felt so sad. (Rb., 1, 10)

Thus the image of the ‘real’ teacher as someone who is friendly, affectionate, patient and always ‘smiling’ emerges in contrast with Ruba’s image of a traditional teacher who constantly shouts, is intolerant and impatient, and is not friendly. The emphasis here again is mostly on affective and interpersonal dimensions.

Some of the objections that Ruba had faced in regards to her choice to pursue Education at LAU are similar to Salwa’s. I asked Ruba about the ‘usual’ reactions that she gets from members of her immediate community such as neighbors, relatives, among others, when she mentions she is studying Education at this particular university. Her reply was: “They usually tell me: ‘why at this university, why did you not do it at the Lebanese University?’ Well [I understand] because it is expensive. I consider myself very lucky to have made it at this university” (Rb., 1, 9). The issue of gender stereotyping as well as perceived hierarchies of disciplines and institutions are further expressed in her recounting of her brother’s advice to her when she first embarked on her program: “My brother told me: ‘since you’re going to this university, why not do Business instead?’” (Rb., 1, 9). Furthermore, Ruba explained that she repeatedly faces objections from her peers and friends about her choice of discipline and that she usually deals with such objections as follows:

They say ‘all you are is a teacher; let’s see you go teach, all you are is a teacher’ and I tell them [her friends] ‘you all have done Business; you will all be jobless when you graduate; at least I will have a job’. This is honestly the case nowadays; really they [Business majors] can’t find a job and we [teachers] immediately find one. (Rb., 1, 7)

In light of these objections, I asked Ruba whether she would have preferred to pursue another career. She replied:

My friends now have done Business and Hospitality; I did consider Hospitality, but when I attended the recent university career fair, I felt that no one is accepting C.V.s from Business students whereas they are begging us [student-teachers] for C.V.s especially to such places as Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Qatar. In Business, they only take people with GPAs [Grade Point Averages] above 3.5. That high! In our case, no one asks about our GPAs. They just want to take us. Now I say thank God I did Education here. (Rb., 1, 9)

In the above accounts, the image of the teacher as ‘migrant worker’ emerges again. This image appears in Ruba’s account of her encounter with objections from her immediate community of friends and family but not in that of her imagined classroom setting. This image of the versatile migrant worker provides Ruba, as in the case of other participants in this study, with negotiating power to defend or qualify her motivation for becoming a teacher. I detected on several occasions that this image emerges on an institutional level as various teacher education programs in Lebanon are beginning to promote themselves to attract prospective students through such images of teachers as prospective migrant workers or entrepreneurs with promising prospects in the labor market. In an interview with a teacher educator at this institution, I was able to detect that this image is increasingly promoted by this institution to attract students to the program. The quality of versatility is also stressed by this institution to further promote the notion that graduates from this program can adapt to any school both locally or internationally. This teacher image is a relatively modern one and is quite different from images of teachers as nation-builders that were prominent in the 1950’s and 60’s in Lebanon (Sinjkdar, 2002). In the next chapter, this image is explicitly stated by a teacher educator who explains that teaching is framed as such by her institution to attract both students and their parents to this discipline. Job opportunities in the Arab Gulf region have had an increasing impact on the social perception of the status of academic fields especially after the end of the civil war in Lebanon. With Education becoming a desired field in such countries as Dubai and Qatar, the status of teachers is gaining a competitive edge over other fields such as Business in Lebanon. I would like to remind the reader of Salwa’s discussion with her parents concerning her choice to do Education at this university. One of the arguments she offered to convince her parents involved the possibility of traveling and working abroad (S., 1, 4). Indeed, Salwa mentioned at the end of her interview that she had just signed a

contract to teach at a school in Abu Dhabi. Such images of teachers as ‘migrant workers’ seeking positions in the Arab Gulf region are reshaping the perception of teaching in Lebanon especially in regards to issues of gender and occupational status. This phenomenon, however, is not specific to Lebanon and seems to accompany major public sector reforms in several other countries (see Menter, 2009).

Ruba contrasts this ‘modern’ image of teachers with a more gendered traditional image:

Maybe in our society they believe that the best thing for a girl is to become a teacher; in the morning she goes to work, in the afternoon she comes back home, cooks for her husband and sits at home [laughing] ... but this is not why I went into teaching. (Rb., 1, 9)

In her account, Ruba draws on the image of the migrant teacher to challenge gender stereotypes about teachers and teacher motivation in Lebanon. This image however seems to emerge mostly when Ruba is elaborating on her motivations in imagined or experienced settings located in her immediate community or larger social contexts. In conclusion, Ruba draws a portrait of her teacher-self through her images of the ‘new teacher’ which she seems to locate either within classroom settings emphasizing affective, maternal and interpersonal coloring or within her immediate community and larger social contexts in Lebanon stressing the image of the teacher as ‘migrant worker’.

Conclusion

Most of the student-teachers at this institution drew on images of teaching that were rooted in either classroom settings or supra-school contexts such as the participants’ immediate communities. These images were expressed by the participants in positive terms. Conversely, most images that emerged in the student-teachers’ portraits that were rooted in school contexts were expressed in negative terms. The contexts in which the participants had *imagined* themselves as teachers were therefore crucial. Images of themselves as teachers did not exist in isolation; they were always *rooted* in specific settings. The relationships these images have with their underlying imagined or experienced settings seem to influence, in varying degrees, the participants’ views and perceptions of teaching in general. The female participants’ images of

the classroom teacher highlight affective and interpersonal (as well as maternal) coloring in general while those of the male student-teachers emphasize charismatic, pastoral, and at times, entrepreneurial colorings.

I will conclude this chapter by briefly discussing the following interesting observation. I noticed that, in general, the images expressed by males showed high degrees of ‘complexity’. It is important, however, to note that the term ‘complexity’ used here is not intended to communicate that male participants provided more ‘sophisticated’ narratives or images than female participants. Rather, male participants provided highly ‘composite’ metaphorical images that drew on various disciplines, experiences, and backgrounds. One possible reason behind this is the need that male participants felt to develop images that have high articulating power to provide them with more rhetorical efficacy to negotiate their choices to become teachers in a society that generally regards teaching as a feminine occupation. It is evident from the participant portraits that male students-teachers face high degrees of social pressure for their choice to study Education, especially at this relatively expensive institution. In effect, they seem to have constructed very elaborate images and metaphors of teaching in order to synthesize and at times reconcile many contradictions and conflicts that they experience on an intrapersonal level while also providing them with high articulating power to negotiate their choice interpersonally with members of their families and communities. Thus, their metaphors often evoked masculine images and identifications (such as priest, rock-star, the figure of Socrates, charismatic Sufi teachers, etc). Furthermore, their motivations drew on metaphors and visualizations that were highly intellectualized. Rami, for example, drew on existential philosophy, humanistic psychology, poetry, film, as well as certain personal existential concerns to articulate his motivation for teaching. Shadi (another participant from this university) drew on his Sufi background as well as (what he termed as) ‘existential’ and ‘spiritual’ watershed experiences in constructing his personal portrait. Fadi (also another participant from LAU) drew on philosophy, quantum mechanics, business, among other fields and disciplines to articulate his motivation for studying Education. This study makes the point that such complex portraits and images reveal the degrees of social pressure that male students face in Lebanese society to justify their motivations to others as well as to make sense of their choices on a more personal level.

Chapter 5 – Student-teachers’ portraits at the French university

Introduction

This chapter presents the portraits of the student-teachers from St. Joseph University that provides, among other things, teacher education. Seven students were interviewed at this institution. All the research participants from this institution were females. One of the teacher educators I interviewed informed me that there had not been any male applicants to the Education Department at this particular institution for the past fifteen years. For most of the participants from this institution, education was their first choice of major albeit not their original preference. Most came from similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, namely; Christian middle-class families from Beirut or North Lebanon. For a short discussion on the institutional setting, the reader is referred to chapter 1 of this dissertation which provides an overview of the teacher education programs involved in this study.

Section 1 of this chapter provides a short reflection on the interviews. For a detailed discussion on the interview process, the reader is referred to the ‘Data Collection’ section in the Methodology chapter. Section 2 presents the portraits of three of the seven student-teachers from this university while highlighting and making connections with the main images that emerge in the portraits of the other four participants.

Section 1: a short note on the interviews

The interviews

Some of the interviews with the participants at this particular university were conducted in an empty office provided by a teacher educator while others were conducted in the common courtyard in the university. In both cases, the environment was relatively quiet and provided us with sufficient privacy where no or very few interruptions took place. In all the interviews, the participants and I were seated facing each other, however, with a slight angle. We were both seated in comfortable chairs or on benches. I commenced every interview by handing out the

research information sheet, explaining its content, asking whether the participant had any questions, obtaining consent to record the interview, and summarizing the ethical responsibilities I have in regards to the interview content, including criteria for confidentiality and anonymity. After asking the participant to state his or her name and age, I would normally start by the general and open-ended question: “So why did you decide to become a teacher?” Although this question and many similar ones recurred during the interview, the main purpose of asking it at the onset was to prompt the participant’s narrative before I start asking specific questions about their personal biographies, educational and professional experiences, views and perceptions about teaching as well as their motivations and aspirations for becoming teachers. The dialectical hermeneutic process that I adopted to interpret the data resulted in the below portraits. This process also helped me further conceptualize ‘image’ as the main interpretive lens that this study adopts.

Section 2: The student portraits

This chapter focuses on three of the seven portraits of the student-teachers I interviewed at this university. However, in the conclusion to this chapter, I forefront some of the main images about teaching and teachers that emerge in the portraits of the other participants. I do this in an attempt to balance between exposing the in-depth interpretive process that resulted in the participant portraits as well as providing an overall picture of the various images that emerge in the portraits of all the participants from this university.

Yara’s portrait

I was introduced to Yara by a mutual friend. I contacted Yara via email explaining the nature of my study and expressing my interest in interviewing her. Yara’s response was positive and encouraging. The interviews took place in an empty office room. She was dressed in casual clothing and seemed comfortable sitting for the interviews. Yara alternated between Arabic and English while at times resorting, although very rarely, to French to express herself during the interview. The main reason for this was because Yara knew that French was my third language

and therefore limited her use of French to a minimum. At times, she felt more comfortable using Arabic and some French, especially when relating her childhood and school experiences. Interestingly, Yara alternated among Arabic, English and French when she referred to academic discourse as well as when stating her opinions and views about what she thought constituted ‘good’ teachers and classrooms.

Yara is a thirty-one-year-old female graduate Education student at St. Joseph University. She had completed her undergraduate degree in Education at the same university in which she is currently enrolled focusing on teaching French at the elementary level. At the time of the interview, she was working at the Education Department as the ‘*charger de stage*’ [in charge of training]. Yara is Lebanese; she was born in Lebanon and received all of her schooling there. Both of her parents are Christian by birth. Yara’s father works in insurance and her mother used to be a social worker. She has an older sister who, after finishing her MBA, has worked in an import-export company. Her younger brother studied economics at the same university in which Yara is currently enrolled while her youngest sister is a final-year graphic design student at another Catholic university in Lebanon. Yara had changed two schools before starting her higher education studies. All of the schools she had attended were private and predominantly Christian although the first was strictly Catholic while the other was, as Yara put it, more *laïque*. Yara chose to specialize in science, more specifically mathematics, during the last year of school. After graduating, she began her higher education studies at the Lebanese University where she majored in Mathematics, although this was not what she was interested in pursuing:

I did not do very well and I left [after two years]. To begin with, I was not interested in doing it; I wanted to do so many other things but then; it just happened that I entered Education without really knowing that this was what I wanted to do. It was not my choice. You know, I always joke and say that even when I was a child, I did not play ‘teacher’ [smiling]. It was not in my head to become a teacher or so. But thank God I entered this field and I now really like it. (Y., 1, 1)

Yara had taught for three years at a school after her completion of her B.A. in Education before enrolling again in the Masters program at this university. In expressing her choice and motivation for pursuing her graduate studies, Yara said:

I came back [to university] because I felt that that's it; at school, one sometimes feels stuck. That's it, one is boxed and it's clear [determined] what s/he should do. I wanted to go back and open up to what's happening out there; what new things are going on. (Y., 1, 2)

I asked Yara about her family background and whether any of her relatives were teachers. I wanted to explore how her family background could have influenced her choice to become a teacher. Yara indicated that two of her uncles are teachers. She specifically mentioned that one of her uncles chose to become a teacher when members of her family moved to Cyprus during the Lebanese civil war¹⁵. There, he and his wife resorted to teaching as an occupation out of the need to work. I then asked Yara to tell me a bit about the encouragement and possible objections that she had encountered from members of her family and immediate community regarding her choice to become a teacher. Yara explained:

I honestly ... really, I have faith that God helped me get here. I love kids. To begin with, I was a scout and a chieftain for young children aged eight to twelve. I had no problem dealing with children and I loved this. Ever since I was young, I loved children and loved playing with them. My brother in law, noticing this, at one point recommended that I pursue Education. He said 'it is a good career'. I know that in the back of his head, he really meant a good career for women. Because we have this in Lebanon to be honest; many people say it is a good career for women: 'she gets vacations with her children; she gets free tuition for her kids' and such. My parents encouraged me and said 'yes, why not, it's a good thing in principle', and honestly, this is what happened. I joined and I remember during our first course we were asked why we chose to come here; basically the most frequent answer was: 'I love children'. (Y., 1, 11-12)

Yara also elaborated on other factors that affected her decision to become a teacher drawing on family experiences and memories during the civil war. She also identified her mother as her role model who particularly influenced her choice. This is expressed in the following account that is worth quoting at length:

Since we were kids we were brought up in a way that whoever asks for something, we are there; whether for our family, our neighbors, for other people. Now my mom affected me, of course. Being a social worker, in many instances, she was asked by friends for help, counseling, and such

¹⁵ During the eighties, many Christian families moved to Cyprus from Lebanon during the war as a result of the demographic shifts and changes that were the result of the development of the civil war into sectarian strife after 1976.

things. Frankly, I am really influenced by my mother. Our home was always open to other people, during and after the war, all the time. There were always people coming to us and we knew they had certain problems or something or a certain challenge. I imagine all this contributed to my choice [to become a teacher]; having such parents and also being, I should say, a Christian. But besides being a Christian, as a scout, I mean, this encourages you on many levels. So many things work together; you cannot limit it to one thing that has made [me] who [I am]. But a little bit of everything. Even now as a Christian, I am committed to a movement that is into this idea of helping others, and I don't know if the war played a role, but since we grew up during the war, I remember those times when we were obligated to help each other and support each other, and come together. (Y., 1, 18-19)

The image of 'helping each other and coming together' recurs in Yara's portraits when she elaborates on her choice and motivation for becoming a teacher. In fact, moral, affective, religious and patriotic tones colored most of Yara's images of her teacher-self. As a teacher, Yara sees herself as committed to a social and moral project that links among her childhood experiences during the civil war, her aspirations to transform post-civil-war Lebanese society, as well as her religious sensibilities. Such aspects of Yara's identity become more evident when Yara further elaborates on her choice to become a teacher. Yara explains that she had initially decided to pursue Agricultural studies:

I love nature and it was my thing. And I still have the same mindset that we can change and improve our country. In my head, I felt that this [Agriculture] was a domain that was neglected in Lebanon and that it is a domain that has the possibility to benefit people. Now when I look back, I feel that teaching is like agriculture however a hundred times better; its effect is a hundred times more in comparison. I mean everything I do, I am helping these future teachers grow; everything I do impacts on the next generation! (Y., 1, 2-3)

In the above portrait, Yara articulates an image of teaching as 'Agriculture' highlighting the potential for teaching to 'sow the seeds of change'¹⁶ and to benefit people and "the country" (Y., 1, 3). Furthermore, Yara stresses that Agriculture, like teaching, is a "domain that was neglected in Lebanon." Later, Yara hints that teaching is a form of "cultivating" (ibid). Yara seems to

¹⁶ Although this image of teaching as 'sowing the seeds of change' was not explicitly articulated in her speech; however, in Yara's portrait, there were repeated hints at the role that teachers can play in transforming society, especially after the civil war in Lebanon, which she articulates first through her love of nature and agriculture and how that was originally her vehicle for making a difference.

draw on this image of ‘teaching as cultivation’ to articulate several aspects of her choice and motivation for becoming a teacher. This image seems to link among Yara’s previous interest in pursuing Agriculture and the notion of ‘sowing the seeds of change’ in a society emerging from a civil war. This image also incorporates a broader cultural image of the teacher as someone who ‘cultivates’ students; an image that is prominent in Lebanese cultural perceptions of the teacher (Bashour, 1995, pp. 84-85). This image also resonates with Yara’s religious background, as is evident in the following account:

Honestly and since I am really religious, ah ... one time, one of the teachers gave a conference on the idea that Jesus is a good example of a teacher. He is a ‘pedagogue’. I don’t know what you call it in English. And for me, yes ... I mean I feel since it is so important for me to help people and to be able to help people around me. (Y., 1, 19-20)

Yara’s image of teaching thus provides her with high articulating power to synthesize various aspects of her experiences and identity; her Christian background and identification with the figure of Jesus as ‘pedagogue’, her belief that post-war Lebanese society is in desperate need for change, and her previous interest in pursuing Agricultural Studies to help develop ‘the country’, among other dimensions. This image, as such, displays religious, pastoral, patriotic, and moral/altruistic dimensions and allows Yara to articulate them in speech. The moral and specifically pastoral image of the teacher that Yara draws on becomes more manifest in the following descriptive yet very concise statement: “This is why teaching for me is really to accompany people through a journey” (Y., 1, 18). Yara explains that a teacher is a “kind of guide, [...] a guide throughout, [...] someone who accompanies someone. I really believe that school is like a journey [...] [of] personal development” (Y., 1, 20).

The above ‘positive’¹⁷ images of teaching as ‘sowing the seeds of change’, ‘cultivating’, and ‘guiding’ which appear in Yara’s account through metaphoric and descriptive statements are colored with moral, pastoral, religious and patriotic undertones and appear to be *rooted* in the broader social context that Yara draws on to elaborate on her perceptions of a good teacher. These are contrasted, later in Yara’s account, with relatively ‘negative’ images of teaching that are partly *rooted* in school and administration contexts:

¹⁷ As deemed by the interviewee.

You see we [teachers] are not compensated financially. The schools, many schools, although I don't want to generalize, at least the ones I know, treat a teacher not just like a 'piece of employees',¹⁸ but even less. In many cases, teachers do not even have a word. Decisions come and you have to execute them. I mean, are we not partners in this [education]? The decisions as if 'descend' from above ... (Y., 1, 13)

Then Yara adds:

When principals or administrators demand things, and this is why I told you they [teachers] feel like mere employees, sometimes principals come and say 'you have this, this, and this; this afternoon you have to come to school and it is our right to bring you'. They say 'it is our privilege to bring you to school when we see fit'. I mean who has the right over my time, I mean, what am I? Am I a commodity [*sil'a* in Arabic] for you to say you have rights over me? (Y., 1, 16)

Elsewhere in her portrait, Yara uses the terms 'abused' and 'exploited' to express an image of teachers in Lebanese society. This abuse, Yara explains, extends from a general perception of teaching as 'easy' and therefore 'convenient for females'. This image, according to Yara, applies especially to primary level teachers in Lebanon. Interestingly, she elaborates on this by drawing a parallel between the cultural images of 'female teachers' and 'mothers' in Lebanese society:

When you speak with principals at schools [referred to them in the masculine], why do you think they assign very young [female] teachers to the primary classes, when they have barely finished school or have been working in other domains? Well, because in the back of their heads [the administrators], they think: 'she's a girl, she can manage with small kids', as if in kindergarten not much needs to be done and that! But, I can perhaps easily make this parallel, because the same applies to husbands; they think not much work is required at home yet he is very demanding of his wife; he demands that when he comes home, everything has to be ready and clean and his kids taken care of and successful in their studies and his wife looking good and ... he demands all these things and he demands them while believing that all these things do not require much effort.

¹⁸ The term 'a piece of employee' was used by Yara in a deprecating manner. This image of the 'typical employee' as someone with a lower social status became very prominent after the Lebanese civil war. Prior to the war, the status of employees, especially public employees, was regarded as relatively high. During and after the war, the term developed to become almost synonymous with 'just a measly employee' when contrasted with the position of a 'professional' or 'entrepreneur'.

Similarly, principals at school have very high expectations and demand so much of teachers [referred to in the feminine] and for them, it is 'very easy'. (Y., 1, 15)

The above account foregrounds an image that Yara attempts to challenge regarding the perceptions of male school administrators of female early-childhood teachers. She juxtaposes this image with that of females-as-mothers in Lebanese society whose work and effort is underplayed by 'supervising' patriarchal figures. This image of teaching as of a maternal nature requiring little more than instinctive and therefore spontaneous activity with children is reflected in Yara's perception of administrations and their attitudes towards female K.G. and elementary-level teachers in general. This gendered image of the female teacher-mother as such, Yara stresses, is harmful for teaching as a career and activity.

I then invited her to recall her experiences as a pupil. Yara explains that her school experience was relatively positive. However, Yara expresses her disappointment in the lack of encouragement from her teachers. Yara explains that she was an average student, however, she stressed that she could have done much better had her teachers challenged and encouraged her more. She then expressed how a teacher must know his/her students in order to push them to do better. When I asked whether she recalls any particular teachers who had influenced her either positively or negatively, Yara singled out her twelfth-grade math teacher:

I mean, I wish him well at the end, maybe he meant no harm, but he is a teacher better suited for university lecturing at best. I mean, he used to enter the classroom, not even say 'bonjour', and immediately start the lesson. He used to cover the whole blackboard with writing, we copied, and when the board was full, he would start wiping it and writing more! This is the way he explained the lesson and solved exercises! And his regard for girls was very negative. He seemed to believe that math and hard subjects were not suited for girls. So it was a great challenge being in his class. (Y., 1, 9)

In the above account, one can detect Yara's perception of a 'bad' teacher; someone who is disinterested, disconnected and detached from the students. Yara then contrasts this with her school biology teacher who had left a very positive impression on her:

[She] was someone who is very strict; she did not like kidding around. During her sessions, you couldn't do anything but concentrate on the lesson. However, there was something in her that made you feel that she wants you to succeed. All she wanted was for you to understand, succeed

and do better. That was her goal. Even when she was angry with us and used to shout at us, you could not be mad at her. She was very *dynamic* and was able to draw you into her dynamism. She was very *active* and explained and repeated all the time. When she reprimanded you, you did not get mad because you felt *she was like a mother reprimanding her child* in order to do better. I used to appreciate her way because you really felt you were her concern and not the lesson, not the marks on the tests, or pushing us to pass just to protect her own reputation. She really wanted you to understand. It was *sacred* for her for everyone to understand and she really used to believe in the smallest [least achieving] person; not just the good students [emphasis added]. (Y., 1, 10)

The above account foregrounds the contrast between Yara's perception of a 'bad' teacher and that of a 'good' one; between a disinterested teacher who has low expectations (especially from female students) and a dynamic, active and encouraging teacher who is concerned about her students as a mother is for her children. Furthermore, Yara resorts to several adjectives and metaphors to elaborate on her image of a 'good' teacher. For example, she stressed that her biology teacher's lessons were 'sacred' for her, and that she reprimanded like a 'mother' who is dedicated to them. Further, Yara explains that her biology teacher had a profound impact on the teacher she has become: "I imagine that I was really influenced by her because my students say to me that I am a person who is very ... what's the word ... exigent" (Y., 1, 11).

Yara's perception of the social image of teaching as a 'fall-back plan' emerges repeatedly in her portrait. She acknowledges that most students apply to other majors and other universities for their primary choice of discipline while considering their application to Education as a safety net (Y., 2, 1). Yara identifies negatively with this image. She explains cynically that most applicants think that "if it doesn't work somewhere else, we'll just do Education" (Y., 2, 1). In other words, the study of Education is regarded as a contingency plan for many applicants, according to Yara. Elaborating on this concern, Yara foregrounds the continuous impact of a market logic that influences the motivations of student-teachers for pursuing Education as a discipline. An entrepreneurial ethic is becoming more and more prominent, according to Yara, in the motivations of students as well as their parents in pursuing higher education. Yara explains that the major *Orthopedagogie* offered by the Department of Education at this University is promoted as potentially enabling students to invest in their own tutoring center in the future, which, as she explains, is gaining popularity amongst students' parents. This sheds light on the tensions inherent in, on the one hand, the negative perceptions of teachers as mere

‘employees’ in Lebanese society which emerge in Yara’s portrait above, with a more ‘attractive’ image of the ‘teacher as entrepreneur’ who is equipped with the technical expertise to invest in her/his own educational enterprise. These tensions, I detected, are reproduced by political, cultural, and social discourses and realities regarding teaching in Lebanon. In an interview with a former director of the Department of Education at this particular university, the interviewee highlights a crucial issue regarding images of teaching in Lebanese society that are rooted in broader cultural and historical images of the ‘employee’ in comparison to the image of the ‘entrepreneur’, ‘private business owner’, or ‘private practitioner’ in Lebanon. She compares teaching to engineering and medicine stressing that the latter two professions are regarded with high esteem partly because they allow members to invest in their own private enterprise or practice; whereas in the case teaching, this is impossible (LD, 2, 6). The interviewee then elaborated on the different images of ‘private practice’ versus ‘employment’ and how the latter is regarded negatively in post-civil-war Lebanese society.

These cultural and social images of teaching, employment, and private enterprise are rooted in further deeper political discourses and realities. The socio-political construction of teaching as an occupation in Lebanon is influenced by institutional and legal forces. In an interview with Chukri Sader, a legislator in the supreme court in Lebanon, it was brought to my attention that teachers’ syndicates in Lebanon fall under a different category than professional syndicates such as those for engineers, lawyers and medical doctors. While teacher movements have tried to develop teacher syndicates into ‘professional’ ones in an attempt to raise the status of teachers and safeguard teaching against infiltrations from other occupations, there are certain laws that stipulate that ‘professional’ syndicates can only be formed for professions that can be practiced privately such as the case of medicine, law and engineering. This law thus renders attempts to transform teacher syndicates into professional ones impossible. Instead, teachers have so far settled for what is categorized as ‘open’ syndicates for ‘non-professional occupations’ such as those for transport employees, for example, which are governed by the Ministry of Labor. Perhaps this could explain how Education as a discipline is being rearticulated by certain academic institutions to enable entrepreneurial pursuits and private practice. The former director of the Education Department mentioned above suggested that several institutions in Lebanon are succumbing to the logic of the market that is reinforced by underlying political and legal realities

that impede the development of teaching into a profession similar to engineering, medicine and law.

In summary, a set of images emerge in Yara's portrait which seem to be rooted in political, social, and cultural discourses and contexts. Furthermore, her images of a teacher as a 'guide' and a 'cultivator' that 'sows the seeds of change' articulate and link among Yara's motivations, aspirations and experiences (personal, professional and educational) and allow her to express them in speech. However, such images are contrasted in Yara's portrait with negative images of 'school-teachers' as 'commodities' especially when imagined in strict school settings. Finally, the image of 'teacher-as-mother' gains both positive and negative attributes in Yara's portrait. Within the school context, this image gains negative tones and is colored with gender stereotypes about females in Lebanese society. However, when imagined in classroom settings, Yara's image of the teacher-as-mother gains positive tones emphasizing affective, moral, religious and pastoral coloring.

Hala's portrait

I was introduced to Hala by one of the teacher-educators at the Education Department at this university. I introduced myself and explained to Hala the nature of my research. We sat in a quiet corner on a bench in the courtyard facing the Education Department. Hala was dressed in smart attire and seemed comfortable sitting for the interview. From the onset, Hala explained that she was more comfortable with expressing herself in French. She occasionally resorted to Arabic when relating personal information.

Hala is a twenty-one-year old female who is a third-year Education student at this university specializing in teaching French. Hala is Lebanese; she was born in Lebanon and received all of her schooling there. Both of her parents are Christian by birth. Hala's father works in the government investigative services and her mother is a house-wife. She is the eldest among her siblings. She has a brother and two sisters. Her brother is studying telecommunications at the Lebanese University while her two sisters are still at school. She graduated from an all-girls francophone Catholic school in Lebanon. After graduating from high-school, Hala started her degree in French Literature at this university. Failing to meet the grade-point-average

requirements of the course, Hala switched to Education with emphasis on teaching French. She explains:

To start with, I did not like French Literature or Education; I wanted to do Translation. However, when I submitted the application, I did not pass the entrance exams so I entered French Literature. I did very badly although I had never failed in a subject in the past, so I felt frustrated. A friend encouraged me to enter Education. So I approached my parents and of course, my mother encouraged me. She saw how much I was suffering. And I thought how could this happen! I used to be among the top three of my class in high-school and now I cannot even pass my courses! Honestly, with the grades I was getting that year, around 9/20, not one school would have hired me! My mother encouraged me but my father wanted me to pursue French Literature. (H., 1, 1)

The above short account sheds light on some of the frustrations that Hala experienced during her first year in college and her consequent choice to become a teacher. Hala expresses her frustrations through elaborating on the dissonance between her self-image as a good student among the top of her class and her low grades in French Literature in college. It is also evident from the above account that Hala had had in mind teaching as an occupational choice when she embarked on French Literature as a major, as she emphasizes above that “not one school would have hired me!” with her low grade-point-average in French Literature. As will be elucidated below, the image of the ‘teacher as a subject expert’, especially in regards to the French language, will become more evident in Hala’s portrait. Furthermore, the dissonance between her image of herself as among the top students in her class and her failing grades in French had led Hala to enter Education:

My father had no problem paying for me to repeat the courses I had failed in French; however, I had made my decision. But I felt guilty for the money my father had invested and so that summer, I worked and paid for one of my courses in Education in order to compensate for what my father had lost in a year. I passed, and I started my first semester, and I liked it; but I did not adapt too well to my classmates at first. (H., 1, 1)

I asked Hala to elaborate more on her choice to study French. Hala explained:

My father objected because with a degree in Education, you can only teach classes from KG to 6th grade; but with a French Literature degree, you can teach higher-level courses. This also pays better, and you are not limited. (H., 1, 2)

The above short account reveals cultural images of the French teacher as a subject expert, especially regarding higher grade levels and in specific, secondary level teaching. The cultural image of the ‘subject expert’ as qualified to teach higher grade levels than the ‘pedagogue’ who is often restricted to lower grade levels such as KG and elementary grades finds expression in many participant portraits, as it does here in Hala’s. This is resonant with particular cultural images of teachers that are still expressed through terminologies regarding the various positions that teachers historically occupied in the educational system in Lebanon. For example, a teacher can be referred to in Arabic as *mu’allim* (which translates most closely to ‘teacher’), *mudarris* (which implies ‘instructor’ and is imbued with the image of teaching as an inculcating activity), and *ustādh* (which connotes a subject expert, used mostly in the masculine form). Historically, an elementary-level teacher in Lebanon was designated *mu’allim*, intermediate-level *mudarris*, and secondary-level *ustādh*; reflecting on the one hand an increasing distancing between the ‘teacher’ and the ‘student’ and, on the other, a increasing proximity or nearness between ‘teacher’ and ‘subject-matter’ as grade levels advance (Matthews & Akrawi, 1949; also see Bashour, 1995). Such terminology also reveals gendered categories as the term *ustādh* is only used to designate male teachers while the term *mu’allim* or *mu’allimah* is used for both genders. In other words, intrinsic to such terminology are gendered images of male teachers as subject experts and female teachers as elementary grade-level pedagogues.

Hala’s image of herself as a French teacher links among and allows the expression (thus articulation) of several cultural and social images of the French teacher as subject expert and as better qualified to teach higher-level classes and thus eligible to earn a higher income than teachers with degrees in Education. Hala further explains:

You can teach in both private and public schools; and with a French Literature degree, you can pursue a Masters degree in other domains; unlike Education. (H., 1, 3)

The above accounts reflect a certain perception of Education, as a field, as limiting in comparison with subject expertise, especially in the case of foreign languages. Furthermore, such images are intertwined with broader cultural images of the French language as well:

I am in it [teaching] for the sake of French. I am terrible in Arabic; my Arabic language is terrible and I worked so much on myself to improve my French. I love French, and I worked on improving my language skills; and yes, even though I lost a year in studying French; I feel that today I have an advantage because my French is superior to that of my peers. (H., 1, 3)

Hala asserts her identification with the French language by referring to experiences and anecdotes outside of school settings:

When I help with my sister's studies, when I speak with my mother, and even when I send my fiancé [text] messages, I make sure I write properly and use the right words. Sometimes in social settings, when friends are speaking French, I correct their language. They tell me speak Arabic and spare us the French. I love French not only because it is a great language; I don't see myself in other languages; notice just now, how frequently I have used French words! I feel that French now is a part of me; and my identity; I have tried during my practicum, even my mentors recognized I was active and dynamic and I would assert myself with students in French. (H., 1, 4)

The above account sheds light on Hala's identification with the French language as she uses such terms as "I don't see myself in other languages" and "French is now a part of me; and my identity." Such identifications and their underlying visualizations mediate Hala's developing teacher identity and allow her to 'assert' herself as a teacher in the classroom and as a member of her community in her relationships with others. Hala later explains that when she was given the choice of subjects to teach, her first preference was French:

My favorite subject was French and I pursued higher education for this sake. When I first applied to the Education Department here, I had several options including Teaching French, Science, Math, and Arabic. My first choice was French and last choice was Arabic. (H., 1, 5)

Furthermore, Hala singles out a particular French teacher of hers as having had a major influence on her decision to pursue Education. The following portrait expresses this as well as sheds light on underlying cultural, gender, and language-ideological images of the French language:

My French teacher really influenced me; I think to like a teacher you have to like her *physical appearance*; I don't know if you understand what I mean; this teacher used to come to class, throughout the years she had taught me; well, I never saw her in the same clothes or the same look. She took very good care of the way she looked; she used to ... for me, to identify myself with teaching and to be encouraged to be a teacher, I look at how I would *look* as a teacher,

coming to class, how well-dressed she is, how much care she took of her physical appearance. Because if she really takes care of her looks and figure, this means she definitely takes similar care of the way she teaches and her *adab*¹⁹; I mean by *adab* the subject matter [Hala here emphasizes a specific meaning of the term *adab*, although she uses it in the possessive, insinuating other connotations of the word as explained in the footnote below] and at the same time concerned for her students. So from a physical perspective, I really liked this person and the way she looked, I mean. From a practical [educational] perspective, she used to explain with all her heart also [emphasis added]. (H., 1, 4)

In the above account, Hala draws on several visualizations and images of teaching to articulate her motivations for becoming a teacher. Physical and gendered images of the French teacher are prevalent in the account and are intertwined with larger, overarching images of ‘culture’, ‘cultivation’, ‘suitable conduct’ for women, and the French language. I felt that many of these images were *rooted* in cultural/historical contexts specific to this institution. Most of these images were rooted in traditional/conservative gendered images (although at times articulated in ‘modern’ technical discursive terms) of the teacher. The image of the French teacher who takes care of her teaching methods as she does her *adab* (her demeanor, conduct, language, etc) connects and links among Hala’s image of the refined, civilized/cultured and eloquent, feminine, and ‘dame’²⁰-like teacher. This resonates with images in Lebanon of the French language as ‘*langue de salon*’; a refined language, as well as suitable for a ‘refined’ female:

My parents’ friends and family encouraged my choice for several reasons saying ‘it’s the best thing; it is comfortable, the work-hours are convenient, all is paid for; your kids at school, you can still attend to your children’s needs’. When they find out what I do, they often congratulate me saying it is the best work for a ‘madame’, and such. (H., 1, 6)

The abovementioned dimensions of Hala’s image are explicitly stated in the above episodic memories. With such images in mind, Hala emphasized that “I seldom received negative remarks from friends and family [about my choice]” adding:

¹⁹ The word *adab* has multiple meanings and connotations in Arabic. It may connote ‘culture’ as in being ‘cultured’, as well as the term ‘literature’ while also expressing moral tones of one being well-disciplined, well-behaved, or well-spoken.

²⁰ The French meaning of the word is intended; which is a common term in Lebanon connoting a lady-like female.

When I decided to switch [to teaching], my cousins who are teachers encouraged me. You know, if I want to later commit to someone in a relationship [get married], the work hours are great, for a female who wants to get married that is. (H., 1, 2)

Such gendered images of occupations suitable for females reemerge later in Hala's account. For example, when I asked her whether she had considered other careers than teaching, Hala explained:

I, at one point, considered working in banking; at a bank. I used to look at young women working in banks, the way they impeccably dressed and looked; I used to see them when I walked into a bank. But when I see the effects of this domain on children; working until at least 5 pm, and then going back home and feeling tired and disinterested in my children, not having someone tend to their needs, I mean, no! What for! So I thought teaching is very convenient and comfortable for a female; honestly, men expect to come back home, after a long day of work, and expect to find things ready and available. (H., 1, 7)

Here again visualizations rooted in physical and gendered images emerge in Hala's portrait. I detected, however, that Hala drew on such images to express both her anxieties as well as her aspirations. In effect, in her portrait, the image of the 'French teacher' emerges as a coalescence of various motivations, anxieties, aspirations as well as personal experiences and memories.

Hala further explains:

I see myself in the next five years in this domain [teaching]. But I don't know what will happen after. I am engaged and my fiancé is in France. We might need to live there for a while and would have to work there in another domain. Or I could do other things there depending on the circumstances. But I am interested in pursuing a Masters eventually, especially if I can do it in France. That way, I would increase my chances of getting a good position. (H., 1, 8)

At this point, I wanted to probe Hala's perceptions and views of teaching in general. In effect, I asked her about her views of a 'good teacher'. Hala elaborated on the following:

I believe that the most important competence for a teacher is to be extremely knowledgeable of what she is teaching and not uncertain about her material. In the end, she is responsible for a generation! If she makes a mistake, it is her fault and not the generation's [expressed mostly in French]. Also, she [the teacher] has to consider herself not a teacher of a classroom, but a mother to twenty-seven or thirty students; to know how to talk to them, not be aggressive, not use

insulting words with students. For example, you [referring to the interviewer]; you wouldn't have developed into a civilized and cultured person if it were not for this country and its teachers. (H., 1, 7-8)

The above image of the teacher as a 'mother' with the responsibility for a whole generation highlights cultural, gendered, affective and moral tones and expresses Hala's views of the role of a teacher in the classroom and in society at large. This image is intermeshed with the image of the 'teacher as bearer of a legacy', an image that is recurrent in the portraits of the interviewees at this particular institution as well as the Lebanese University; more so than in the accounts of the participants from the American university. This image of the 'teacher as bearer of a legacy' and an 'expert' was more prominent in the portraits of the participants from the French and Lebanese universities in comparison to those of their counterparts from the American university.

Later on in her account, Hala evokes visualizations and images of teaching that seem to be based on Lortie's (1975) notion of 'apprenticeship of observation'. Such images appear to be rooted in Hala's childhood memories of her teachers. In her portrait, she recurrently expressed how she always wanted to model her teachers at school. This is particularly evident in the following account:

Since I was very young, when I used to prepare to start studying, I used to pretend I was my teacher as if it were my teacher beginning her lesson. I loved to pretend to be a teacher through play; but I did not see my ability to teach until I started my practicum program and through practice. Now I see it and I work very much on developing my abilities. So from the start, I used to prepare my studies this way; I used to review my lessons in this way, the way my teacher would teach it and this is how I studied. (H., 1, 8)

The images of teaching as apprenticeship and as subject expertise appear to coalesce later in Hala's portrait. During the interview, Hala emphasizes the importance of her practicum and the impact of the teachers she had observed on her teaching, stressing that "you learn from and with students really" (H., 1, 6). When I asked her to rate the relevance of some of the theoretical courses that she had to take at the university, Hala responded by saying:

I do not see the relevance of courses in child psychology, for example; as a teacher. I do not think it is my responsibility to analyze a child's personality. A specialist is responsible for this. Also in regards to psychomotor abilities in children, there are specialists for this. I feel all theory

courses on such issues are not really important; to get a general idea about them is okay, but to study all of them knowing that in the future I will not be applying them in the classroom, then what for? (H., 1, 6)

In contrast, Hala emphasized the importance of all the courses that are strictly relevant to her subject-matter, namely the French language. From the above portrait, one can detect that the image of the teacher as both apprentice and subject expert becomes prominent. In other words, Hala's images draw on underlying perceptions of teaching as a craft that can be learned through observation and modeling coupled with teaching as subject expertise.

During the interview, Hala made several allusions to the difference between 'teachers of the past' in contrast with her generation of teachers. In consequence, I was interested in evoking some of the images that Hala drew on to articulate such a comparison. In response, Hala explains:

In the past, teachers were too strict, because, to start with, you did not have those developed pedagogical foundations or the developed schools. Now we work with multimedia technologies, using projectors and laptops. In the past, you did not have all that, so surely a teacher [referred to in the masculine] had his aura; a teacher only needed to look at a student for the student to know they have done something wrong. There was a certain degree of sternness different from today. Now with all the advances, the aura is not as intense as it was in the past. (H., 1, 10)

Then, Hala draws on an explicit metaphor to contrast 'teachers of the past' with her generation of teachers:

I believe that in comparison to a teacher who has been teaching for years and is about to retire, a young, fresh graduate who is like *a budding flower, opening little by little* [emphasis added]; in my opinion, the level of a young teacher is much higher than that of the old one. (H., 1, 10)

In the above short account, Hala articulates a powerful and vivid metaphorical image of the young teacher as 'budding' gradually like a flower. Elsewhere in Hala's account, the image of good teaching as an active and dynamic process of development is recurrent:

I am always preparing for my lessons; I love developing and expanding. I think teaching is a dynamic and creative activity. And I feel I always need to develop my language abilities. (H., 1, 10-11)

Hala stresses that teaching is a dynamic activity. This image was recurrent in most student-teachers' portraits from the three universities under study. However, such an image was always rooted in classroom contexts and in specific in interactive contexts with students. However, most participants in this study expressed dismay regarding how restricting and limiting school contexts were to their developing teacher identities. This theme will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion to this dissertation.

Hala's images discussed above, specifically of the teacher as subject expert, occasion the following observation about broader images of teachers in Lebanon that are reproduced through political and legal discourses and practices. In several interviews that I had conducted with officials, teacher educators, and unionists, I detected a recurrent concern about a certain image of the superiority of the 'teacher as subject-expert' who has obtained an undergraduate degree in a specific subject-matter in comparison to teachers with education undergraduate degrees. In the next chapter that focuses on the portraits of beginning teachers at the public university in Lebanon, such images and their underlying political and material contexts become very prominent. For example, the majority of students interviewed at the public university expressed their dismay regarding the biases inherent in the Bureau of Civil Service examinations for public employment that all teachers seeking public school employment must undertake. The participant student teachers at the public university explained that governmental exams administered by the Bureau of Civil Service favored subject expertise over pedagogical knowledge. In consequence, students who had majored in specific subjects such as French, Arabic, Math, etc usually obtain higher scores on such exams and have better chances of getting hired in the public education sector. The students at the public university expressed disappointment towards such measures emphasizing that the Faculty of Pedagogy at which they are studying was historically founded to train teachers for the public sector who were guaranteed positions upon graduation²¹.

In the present, however, government exams seem to favor subject experts over pedagogical experts. This, however, has its origins in the various stages of educational reform and development that had taken place before and during the civil war in Lebanon. The public university was founded in the 1950's as *Dar al-Mu'allimin al-'Ulya* (Higher Institute of

²¹ In the 1950's and 60's, students who were accepted at the public Faculty of Pedagogy were required to sign employment contracts at the onset of their studies making them government employees even as students.

Teachers) which offered subject-matter degrees to future teachers while equipping them with basic pedagogical and educational theory. Even today, a B.S. or B.A. degree for most subject matters in arts and sciences from this public university is called *shahadah ta'limiyah* (teaching degree) thus preserving the original function that such undergraduate degrees were meant to serve.

Furthermore, during an interview with an official at the Ministry of Education, the interviewee drew my attention to the possible implications of having teachers sit for the Bureau of Civil Service exams for developing teaching into a profession in Lebanon. As the interviewee explained, such exams must only be administered to administrative and clerical governmental positions that test general knowledge and basic administrative skills. The interviewee emphasized: “Why do teachers have to sit for such exams? Teaching is altogether a different kind of occupation!” (AS., 1, 4). Such underling political forces reproduce teaching as an occupation similar to basic administrative occupations in the government. As was mentioned earlier, teacher syndicates, until today, are still categorized under the Ministry of Labor rather than the Ministry of Education, rendering such syndicates as non-professional or ‘open’ syndicates similar to those of transportation sector employees or artisans, for example. Even the official pay-scale for teachers is that of a public cleric or administrator (3rd grade pay-rate) and it was not until recently, and due to repeated teacher movement protests, that a newer pay-scale was incorporated.

The above short discussion is intended to provide insight into the tensions and contradictions produced by the various political and material forces that continuously reproduce teaching, from a socio-political perspective, as a craft rather than a profession on the one hand, while, on the other constructing it, on a discursive level, as essentially a matter of subject-expertise.

In summary, a set of images emerge in Hala’s portrait which seem to be rooted in political, social, and cultural discourses and settings. Furthermore, her images of current teachers as ‘budding flowers’ who are well cultured, cultivated and confident in their field as subject experts provide her with articulating power to synthesize various experiences and perceptions as well as provide her with cogency to articulate them in speech. Maternal, feminine, physical, as well as moral and pastoral tones emerge in Hala’s main images of teachers.

Sophie's portrait

I was introduced to Sophie by one of the teacher-educators at the Education Department at this university. I introduced myself and explained to Sophie the nature of my research. We sat in a quiet corner on a bench in the courtyard facing the Education Department. Sophie was dressed in smart attire and seemed comfortable sitting for the interview. She alternated between Arabic and French during the interview, resorting to the latter when referring to technical and discursive concepts and notions. Nevertheless, Sophie was comfortable expressing many of her views, motivations and experiences in Arabic.

Sophie is a twenty-one-year-old female who is a third-year Education student at this particular university specializing in teaching French. Sophie is Lebanese; she was born in Lebanon and received all of her schooling there. Both of her parents are Christian by birth. Sophie's father works as a director in a bank and her mother is a house-wife. When I asked her about her school experience, Sophie explained that she had to change schools after failing her first year in high school. Having switched to another school, Sophie explained that her performance improved dramatically and that she had realized that "the problem was in the previous school and not me" (Sp., 1, 2). Sophie adds:

With the grades I was earning, I knew that my only chances were to enter the literary track for my last year in high school. I did not like French Literature. I wanted something that involved kids. So after my first Secondary year, a university professor told me that I can go into a technical school to study Early Childhood Education and so I did. I did three years and I am proud to say it! At first, my mother objected to this because it is a technical degree and you know how people view technical degrees in Lebanon. However, my father always emphasized that I should do what I want because in the end, this is my education; where I feel comfortable, I will learn the most. (Sp., 1, 1)

Sophie then explained that she did very well at the technical school and that helped her restore her confidence in her abilities as a student. The challenges that she had to overcome and her high achievement in her technical studies have, according to Sophie, contributed positively to her choice to become a teacher:

So when I started the first year and I was doing very well, at this point, my parents changed their attitude about my decision. So I thrived because it is what I loved and I ranked third in Lebanon

in the official exams. So I felt so proud! Even though some would dismiss this as merely a technical degree! Not true! It was very challenging. I really benefited from my studies there and I feel I can apply what I know here. This was my first experience in my life; sort of the reason behind my choice to do Education. So afterwards, I decided to continue my studies to gain more experience and I chose this university. (Sp., 1, 1)

Sophie explained that all her family members are in such occupational fields as banking, finance and business. She was, at one point, encouraged to pursue a career in banking because it is considered “suitable for a female [in Lebanon]” (Sp., 1, 1). Sophie explained:

Most of my family members are in banking. My father works at a bank. My sisters are in marketing and economics. However, my mom always wished that one of her daughters would end up a teacher; and I guess I was the one [smiling]. My mom always thought that for a female, teaching is a good occupation. (Sp., 1, 1)

It is interesting to note that many of the participants from this university mentioned that banking, like teaching, is considered appropriate for females since as an occupation, it is considered suitable for their future roles as mothers. Riva and Stephanie, two other student-teachers that I interviewed at this university, stressed how their families and relatives encouraged them to pursue either banking or teaching as occupations for similar reasons as the ones Sophie highlights above. Furthermore, many of the participants emphasized that unlike banking, teaching involved more activity and growth compared to the perception of a desk job as stifling. The reader will recall that Hala, in the previous portrait, explains how her previous motivation for working at a bank was influenced by her image of young female bank employees. Yet Hala believed that teaching was more dynamic and active, as well as convenient and comfortable for a female.

I asked Sophie to elaborate on her experience with and perceptions of people’s objections to her choice to become a teacher. In effect, Sophie contrasted banking and teaching as occupations involving different activities stressing that she saw herself as an active person and therefore more fit for teaching as an occupation:

[People object by saying] how can you really bear sitting for long hours with children! You are trapped with them, shouting and screaming all day! I used to answer by saying this is better than sitting behind a desk [as in a bank] all day and not doing anything, just feeling trapped. With

teaching, I am a child again and I learn so much from children and have them learn from me. Children teach us so many things. And it is nice to work with children; it is better than adults! I love this! I am very active and I don't like to be stuck in one place. And I used to answer their objections by saying teachers do not shout and scream, and write on the blackboard; teachers are different. (Sp., 1, 6)

It is important to note here that the cultural image of teaching in Lebanon as a 'limiting' occupation evoked serious tensions in the participants' portraits especially when they spoke about their motivations and choices to become teachers. Some participants regarded teaching as more resonant with their 'active personalities' than regular 'desk jobs', although the same participants, when asked about their future plans regarding their careers, explained that they would not want to be limited to teaching and would either invest in educational entrepreneurial projects or move on to other occupations. Such images of teaching exhibit tensions between, on the one hand, beginning teachers' aspirations and motivations to become active, dynamic, and innovative teachers and, on the other, the more dominant cultural image of teaching as a limiting occupation. When I asked her where she would see herself in ten years, Sophie explained:

I have many plans. First, when I graduate from this university, I will continue my Masters. I was thinking of pursuing Educational Management, and not just staying in Education; something that has to do with administration work and not be limited to this [teaching]. Well, this is because I already have a [technical] degree in early childhood education so I plan to teach in a respectable school for three or four years to gain experience and then invest in my own nursery; but the right kind of nursery and not like most nurseries that we see around us today. I already have several ideas for investing in my own nursery. But I don't think I am ready yet. I might start with a center that organizes summer activities for children and then turn it into a nursery later. Or I might start something like the centers you see today that have a restaurant for parents with activities for children. So I have many plans. (Sp., 1, 6)

As was revealed in Yara's portrait, the negative image of the teacher as a 'mere employee' is very prominent in Lebanon. This cultural image of the teacher-as-mere-employee, reinforced by underlying social, economic and political realities in Lebanon, creates tensions for most of the participants in this study and informs their aspirations and motivations about their career choice.

Later, I encouraged Sophie to reflect more on her school experience and how that could have possibly influenced her perceptions of teaching as well as her motivation to become a teacher. In response, Sophie attempted to chart for me her educational background in order to explain her choice. Sophie explained that she had studied at two different French schools and then a technical school before pursuing her higher education studies at this university:

When I was at the first school, all my sisters did well there. What happened is that teachers considered me at 'null'; that I had nothing to offer, especially Math teachers. I hate math because of the teacher I had. I hate math, I would hate to teach math although now I understand it through the courses we take here at this university. Nevertheless, I will not teach it. I don't like it. When I left that school, I felt a different spirit existed between teachers and students in the new school. In the first school, there was quite a distance between me and my teachers. I always felt 'null' and 'inferior'. When I switched, my personality changed; I felt stronger. I felt I had things to say. The new school was a coed school; although the first school is considered better than the latter. (Sp., 1, 2)

Sophie then focuses on the impact that the teachers at the second school had on her motivation for becoming a teacher:

I was really influenced by the teachers in the second school I attended; even the Math teachers; those that I hated in the first school, now I loved. I still did not like Math as a subject; nor did I like Physics, History, Geography, etc; basically because I don't like to memorize. So I was really influenced by the teachers in the new school especially my French teacher. I was so attached to her and I would love to be like her. I have always liked French teachers. All my life, I have loved French teachers. (Sp., 1, 2)

At this point, I wanted to probe Sophie's identification with her French teachers and so I asked her to elaborate more on her last statement. Sophie explained:

How she [French teacher] speaks; how she dresses! All my life, at least during the time I was a child, I saw all French teachers as, you know, [smiling] ladies. I always wanted to be like them; whereas Arabic teachers, for example, were always old, and not ... you know. But now they [Arabic teachers] are changing; now Arabic teachers are young and you know. Ever since I was a school student, I loved French teachers; they happened to be really cute and nice. (Sp., 1, 2)

The above portrait highlights an image with which Sophie seems to identify which also resonates with Hala's (in the previous portrait) image of the elegant, eloquent and lady-like French teacher. Such an image also stands in contrast with a common cultural image of Arabic teachers in Lebanon as 'old', 'archaic', and 'authoritarian'. Again, the image of the young, active, lady-like, and refined 'French teacher' is depicted in both Hala's and Sophie's portraits. This image recurred in many of the participant portraits from this university.

At this point, I would like to zoom out from Sophie's portrait and discuss an interesting phenomenon that I detected in most student-teacher portraits from this university. A recurring image of what I would like to call 'French-ness' was evoked by the participants to articulate the tensions that they experienced between their perceptions of themselves as active and dynamic young female prospective teachers vis-à-vis the more dominant cultural image of teaching as limiting and stifling. Such cultural images of the French working female (and the American working female in the case of the American university), reinforced by their experiences with French (or English) teachers at school and through the media, resonated better with their motivations and aspirations as young working females. In other words, I detected that the images of teaching that the participants from this (and the American) university evoked to articulate their motivations for becoming teachers were intimately tied to language ideologies as well as broader cultural images of foreign language teachers. Perceptions of French-ness (and American-ness) provided these student-teachers with high articulating power to link amongst various dimensions of their motivations and aspirations for becoming teachers. For example, this was evident in Sophie's teacher-images which she further articulated in feminine and maternal terms. When I asked her to elaborate on what attracted her to this particular French teacher that she had previously mentioned in her account, Sophie explained:

I love the way they [French teachers] treated us; disciplined us. For example, there was one teacher; you know children pass through stages when they can be very unruly and demand a lot of attention, she [the teacher] knew how to stand, how to go down to our level and not force us up to hers; she knew how to establish this contact [or connection]. She made us like her and attached to her through the way she treated us. Although she was very lenient, she was nevertheless fair. (Sp., 1, 3)

Then Sophie added:

Notice how everyone says ‘observe this new generation, they do not listen to their parents, they are unruly’. But tell me, who is to blame? Who is a child’s first or primary school? It’s the parents. A mother is the first school and then comes the other school. (Sp., 1, 4)

The image of the French teacher that Sophie draws on from her school experience seems to articulate and connect among her self-image as an active and dynamic female, the tensions inherent in the cultural images of teaching as a limiting occupation, and the more culturally sanctioned images of teachers as ‘mothers’. The latter becomes more apparent in Sophie’s account as she foregrounds affective dimensions of her teacher image through elaborating on her love for children:

I have loved children all my life. When visitors came by my parents’ house when I was young, I used to sit with their children, play, do activities, and when it was time for them to leave, the children would complain that they wanted to stay more. In my village, on several occasions, I used to volunteer in my Church community to organize activities for children. I was a youth-leader in the summer camp there. These experiences helped me discover my love for children. I love Education. The first thing they tell me is ‘it suits you’. (Sp., 1, 4)

Yet, tensions between teaching-as-limiting and Sophie’s self-image as dynamic and active who loves to work with children reemerge in Sophie’s perceptions of what people from her community think of her:

Some tell me that other things suit me better like being a reporter; you know something *more* [emphasis added]! But then they would say that it is nice since your kids will be close to you and with you. Especially when they hear me speak about children, all of a sudden they tell me they wish I could be teaching their kids. Or when they see me engage with their children; there is something in me, I don’t know really, that immediately attracts children to me. (Sp., 1, 4-5)

As was discussed above, the maternal image of the teacher (which has higher social sanction) seems to allow Sophie to reconcile some of the tensions that arise between her self-image as an active and dynamic female who does not want to be limited in her career, with the broader cultural image of teaching as limiting and stifling. In her account, such an image of motherhood seems to also merge with Sophie’s image of the French teacher through her experiences at school and her aspirations as a female. Interestingly, the image of the French teacher later emerges in Sophie’s portrait in contrast with images of teachers of other subject matters. For example, when

I asked Sophie to elaborate on the possible reasons for the lack of male student-teachers at this university, she explained:

Even when we were young, no males ever taught lower grade levels. A young man cannot really tolerate children. You always see males attracted more to Math, Physics, sciences, or Arabic. But you never see a male French teacher; English, perhaps, every now and then, but not French. I feel males are more inclined to English, to Math, Chemistry, Physics, etc. They like them; it's their character. And so males will go and study Math, Physics, or Arabic if they want to teach these subjects and not do Education in particular. (Sp., 1, 7)

The above account sheds light on the underlying gendered images of teachers in Lebanon in which the image of the 'subject expert' designated historically by the term *ustādh* (a masculine term) reemerges. Such images are also evoked in the accounts of students at the public university, as was mentioned earlier. Several student-teachers from the Lebanese University complained about the bias in the Bureau of Civil Service exams which favor subject-matter expertise at the expense of pedagogical expertise. Thus images of masculinity become more prominent in student-teachers' portraits when teaching is articulated in terms of subject-matter expertise; specifically regarding such subjects as Math, Science, and Arabic. Yet images of French-ness and motherhood provide the participants with rich materials to rearticulate such masculine images of subject expertise in 'active', 'dynamic', and 'feminine' terms that resonate with their own self-images as teachers. Such favorable and desirable attributes seem to coalesce in the image of the 'French teacher' in most of the participant portraits from this university.

When I attempted to probe Sophie's perceptions of a 'good teacher', several metaphors and images emerged in her portrait of her choice, motivation, and aspiration for teaching in general. For example, Sophie expressed her perception of what makes a good teacher as follows:

You can either be born with this ability or you can learn it; it's not that hard. If the teacher understands that she is teaching not to finish a curriculum and that students have to be like machines writing in front of her, then she will be successful. I have had this ability to start with cause I love children and now it has increased through experience and through training and observing other teachers. Also, I try to change the things that I used to hate in my school in order not to do the same to children. (Sp., 1, 9)

Like Hala, Sophie privileges an apprenticeship model for becoming a ‘good teacher’ with a particularly affective dimension of love for children. Then Sophie explicitly draws on the following metaphor to describe the role of a good teacher:

It is like when you go to buy a magazine, what motivates you to buy it? It’s the front page of the magazine. The *teacher is like this front page* [emphasis added] that motivates the child to either go in to study or not and put up a block. (Sp., 1, 10)

This metaphor of the teacher as a ‘front page’ recurs in Sophie’s account when she speaks of the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the children in the classroom. Sophie also elaborates on her perception of a good teacher through linking teaching to her passion for acting:

I think teaching and acting are extremely similar. As with acting, you vent and divulge everything you have inside of you; you ‘exit’ yourself and are not yourself anymore and you feel better about yourself. A teacher does not have to create a theater around her but a context to help a child divulge [with connotations of ‘to flourish’] and not be timid. Theater is for everyone and not a certain group in the audience. When you go and watch a play, the actor is not acting only for you, but all the audience, even if you were his father, he is not yours, he is not performing for you but everyone in the audience and so a teacher must perform for everyone and not a special someone in her class. This is what I personally believe. (Sp., 1, 9)

Sophie draws on the image of teacher-as-actor to link her passion for acting with affective and interpersonal dimensions of her image of a good teacher. At one point, Sophie explains:

My parents did not let me [pursue acting]; however, I might do it later. I have already acted in a children’s play last year. I love acting and [as a teacher] I can act in children’s productions and not necessarily in TV productions. (Sp., 1, 10)

For Sophie, various images coalesce in her portrait allowing her to articulate her motivations, aspirations and anxieties regarding her career choice.

In summary, Sophie draws on her personal, educational and professional backgrounds in constructing her images of teaching amidst tensions that arise vis-à-vis broader cultural and historical images of teachers and teaching in Lebanon. Sophie’s image of her French teacher in

school, her perceptions of teaching as motherhood that involves love of children, as well as her self-image as an active and dynamic young working female coalesce in her personal portrait.

Conclusion

One prominent image that reemerges in most portraits from the French and American universities depicts teaching as an active and dynamic occupation. Such an image informs beginning teachers' motivations to become teachers. However, this image, as the portraits reveal, is soon frustrated by school contexts and material realities that, in most cases, are perceived to stifle the work of teachers. Many beginning teachers feel that they could salvage and maintain some of these active and dynamic aspects of the teacher images they have by choosing the 'right' subject. In both French and American universities, the subjects that offered such dynamism and energy were French and English respectively. Identifications with former teachers from school as well as with cultural and media images that are prominent in Lebanon of European and American females intertwine to render the images of French and English teachers as the most active, dynamic and 'not limited' in comparison to other subject matters. Such images, perhaps, explain why most beginning teachers were attracted to French and English as subjects for teaching. As was revealed in Sophie's portrait, as well as in those of other participants from this university, images of French-ness (French teachers and the French language) provided the participants with the articulating power to reconcile among various contrasting images of teaching (teaching as 'stifling', 'a mere employment position', and masculine images of 'teachers as subject experts') and integrate them with their self-images as active and dynamic working females. In Sophie's portrait (as well as in Riva's who is another student-teacher at this university), an explicit distinction is made between French teachers as feminine, active, dynamic and versatile and teachers of other subject matters such as Math, Physics and Arabic as masculine, rigid and limited. Furthermore, I detected that most participants in this study drew on the image of teaching-as-motherhood to reconcile among the tensions that emerge between their image of teaching as active and dynamic and the broader images of teaching-as-mere-employment and as stifling. The image of teaching-as-motherhood somehow seems to attenuate the intensity of the cultural image of teaching-as-stifling through cultural images of the teacher-as-working-mother thus becoming both socially sanctioned as well

as retaining elements of activity, dynamism, and independence which most participants from the French and American universities emphasized.

I also detected another image that was prominent in the portraits from this particular university. The image of the teacher as ‘bearer of a legacy’ emerged repeatedly. Yara’s teacher images that are colored with pastoral and maternal undertones, Hala’s image of the teacher as a mother responsible for a whole generation, and Sophie’s (as well as Riva’s) image of teachers as mothers responsible for the new generation, are but a few examples. It is interesting to note that the image of ‘teacher as bearer of a legacy’ is more prominent in the portraits of the interviewees from this particular institution in comparison to those from the American university. Such an image reemerged in the participants’ portraits revealing religious, nationalist, and moral tones and was often rooted in civil war stories and episodic memories as well as broader, overarching nation-building narratives. This, however, was not detected in the portraits of the participant student-teachers from the American university. Instead, their portraits were dominated by images of the ‘migrant teacher’ and ‘teacher-as-entrepreneur’ which, as Menter (2009) elaborates, are not consonant with images of teachers as nation-builders.

Chapter 6 – Student-teachers’ portraits at the Lebanese university

Introduction

This chapter presents the portraits of the student-teachers from the Faculty of Pedagogy at the Lebanese public university in Beirut. This branch of the university is one of several public institutions that provide teacher education and training in Lebanon. Six female students were interviewed at this institution. For the majority of participants from this university, education was their first choice of discipline. The interviews revealed that the majority of the participants came from similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds; namely, (predominantly) Shiite Muslim lower middle-class families from Beirut or South Lebanon. As was mentioned in previous chapters, a general discussion on the institutional setting is undertaken in chapter 1 of this dissertation.

Section 1 of this chapter provides a short reflection on the interviews. For a detailed discussion on the interview process, the reader is referred to the ‘Data Collection’ section in the Methodology chapter. Section 2 presents the portraits of four of the six student-teachers from this university while highlighting and making connections with the main images that emerge in the portraits of the other participants.

Section 1: a short note on the interviews

The interviews

All of the interviews with the participants from this university were conducted in the common courtyard on campus. As will become clear in the portraits below, many of the student-teachers expressed their dismay for how ostracized and marginalized they felt this particular Faculty was by the government and the main education authorities. Such a sentiment was detected in several interviews with education officials and unionists that I had conducted before approaching the participants from this university. It was mentioned in the introductory chapter of this dissertation that major conflicts and internal struggles exist within the education authorities in Lebanon that

have their origins in politico-sectarian rivalries. Several officials and educationists that I had interviewed identified such conflict as the main impediment for the development of education in Lebanon. For example, a major unionist who is also a public-school teacher stressed that deep schisms exist within the major education governing bodies in Lebanon such as the Ministry of Education (MEHE), the Lebanese University (LU), the CERD (Center for Educational Research and Development) which create a serious obstacle against any fundamental educational change in Lebanon (IK, 1, 6). Such tensions and contradictions, the reader will detect, are explicitly manifest in the portraits of the student-teachers at this university in comparison to those of their counterparts at the private institutions discussed in the previous two chapters.

The interviews took place at a time of considerable confusion amongst both teacher-educators and student-teachers at the Faculty of Pedagogy. In 2010, the University had just reformed its curricula transitioning to the LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorat) system and in effect, students found themselves transitioning from a four-year to a three-year undergraduate degree. Furthermore, in the previous program, students were expected to specialize in one of three areas of focus: teaching Arabic and Social Studies, teaching English and French, or teaching Math and Science. According to the new curriculum, students are expected to major in one subject and minor in another. In light of the rapid changes that were taking place at the Faculty, all students and teacher educators whom I had interviewed felt insecure and uncertain about how such a transition will affect their academic responsibilities. As will become increasingly evident in the below portraits, the student-teachers' images were to a large extent informed by broader social, political, and economic realities. This distinguished the portraits and images of the participant student-teachers at this university from those of their counterparts at the other two universities. The below portraits will shed light on some of the possible reasons for this distinction.

The students at this campus of the university were predominantly females²² and many wore veils. Furthermore, all of the interviewees, except one, insisted to be interviewed in pairs. I inferred that it was not considered appropriate on this campus that a female sit alone with a male in the courtyard. The environment was relatively quiet and provided us with sufficient privacy where no or very few interruptions took place. On this campus, I detected a particular attitude towards

²² Only two male students were enrolled at the Faculty at the time of the interviews. Although desirable, I, however, was not able to contact them to arrange for interviews.

my presence and research project in general which I did not experience at the other two universities. Every participant, without exception, thanked me profusely for demonstrating interest in their experiences as students at this Faculty. This, I felt, was articulated in response to feelings of marginalization and neglect that the participants experienced as student-teachers at this institution. In the below portraits, the reader will detect this recurring theme as the student-teachers relate their anxieties and concerns about their career choice and their educational experience at this particular program.

In all the interviews, the participants and I were seated on benches facing each other, however, with a slight angle. I commenced every interview by handing out the research information sheet, explaining its content, asking whether the participant had any questions, obtaining consent to record the interview, and summarizing the ethical responsibilities I have in regards to the interview content, including criteria for confidentiality and anonymity. After asking the participant to state her name and age, I would start by asking the general, open-ended question: “So why did you decide to become a teacher?” Although this question and many similar ones recurred during the interview, the main purpose of asking it at the onset was to prompt the participant’s narrative before I start asking specific questions about their personal biographies, educational and professional experiences, views and perceptions about teaching as well as their motivations and aspirations for becoming teachers. The dialectical hermeneutic process that I adopted to interpret the data resulted in the below portraits. This process also helped me further conceptualize ‘image’ as the main interpretive lens that this study adopts.

Section 2: The student portraits

Nour’s and Samah’s portraits

The first two interviewees were Nour and Samah who were second-year Education students at the Faculty of Pedagogy. Nour had studied at a Shiite school in Lebanon and graduated with emphasis in economic studies. Nour explained that many members of her family were teachers or work in education and jokingly added that perhaps her choice to pursue Education was “hereditary” (N. & S., 1, 1). When Nour started her higher education studies, she first majored in Laboratory Studies. She explained that she had hated it because: “A literary mind entered a

scientific domain! I could not get along with it. It was hell for me! Now that I am here [at the Faculty of Pedagogy] I am very happy and content. I say I wish I had gone into this major [Education] from the onset” (N. & S., 1, 10). Nour then added:

I went into sciences at first because my mother wanted me to do so. She prefers chemistry, medicine, teaching science, biology, etc. But the rest of my family members were very supportive of my decision to become an Arabic teacher. They did not mind my choice of discipline so long as I did well in it and succeeded in it and *delivered the message* that I wanted to deliver [emphasis added]. (N. & S., 1, 1)

Nour then explained that she had chosen to pursue education because:

It is considered a *respectable* occupation for a *female* in general and because I like it; I find myself in it; I can find my personality through it and I can assert my personality with the students and *give from the heart* in it. After all, it is not just an occupation to make money. Bottom line, it is a *message* that you are delivering and this is why I resorted to it. And I chose this Faculty to specialize in teaching Arabic because this institution is well reputed in Lebanon for its ability to prepare teachers who are able and strong and are ready to teach in any school and able to stand out as the select few. And after all, a *graduate from the Faculty of Pedagogy earns a better salary than his counterpart from the Faculty of Letters*. So this is why I chose to be here [all emphasis added]. (N. & S., 1, 1)

The reader will gradually detect that the student-teachers’ portraits presented in this chapter reflect an ongoing competition that many of the students experience against the graduates of the Faculty of Letters at the same university. Graduates from the latter usually apply to tenure or contract-based teaching positions in the public sector and therefore constitute a competitive labor force that students from the Faculty of Pedagogy recognize and continuously encounter. Mirvat’s [another student-teacher at this institution] portrait below will shed more light on the nature of this competition and its impact on the motivations and aspirations of the graduates from this Faculty. In brief, Mirvat explains that the government exams that all beginning teachers have to undertake to work in public schools favor subject expertise rather than pedagogical knowledge and therefore privilege the subject-matter knowledge of the graduates of the Faculty of Letters. Such concerns are detected in the portraits of most of the participants at this Faculty

and impact their images of teaching and teachers in general. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Samah, like Nour, had also graduated from a Shiite school with emphasis in economic studies before applying to this university. She explains:

I have *loved* teaching since I was a child. I love *interacting with others*. Now I entered teaching because I was curious about how effective I will be in *making a difference with students*; whether they will be able to produce good results or not. I have this curiosity about whether I will succeed in this specialization or not. I also thought that this is very *convenient or suitable for a female*. I feel that teaching as an occupation is more suitable for females than males. I don't know; this is what I think. I feel females can *give from the heart* really, and that this occupation is considered *a respectable one in society* [all emphasis added]. (N. & S., 1, 1)

Samah later added that “everyone encouraged me to pursue teaching” (N. & S., 1, 12).

The above two short accounts by Nour and Samah shed light on several dimensions of teacher images that the participant student-teachers recurrently draw on in their portraits to articulate their choices and motivations. Gender, social, and moral dimensions are expressed metaphorically or explicitly through such images of teaching as a ‘message’, as ‘suitable for females’, and as ‘respected in society’. Both Nour and Samah also draw on affective and interpersonal dimensions such as a ‘love’, ‘from the heart’, and ‘interacting with others’ to elaborate on their choice and motivation. Such dimensions reemerged later when I tried to probe Samah’s perceptions of teaching in general. Samah explained:

I think that teaching is about *mahabbah* [love, adoration] and about a teacher’s character who *teaches with all his heart*; and is *not rigid*. It must extend from *mahabbah* and coming from the *heart* and aiming at *tarbiyah* [educating] and considering students as *one’s own children*. My intention is not to philosophize here; it’s just what I believe. Of course skills and knowledge are important; but for me the priority is *giving* and *mahabbah*. (N. & S., 2, 2)

The above accounts shed light on a number of recurring teacher images in the participants’ portraits that are colored with affective, interpersonal, moral and gender dimensions. Several of the terms and metaphors about teaching expressed in the accounts above draw on specific

visualizations and images that the participants have of teachers. Such images are gradually revealed in the participants' portraits below.

Moreover, both participants expressed their intentions to pursue teaching higher grade levels than the ones they will eventually start teaching after their graduation. Nour and Samah explained that since the Faculty of Pedagogy only prepares elementary- and intermediate-school teachers, they plan on first teaching lower grade-levels to gradually get "promoted" to higher levels (N. & S., 1, 2). Elaborating further on her motivations and anxieties about her career choice, Nour explained that her greatest fear is to stagnate. She explained:

I would want to be promoted; I don't want to get stuck where I am. Perhaps this is my greatest anxiety about being a teacher. (N. & S., 2, 4)

Nour earlier explained her preference for teaching higher grade levels by stressing that "with a more mature student, you can give more, and he will respond and interact better than a younger student" (N. & S., 1, 3). Samah agreed with Nour and added that "if you teach secondary levels, your *status is greater in society* [emphasis added]" (ibid).

It is important at this point to briefly elaborate on the competing images of secondary grade-level teachers in Lebanon that emerge from a multiplicity of discourses and contexts. In Chapter 5, I briefly discussed the images inherent in the out-of-date official terminology (although still in currency) that distinguishes amongst elementary-, intermediate- and secondary-level teachers in Lebanon; namely, 'mu'allim', 'mudarris', and 'ustādh' respectively. These terms portray a continuous 'distancing' of the 'teacher' from the student as s/he is identified more as a subject expert as grade-levels increase. Furthermore, the term 'ustādh' retains masculine connotations while 'mu'allim' is often used in the feminine (mu'allimah). In fact, it is very common in Lebanon to generally refer to a male teacher by 'ustādh' and a female teacher 'mu'allimah'. In other words, these terms still retain gendered hierarchies reflected in social and cultural perceptions about teaching in Lebanon.

Furthermore, the perception of the secondary grade-level teacher in Lebanon carries historical images that emerged in what is referred to as the 'Golden Age' of teaching and public education in Lebanon; namely, the 1950's. In the introduction to this dissertation, it was mentioned that the Lebanese University started out as *Dar al-Mu'allimin al-'Ulya* (The Higher Institute for

Teachers) which was, during the 1950's, the sole institution responsible for training secondary grade-level teachers in Lebanon. Current perceptions of public-school secondary-level teachers in Lebanon still retain some of the historic images of teachers from the 'Golden' 50's. Sohad [another participant in this study], in her account below, explicitly reveals and problematizes such an image of secondary grade-level teachers that has endured since the 1950's.

Several images of teaching that are imbued with gender tones coalesce in Nour and Samah's personal images of teaching and inform their motivations for and anxieties about their career choices. Nour and Samah's images of their teacher-selves foreground social/cultural dimensions of the respected and recognized secondary-level teacher/subject-expert in Lebanese society that promises to earn them, as females, higher salaries and better recognition and respect in their communities. However, many of these images, such as those of the secondary-school teacher, the subject-expert, among others, seem to create further tensions for the participants in regards to their motivations to become teachers especially when the choice of private versus public schools is raised. Nour, for example, emphasized that she would rather teach at a public school explaining that salaries are normally higher and the benefits better (in comparison with private schools). Nour then stressed that "how teachers are treated [in public schools] is better than in private schools since what I have been witnessing in private schools is the increasing control and demand from administrations over teachers. These administrations are exerting much pressure on teachers while in public schools, the teacher has more freedom" (N. & S., 1, 3). I asked Nour to elaborate on her opinion; she responded: "Honestly, private schools work their teachers to death. In other words, a private school does not properly compensate the teacher for good work whereas the public school does" (ibid). Nour added that her relatives teach at private schools and this is what she has so far witnessed. Samah did not agree with Nour and stated that her preference would be to work in a private school since "things are more organized and the students want to learn; whereas in public schools, things are chaotic and you have to work so much with the student" (ibid). Furthermore, Nour explained that they (she and a group of her peers) have recently formed a student committee representing students from every academic year in their program to relay the demands of the students-teachers at this Faculty to the Ministry of Education in an attempt to secure tenure positions in the public school system (as opposed to contractual employment). Nour adds:

We are working on this so as to secure a position right after graduation and to avoid contractual employment. We are trying our best; hope we get lucky! (N. & S., 1, 3)

In light of the participants' portraits of their choices and preferences, I tried to probe Nour and Samah's possible underlying anxieties about teaching. It was interesting to note that notwithstanding the various uncertainties and challenges that emerged from the broader socio-political climate that affected the status of teaching as an occupation in Lebanon, Nour and Samah's main anxieties about teaching were largely related to their performance in the classroom. Nour explained:

One of my greatest fears is not to be able to control my classroom especially with this generation of students. They are extremely unruly and their parents are spoiling them! This is why I'd rather work at a public school. In private schools, the students are always right no matter what happens! This is too much! In public schools, you can reprimand and be very tough with students and you are supported by the administration. (N. & S., 2, 6)

Samah interjected:

My greatest anxiety is bound to the classroom also. I fear that I invest so much of myself in teaching and then my students would fail [in high-stakes official exams]! This is my greatest fear. You see I am into this because I want to succeed. Failure is not an option for me. (N. & S., 2, 6)

I then asked Nour and Samah about their educational backgrounds and how that could have impacted their choice to become teachers. Nour explained that she had graduated from a Francophone school (main languages of instruction being French and Arabic) while Samah studied at an Anglophone school (English and Arabic). At the Faculty of Pedagogy, both participants were specializing in teaching Arabic with secondary emphasis on French and English respectively. I asked Nour and Samah about their choice of emphasis, and Samah explained:

We chose to study Arabic at the Faculty of Pedagogy and not the Faculty of Letters because in the latter, the approach is very dry and rigid. They drill you with such things as history of language and such. However, with Education, you go into sociology, psychology of the child, developmental psychology, and other aspects of education that are more dynamic and so it is quite diverse. However, at the Faculty of Letters, you pointlessly go deep into stuff. And

besides, I love the Arabic language; I love poetry and I write and I feel it is ... um, not easier!
But it is closer to my heart personally. (N. & S., 1, 3)

The above account expresses Samah's motivation to pursue teaching Arabic. Her love for the language and wanting to stay close to the subject while avoiding the rigid approaches to teaching it (which Samah explains are characteristic of the Faculty of Letters) have informed her choice to pursue teaching Arabic at the Faculty of Pedagogy. As will be evident in the rest of the accounts in this chapter, the theme of teaching as involving dynamism and activity is interspersed in most of the student-teachers' accounts; a theme which resonates closely with the concerns and anxieties of most of the participants from the other two universities as well. Moreover, the comparative posture that the participants from this public university adopt in explaining their choice to enroll at the Faculty of Pedagogy rather than the Faculty of Letters emerges repeatedly in their narratives.

Nour elaborated on her choice to pursue teaching Arabic as follows:

I chose to teach Arabic because my cultural/educational background in Arabic is quite strong. And so I wanted to choose something that was close to my background environment as well as increase my chances of succeeding in it. I feel I can give more in Arabic compared to other specializations. (N. & S., 1, 3)

Nour elucidates her choice to become an Arabic teacher through her identification with her own Arabic teacher as well as by drawing on her religious upbringing. A sense of belongingness to the cultural/educational background that the Arabic language constitutes for her seemed to also inform her image of her teacher-self. This belongingness comprises a sense of identification (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) with a cultural/educational and possibly²³ religious background that Nour wants to stay close to through her occupational choice. Furthermore, the image of the teacher as 'bearer of a legacy' (especially in regards to the Arabic language), which is a dominant cultural image of Arabic teachers in Lebanon, coalesces with Nour's image of teaching as a *message* and provides her with articulating power to express her motivations. Her image of herself as an Arabic teacher also finds rootedness in her cultural background and reinforces a

²³ Here I qualify the term 'religious' because it was not explicitly stated in the participants' portraits and because it is quite problematic to distinguish it, as a cultural category, from Arabic as a language. The relationship between such categories as 'Religion', 'Islam', 'Culture', and 'Arabic' is extremely complex from historical, ideological, and cultural perspectives.

sense of categorical identification²⁴ with the Arabic language. To elaborate on her choice further, Nour draws on an image that is rooted in her experiences as a student:

I loved my Arabic teacher! She was able to deliver the subject to me in simple and flexible ways. And she did not inculcate; on the contrary, she used dialogue to teach us. She made us feel we were being educated/cultured rather than receiving information that is only useful for doing well on the exam. However, my worst teacher was the math teacher; first because I hated the subject and the teacher would dash through the lesson in fifteen minutes without explaining it really. I believe it's up to the teacher to make you love or hate a certain subject. And I am personally quite unfortunate because not once was a math teacher able to get me interested in the subject. (N. & S., 1, 4)

The above quote expresses another form of identification; namely, relational identification (Brubaker & Copper, 2000); this time with Nour's Arabic teacher (which is contrasted with her Math teacher) providing her with further articulating power to express her desire to stay close to the Arabic language as a subject and as a fundamental part of her cultural/educational background, as well as to reconcile the tensions she experiences in regards to language ideologies that she believes are characteristic of the approaches adopted by the Faculty of Letters.

As was detected in the student portraits from the other two universities, language ideologies play an influential role in the student-teachers' choices of their subject-matter. I have already discussed the images of the English and French languages that emerge in the portraits of the students from the American and French universities respectively. Such images also find expression through the accounts of the students at this university as is evident in Samah's elaboration on her aspirations as a future teacher: "I like my major but I have considered transferring to teaching English rather than Arabic" (N. & S., 1, 12). Samah then adds:

Well I am good in English. But the main reason, again, has to do with society. You are regarded differently if you teach English. Even the way people *look* at you [I detected that Samah here is evoking a social image or visualization to elaborate on her choice]. To tell you the truth, my social environment has this regard. I'm being very honest if I may! If you say you teach Arabic, people will barely give you any recognition to be honest. But if you say you are an English

²⁴ For a definition of the term, the reader is referred to the Literature Review chapter of this dissertation.

teacher, people usually say: ‘Good for you, wow’ and stuff. I really don’t think we can ever change this; I mean these *perceptions/impressions* of teaching Arabic and teaching English [all emphasis added]. (N. & S., 1, 12)

Here again, Samah’s emphasis on ‘social status’ in elaborating her choice to become a teacher reemerges in her portrait. Certain dominant social images of the ‘English language teacher’ coalesce with images of the secondary-grade-level, private-school teacher to provide Samah with articulating power to express her motivations and aspirations for teaching.

Samah’s portrait also reveals a very important dimension of the concept of ‘articulating power’ that this study conceptualizes as a lens to understand student-teachers perceptions, motivations and anxieties about teaching. In many of the participants’ portraits in this study, I was able to detect a high degree of emphasis that the student-teachers placed on their ability to express ‘publically’ (either with ‘real’ interlocutors or ‘imagined’ ones) their career choice. Their ability to convincingly and coherently express their choice, I detected, highly affected their motivations and anxieties. In effect, the participants often drew on experiences, arguments, images, etc that helped them better *express* their choice to become teachers to real or imagined audiences. In other words, certain statements they made about their choice were not merely descriptive but rhetorical and it is in this vein that the concept of *articulating power* provides further insight into understanding these portraits. The term ‘articulating’, as was delineated earlier in this study, expresses both an attempt to *link* or *integrate* several aspects of beginning teachers’ identities and experiences (personal, education, and professional) as well as provide them with expressive and rhetorical (i.e. articulating) power to coherently and convincingly negotiate their choice with real or imaginary audiences. In effect, the notion of articulating power sheds light on the degree to which an image or a set of images allow the student-teacher to both *integrate* competing and multiple dimensions of their experiences and identities as well as *express* and *negotiate* their choices in real or imagined public or social settings. The above image by Samah reveals imagined settings where Samah attempts to justify her choice to an audience from her community. Such *intra-locutors* (internal personal interlocutors), as I would like to call them, have a determining effect on the images that the beginning teachers construct about teaching. The reader may recall that in the portraits of the student-teachers from the American university, the participants evoked technical and discursive dimensions of their teacher images to convince

their audiences (real or imagined) that teaching is a ‘real’ and ‘worthy’ discipline or profession. In the conclusion to this dissertation, I shall make a case for the importance of gaining insight into the images that student-teachers construct of teaching that provide them with high articulating power. I found that this factor is extremely important in the case of teaching in comparison with other occupations especially in Lebanese society. For example, with socially and culturally sanctioned professions such as engineering, medicine, pharmacy, etc in Lebanon, students might not need to develop images that have high articulating power because such choices are regarded as prestigious. Teaching, on the other hand, is imbued with multiple dimensions and contested images in Lebanese society and therefore demands higher articulating power on behalf of those pursuing it as a career. In the conclusion to this study, I shall argue for the importance that teacher education programs provide the environment and context for students to develop images of teaching that resonate with those of the program’s principles and philosophies while concomitantly providing students with high articulating power to both integrate their experiences and expectations and express their choices to an audience (real or imagined) from their communities. Otherwise, the content of teacher education programs will be left at the mercy of the images that the students have already constructed to gain high articulating power to both integrate and express their previous experiences and personal motivations for becoming teachers.

Other tensions in the participants’ portraits become more salient when they elaborate on the ongoing competition they experience with graduates from the Faculty of Letters at the same university. The latter are generally recognized as subject experts and consequently considered more adept to teach higher grade levels than graduates from the Faculty of Pedagogy. Mirvat’s account below sheds light on the intensity of competition that the graduates of this Faculty feel with their counterparts from the Faculty of Letters specifically regarding the Bureau of Civil Service exams which determine public school employment opportunities. Mirvat explains below that such exams favor subject expertise and therefore the subject knowledge provided by the Faculty of Letters rather than the Faculty of Pedagogy. Here, teacher education ideologies that emphasize teachers as subject experts become more manifest through the tensions that the participant portraits reveal.

It is important to note at this point that such ideologies have their historical background in the development of higher public education in Lebanon. Sohad at one point explained that “up until recently, our four-year degree used to be called a Teaching Diploma before it was turned into a Licence [B.A.] in Education” (N. & S., 1, 3). This was the case for many undergraduate degrees from other Faculties at the university such as the Faculty of Letters. Graduates from these Faculties would earn a Teaching Diploma in language or science upon completing their course. This has its roots in the development of the Lebanese University as a public educational institution. As was mentioned earlier in this study, this university was founded as the Higher Institute for Teachers and the main purpose of its degrees was to qualify secondary-grade-level teachers in the various subject areas of study. In consequence, the degrees were categorized as teaching diplomas because they in fact served this purpose. These institutional categories endured until the recent reforms creating further tensions between graduates of the Faculty of Pedagogy and their counterparts from the Faculty of Letters.

I was able to detect similar tensions and concerns in interviews I had conducted with unionists and education officials on the status of teachers and teaching in Lebanon. Several interviewees raised questions about whether the Lebanese government has been systematically marginalizing the national public institutions for training teachers (the Faculty of Pedagogy, *Dar al-Mu'allimin*, etc) as part of a privatization trend that is overtaking public-sector reform not only in Lebanon but globally. This, one educational official argued, is evident in the ever-increasing numbers of contracted (versus tenured) teachers, referring to this phenomenon as the “epidemic of contractual employment” (LF, 1, 5). A major unionist in Lebanon explained that this comes as part of a neoliberal political ideology that has become characteristic of government policy after the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1989 (IK, 1, 7). Such reforms are to be understood, as Menter (2009) would argue, as part of a global public sector reform that gained more impetus with the waning of the global left after the end of the Cold War; an event that coincides, not surprisingly, with the end of the civil war in Lebanon as well as other countries in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Such global trends are resonant with ideologies of teaching that are expressed in the Bureau of Civil Service exams as well as official discourses and policies that further create tensions for beginning teachers at this particular university in regards to their choices and motivation to become teachers. IK (1, 12) argues that such ideologies of secondary-grade-level teaching as largely involving subject-expertise and the growing trend of contractual

employment of graduates from other Faculties at this university produce de-skilled, politico-sectarian subjects to serve political clientelism in Lebanon. Similar concerns were evident in the portraits of the student-teachers from this university.

It is also important to note at this point that at the end of the second interview with the participants, both Nour and Samah smiled and asked if I was interested in knowing what their opinion is about what I do. Evidently, I invited them to express their opinions. Both, as did all the other participants at this university, communicated their deep appreciation for my interest in their education and experiences at the Faculty of Pedagogy. This appreciation, I detected, was in response to a feeling of marginalization and exclusion that all the participants at this Faculty felt; a sentiment that was repeatedly expressed in their interviews. Such feelings are reinforced by some of the tensions and anxieties that the participants experience in an educational environment that is rapidly changing around them. Furthermore, these feelings of marginalization as well as confusion are further compounded by politico-sectarian tensions that the beginning teachers experience at this university. During our discussion of what makes a good teacher, Nour at one point stressed:

It is very important that teachers do not differentiate or are prejudiced against certain students just because they happen to belong to a certain sect or religious tradition. Also, [teachers must] treat students according to their abilities and not according to their religious backgrounds because, honestly, we are facing serious challenges with this issue these days. Honestly, we as students are facing this here, at this university [Samah acknowledged]! Since this seriously aggravates us, we hope that we, as teachers, will never have to resort to such things; to discriminate amongst students according to sect or religion. (N. & S., 2, 4)

Samah added:

At school, we never felt such discrimination as we do here at this university. We have felt it with our peers and professors; maybe because this university attracts people from all walks of life. But we feel it here, in our heart, that there is discrimination. (N. & S., 2, 4)

I then inquired about how such sentiments affect their experience at the university. Nour explained:

We have decided to ignore this because we are very clear about our goal here; we are here to gain expertise in our field and then once we have our careers, we will care less about anything else. But of course we are keen on maintaining good rapport with our professors since they are the key for our future career. We avoid discussing sensitive issues with our peers so things are fine. But what is aggravating is how some professors act partisan towards certain students [of the same sect or politico-sectarian affiliation]. For example, you might invest so much effort to get an okay grade whereas someone else who you know is failing ends up passing the course with little effort! (N. & S., 2, 4)

Then Samah interjected:

Sometimes I am reluctant about coming here for such reasons but of course this will never keep us from coming here and pursuing our goals. (N. & S., 2, 5)

As the above accounts reveal, politico-sectarian tensions are explicitly expressed in the portraits of the students from this university as compared to those of their counterparts in the other two universities involved in this study. This is partly due to the fact that this university is a public institution and often functions, like many other public institutions in Lebanon, as an arena for politico-sectarian tensions and contestations.

In light of the above discussion, I decided to further probe Nour's and Samah's educational backgrounds and experiences to explore their possible impact on their choices and motivations for becoming Arabic teachers. Samah explained:

When I was still at school, all the teachers were exceptional. Really, because the school was well organized, they followed up on you, and to say it bluntly, they *spoon-fed* you everything. They were organized. When I moved to another school, they had no administration and nothing really! For example, the Math teacher, who teaches the *most important subject*, used to turn the blackboard into a [incomprehensible] map! He would speak to himself rather than explain to the students. The classroom is disorderly and he'd go on and on all on his own! No organization and structure! But I do not blame the teacher; it's all about the administration. If that is weak, how can you blame the teacher [all emphasis added]? (N. & S., 1, 4-5)

At this point, I would like to focus on a very important image that emerges in Samah's portrait; namely, the image of Math as 'the most important subject'. Such images of subject matter, as was detected in all the student-teachers' portraits from the three universities that are the focus of

this study, fundamentally influence the participant's images of teaching in general and affect their motivations and aspirations as beginning teachers. A certain hierarchy of subject-matter importance extends from broader cultural images in Lebanese society of various subjects and disciplines. In the American and French universities, such tensions emerged in the students' accounts of their choices between studying English or French Literature on the one hand, and Education on the other. The portraits from this university foreground the competitive tensions that the participants feel with the students from the Faculty of Letters who are regarded as subject experts. Yet such tensions become salient when Arabic is the subject matter of choice. On the one hand, the Arabic language is venerated as a legacy to be protected and preserved while on the other, it is considered unbefitting a 'profession'. This cultural ambivalence towards the Arabic language in Lebanon expresses itself in the portraits of the students and contributes to contradictions in their teacher images.

In light of this, it becomes important that teacher education programs take into consideration such tensions and work with students specializing in teaching Arabic to develop higher articulating power for their personal teacher images to allow them to link among the various personal, education and professional experiences that they believe have led them to their choices.

A very important image that recurs in many of the student-teacher portraits from the three universities is that of 'good teaching as good delivery'. Although most student-teachers utilized, on several occasions, technical educational discourse that emphasized child-centered and constructivist approaches to learning to articulate their views and perceptions of good (modern-day) teaching; however, and this was partly discussed in Chapter 4 (American university), such knowledge emerged mostly in imagined or anecdotal rhetorical encounters outside classroom and educational settings. Within the classroom, images of 'good teaching as good delivery' imbued with affective and interpersonal dimensions dominated the participants' portraits from the three universities. For example, when I asked Nour about her view of what makes a good teacher, she emphasized that a good teacher must be able to "deliver information in a short period of time and in a very smooth way ... to be patient because basically different students have different learning abilities and not all students are the same. However, their [the teachers'] relationship must not be restricted to merely providing the students with the lesson and that's it;

the teacher must have dialogues with students and *care* for them, basically this [emphasis added]” (N. & S., 2, 1). Samah also added that

A teacher should not, when they go into a classroom, have a mindset that they are there to speak a couple of words and expect their paycheck at the end of the month! Of course the salary is important to make a living, but he must also keep in mind teaching; that this is his role. He has students in his hands and he has to teach them; the classroom/lesson cannot be dry and rigid: ‘just study, solve problems’ and that’s it! You can always open debates with students; in fact, students will *love* the teacher more; the teacher will be *loved*, they will also like the subject more [emphasis added]. (N. & S., 2, 1)

In the above two accounts, both Nour and Samah foreground interpersonal and affective dimensions of their images of a good teacher (utilizing such words as ‘care’ and ‘love’); yet the image of teaching-as-delivery remains implicit in their portraits. This was also detected in the portraits of the other four participants from this university.

Probing such an image of ‘good teaching’ revealed underlying gender dimensions as well. To explore this, I inquired about the presence of male student-teachers in the Faculty of Pedagogy and the participants’ attitudes regarding male teachers. Samah responded by stating that:

There are only two male students at this Faculty; one in teaching Geography and the other Math. And you know, Math ... um, because males are often attracted to Math; yet most students here are females because basically teaching is convenient for females. (N. & S., 1, 7)

Nour explained:

More males teach higher grades because females are closer to children; females can give children more and interact more and be more compassionate with the child than a male. A male teacher [referred to by Nour as *ustādh* rather than *mu‘allim*; a term discussed above which conveys ‘subject expertise’ in the masculine form] is different. He prefers higher grades because to him, he is there to deliver a *risalah* [a message]. He does not want to be a *tarbawi*²⁵. He has information to deliver and that’s it. However, a female can interact more with the child than a male teacher. (N. & S., 1, 6)

²⁵ From the word *tarbiyah* meaning education (as well as upbringing).

The competing perceptions of good teaching, as reflected by the various portraits above, revealed tensions that the participants felt in regards to their choices and aspirations as teachers. These tensions emerge amongst the participants' aspirations to teach higher grade levels, their perceptions of 'good teaching as good delivery' and as 'spoon-feeding', their identifications with their female role model teachers versus higher-grade-level male subject-experts, and the impact of gender-role stereotypes which they experience socially and culturally. Anxieties arising from gender-role stereotypes with which the participants often grapple became explicit when Samah asked me the following question:

Is it true that certain studies have shown that males are more intelligent than females and that is why the majority of higher grade-level teachers are males? (N. & S., 1, 7)

I assured Samah that if such studies existed, one can easily challenge their validity and claims. Nour then suggested that:

Perhaps more females teach beginning grades because around the age of 23, they eventually get married and adopt a marriage lifestyle, refrain from pursuing higher levels of education, and commit to lower grade levels because of convenience and schedule. However, males do not have these responsibilities; they do not have these restraints. (N. & S., 1, 7)

Yet, both Nour and Samah expressed their desire to pursue graduate studies emphasizing that it would be unfortunate if they stop at an undergraduate degree. In effect, I asked Nour and Samah to elaborate on where they saw themselves in ten years, and this was what Nour said:

I see myself with my children, in my home, and of course, my work; absolutely. And so I am working on this from this instant! When I choose my life's partner, we will have to reach an agreement from the onset regarding my ambitions and aspirations and find a good balance between my family and my work. (N. & S., 1, 8)

Samah interjected:

I would definitely also try to find a balance between work and family but no one knows what will happen! We might get married and stay at home, but at least, we can then practice what we have learned with our own children. (N. & S., 1, 8)

Then Nour added:

Now with the new system [LMD], one can get a doctorate in seven years. So God willing I will continue to get my doctoral degree. I'd rather not interrupt my studies and go all the way. (N. & S., 1, 8)

I asked Nour to elaborate further on her ambitions to pursue her doctoral studies. She explained that although it might seem superficial, but she has always aspired to become a 'Doctor' because "society eventually regards you differently; they regard you with more respect" (ibid). Samah agreed with Nour by adding that "We have to acknowledge that there are social *images* that are important; we can never ignore them! The word 'Doctor' as Nour explained, immediately earns you respect [emphasis added]" (ibid).

Several images coalesce in Nour's and Samah's portraits regarding their motivations and aspirations to become teachers. These images reveal tensions that are rooted in broader cultural images about teachers and teaching such as masculine images of higher-grade-level teachers. These tensions gain more intensity as masculine images of 'teaching-as-inculcation' and 'subject- expertise' that are rooted in public school contexts are contrasted with feminine images of teaching that reflect affective and interpersonal dimensions and that are rooted in classroom experiences in private-school settings²⁶.

In summary, the above participant portraits reveal multifarious images of teaching that constitute a canvas of contestation for gender, social, and economic forces that create tensions for the student-teachers at this university. For Nour, as well as for other participants from this university, the images of the Arabic teacher as bearer of a legacy and a message provide her with articulating power to express her choice and motivation for becoming a teacher. For Samah, the image of the 'English teacher', imbued with social and cultural perceptions of the English language, help her link the competing social, cultural, and gendered images of teaching. Interestingly, the image of teaching-as-motherhood, although implicitly detected in the participants' portraits, was not as prominent as in those of the participants from the other two universities. I suspected that the gender-based tensions that Nour's and Samah's portraits revealed created too powerful a dissonance with images of teaching-as-motherhood causing the latter to recede to the background in their portraits.

²⁶ This will become more evident in Mirvat's account later when she stresses that pedagogy (contrasted with traditional modes of teaching) can only be practiced in private schools.

Sohad's and Mirvat's portraits

I was introduced to Mirvat through an acquaintance who was a member of the Majority-Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) in Lebanon. Mirvat was also affiliated with that party and this was reflected in her awareness of several issues that spanned political and social dimensions regarding this university. In turn, Mirvat introduced me to Sohad who was her colleague at the Faculty of Pedagogy. Both student-teachers were final-year students in this program. Mirvat was specializing in teaching elementary-level Arabic as a major and Social Studies as a minor while Sohad was specializing in ECE (Early Childhood Education) and teaching English for elementary grade levels.

I asked Sohad to tell me about her choice to become a teacher. She explained:

Basically, ever since I was a child, my dream has been to become an English teacher. I was so in love with my English teacher that I knew right then and there I wanted to become an English teacher. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 1)

I invited Sohad to elaborate on her experiences as a student and their possible impact on her choice to become a teacher. Sohad explained:

Since I was a kindergarten student, I loved my English teacher, and since then I decided when I grow up, I want to be an English teacher just like her. When I reached 9th grade, my family was experiencing certain difficulties so I was advised against continuing my high school education and was encouraged to pursue early childhood education at a technical school instead. So I did that for three years and started teaching at a local school in my home town. I taught Arabic and Civics in first and second grades at an orphanage school. Recognizing that many of my colleagues had a degree from the Faculty of Pedagogy, I felt encouraged to apply and pursue a B.A. in Education. You see I had had that dream for a while. At the technical school, all of our teachers encouraged us to continue our education at the Faculty of Pedagogy emphasizing that the degree we earn from it is prestigious and that no school would turn us down after having this degree. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 1)

In the above short account, as in the majority of the student portraits presented in this study, the participant expresses her main motivation for becoming a teacher through her identification with one particular teacher from her schooling experience. Sohad adds:

I wouldn't have minded pursuing a B.A. in English Literature [at the Faculty of Letters]; however, my technical degree only allows me to pursue higher education in Education. But regardless of the path, I am keen on becoming an English Teacher. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 3)

I asked Sohad to elaborate further on her schooling experiences and how they may have impacted her choice and motivation. Sohad explained that she is the only one amongst her siblings who has pursued higher education. Her elder brother and sister pursued technical degrees whereas her younger sister dropped out of school after the ninth grade and later got married. Sohad then adds that she was an excellent student at the American Evangelical School in Sidon (a major coastal city south of Beirut) and that she had to get very high grades because she needed the scholarships:

If I got a 97 over a 100 on an exam, I used to be afraid to go home knowing that my mother will punish me. I had to get very high grades to maintain the scholarship. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 2)

I then tried to explore Sohad's experiences as a student-teacher at this Faculty. In response, Sohad elaborated on many challenges that she had faced when she first started her program:

It was very hard at the onset. It is very annoying really, the environment here; with all sectarian discrimination and fiefdoms. Some professors act upon such differences and this affects our grades! Some just work against you rather than support you. Most of our teachers here are very miserly with grades, and I believe that some actually plagiarize our work for their own research! And they never recognize you or your work, and this really bothers me. But at the same time, we console ourselves by saying this is a renowned university and for a student to pass, it requires so much dedication and commitment and so it's a challenge. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 3)

As will become gradually evident in Sohad's portrait, the themes of 'challenge' and 'working against all odds' become increasingly prominent in her personal accounts. The image of her teacher-self as 'working against all odds' gradually emerges through Sohad's choice of metaphors, anecdotes and episodic memories as she elaborates on her motivations, aspirations and anxieties about teaching. For example, in her account, Sohad explains that:

When I applied [to the Faculty of Pedagogy], I discovered that I was competing against 600 or 700 applicants and so I thought that my chances were extremely slim. I thought if I fail the entrance exam, I will apply again and again. I heard that you need to pull some strings to get into the university but I decided to ignore all this and rely on myself. When I discovered I was

accepted, you would not believe how joyous I was! My heart was filled with joy! (Sd. & Mv., 1, 1)

The reader will gradually detect in Sohad's portrait that her image of her teacher-self as 'working against all odds' is intimately linked to broader cultural images of 'teaching as a message' and a form of 'self-sacrifice' that also depict teachers as victims. In the analysis part of this dissertation, I will utilize such polarizing images as tropes to provide a critical reflection on some of the prominent cultural images of teaching and teachers that are in currency in official discourse as well as in Lebanese society in general.

The 'victim' facet of this image emerges more explicitly when Mirvat, the other participant, discusses her anxieties about the radical changes taking place at the Faculty level as well as within the general educational system in Lebanon. Mirvat stresses:

Honestly, we [students at the Faculty of Pedagogy] are victims. With the late reforms, things are a mess here. There are professors forced to teach materials they do not normally teach; and of course, we suffer the consequences! Other professors never show up to campus; and stuff like that. Really, we are victims of this [system]! (Sd. & Mv., 1, 3)

Sohad at this point interjected to elaborate further on Mirvat's sentiment:

We honestly feel betrayed here because we started our program as a four-year B.A. program in Education. Then they changed the curriculum and now it is a three-year program; however, we ended up losing our first year as they had cancelled several courses we had already taken! (Sd. & Mv., 1, 3-4)

Both Mirvat and Sohad expressed their disappointment in the lack of organization and chaos that characterized the changes that were affecting their program of study. They have tried to raise issues with administrators regarding their qualifications to teach during their fourth year of study; yet according to the participants, no one was able to provide them with answers. Feelings of unpredictability and instability dominated the participants' portraits of their future expectations and aspirations. Both repeatedly used the term 'victim' to describe their status at this university and in regards to their position in the program. However, Sohad's image of her teacher-self as working against all odds repeatedly reemerged in her portrait linking and articulating among the competing and antagonistic aspects of her image of teachers in Lebanon.

Sohad continues:

Perhaps there is a flipside to this. Although this is negative, yet I personally feel that this experience is making us strong and self-reliant. We seek information; do our work sometimes almost independently, and things like that. We hear about Montessori or for example the works of Dewey and we get very interested and we try to discover things on our own. So driven by our curiosity, we end up searching more and I think this has empowered us, I believe. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 4)

On several occasions, when I asked her to elaborate more on her choice to become a teacher, Sohad frequently alluded to life challenges and experiences that involved undertaking social work, being in situations that ‘defy all odds’, risking her life for others, among other experiences and memories to explain her motivations for becoming a teacher. For example, Sohad emphasized on several occasions:

I am quite involved in social work in my village. I volunteer with the Municipality; I was trained with the Red Cross and the Civil Defense and volunteered to ride ambulances during the 2006 war. Yes, I am very courageous and very curious. I love learning about everything. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 5)

She then added:

You see I have been a scout and once, believe it or not, I tried to apply to the Police Department. I don’t know! I have always wanted to change things, not because I wanted to fight for my country or something like that, but we are seriously sick of the situation in this country. We need to do something for this country to improve the situation in Lebanon, really! Lebanon has so much potential; but we need this generation to wake up [be more aware] and not blindly follow politico-sectarian parties and religious factions. We should truly all be Lebanese and advocate unity and solidarity. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 9)

Sohad’s image of her teacher-self expressed above seems to provide her with articulating power to link her aspirations with significant past experiences (ex. Police, Red Cross, Civil Defense, etc) and express them in her portrait. Further, as was mentioned earlier, politico-sectarian issues and tensions become prominent more in the portraits of student-teachers at this university in comparison to those at the other two universities. In effect, student-teachers’ portraits at this university often expressed a particular role of the teacher in Lebanon as ‘educating a new

generation' of students who endorse solidarity against politico-sectarian fragmentation and strife. Here, the image of teaching as a message emerges in Sohad's portrait and is colored with moral as well as patriotic tones.

The image of teaching as a message also emerges in Mirvat's account when she recalls her early experiences in the program:

I remember when we first started here, one professor told us about some Western philosopher who had once said that teachers must not be given a salary for what they do; they should offer their services for free. And that really influenced me. Because I think that teaching is a service like the civil defense service or similar social services! This was the first thing they taught us here and I really believe that a teacher [referred to in the feminine] should give with all her heart, really. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 9)

The above short account reveals certain underlying cultural-historical images of teachers that contribute to various tensions and contradictions that are expressed in the portraits of the students at this Faculty. Nakhle Wehbe, a critical educationist and a former member of the Faculty of Pedagogy, problematizes the prominent image of teaching as a message arguing that it is often utilized to domesticate and exploit teachers (Wehbe, 2003). Several interviews that I had conducted with unionists and education activists in Lebanon revealed similar concerns about such images of teachers in Lebanon. One unionist argued that such metaphors as 'teacher is almost a prophet' elevate the status of teachers to such a lofty position that it becomes a form of "blasphemy" for teachers and unionists to pursue any material demands to improve the status of teaching in Lebanon (IK, 1, 12). Beginning teachers in Lebanon, as is evident in the student-teachers' portraits, continuously grapple with the tensions that emerge from such competing images of teaching as a 'message', 'service', 'sacrifice', etc to which they are exposed vis-à-vis the contexts and realities in which they find themselves.

These tensions are further compounded by a sense of 'being abandoned' which recurs in both Sohad's and Mirvat's portraits. Both participants expressed disappointment and anxiety about the absence of support from the University regarding finding schools to do their practicum and to later find employment: "We are on our own; we have to do all this on our own" (Sd. & Mv., 1, 12). Sohad then foregrounds the image of teaching as a message or mission to rearticulate some of the tensions that she experiences during this stage of her career:

We owe it to some of our good professors that we are still pursuing this occupation. You see every now and then when we feel like giving up and just getting the degree for the sake of having a university degree, one of our professors would encourage us to pursue this as an occupation by saying: ‘you have invested so much effort in this, carry on; otherwise, you should have pursued a different discipline, but you chose the mission of teaching. So if you have the resolve, you will be able to get there’. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 10)

The images of teaching as a message, a service, and a form of self-sacrifice that emerge in the participants’ portraits, especially from this university, reveal a certain broader binary image of teaching in Lebanon: the image of teachers as ‘demi-prophets’ renders teachers as either selfless altruists or selfish egoists. Such dichotomous images of teachers appear to transcend the cultural specificities of teaching in Lebanon. Chris Higgins, in *The Good Life of Teaching*, argues that discourse and representations of teaching in Anglo-American cultures are similarly polarized representing teachers as either ‘saints’ or ‘scoundrels’. In his work, Higgins probes this “dichotomous tendency to imagine teachers as either selfless saints or selfish scoundrels and challenges the very idea of [teaching as] a ‘helping profession’” as well as a ‘service’. Higgins argues that “Rather than recognise the teacher’s self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice as a threat to teaching itself, we rationalise them with the rhetoric of service, we hail them as the call of duty and very mark of a teacher” (2010, p. 191). He adds: “And this is where the rhetoric of service comes in. In the so-called helping professions, deprivation can become a badge of honour” (2010, p. 196).

In relation to the above arguments, I would like to draw the attention of the reader to Yara’s portrait from the French university. In her account, Yara likens teaching to motherhood stressing that both are regarded as a message in society requiring sacrifice while at the same time deemed as a natural and innate ability specific to women. Mirvat above refers to ‘some French philosopher’ who had argued that teaching should be a free service which again implicitly makes links with images of motherhood as a message/service/sacrifice that should be considered a natural right and responsibility expected of the caregiver; whether a teacher or a mother. Several educationists in Lebanon have critiqued such images arguing that they further domesticate teachers and produce dichotomous images of teaching through discourses of either-ors. Even Sohad’s images carry undertones of teaching as a service when she articulates her motivations through her volunteer work with the Red Cross, Civil Defense, etc. Also, the fact that the

Bureau of Civil Service is the main gateway for teachers to enter the public sector further frames teaching as a form of ‘civil service’. The latter point was highlighted in the interview of a teacher educator who critically questioned why teachers must sit for the Bureau of Civil Service exams that are in principle designed for employment in civil service positions in the government.

In summary, images of teaching as a service and a sacrifice were prominent in the portraits of student-teachers at this university especially in comparison to those of their counterparts at the other two universities. These images revealed tensions between public and private sector employment, masculine and feminine images of teaching as well as language and subject-matter ideologies that the participants were experiencing during their teacher education.

Many of the images that the participants from this Faculty expressed in their accounts were partly rooted in a context that is marked by confusion, uncertainty, and competition. Furthermore, the political climate at the time of the interviews was markedly volatile; which was explicitly expressed in the students’ portraits. When I asked Mirvat and Sohad, as I did with all participants in this study, to elaborate on where they saw themselves in ten years, Mirvat jokingly answered:

Well, we’re not thinking beyond the upcoming war this September, when Israel is supposed to bomb us. (Sd. & Mv., 2, 6)

Sohad interjected:

Don’t you worry Mirvat, there will be no bombing this September. If Israel wants to bomb, it never warns beforehand. Since it has threatened to do so this time, it means there will be no bombing. (ibid)

Again, an environment of uncertainty on many different levels marks the portraits of the students from this university in comparison to those from the other two universities. One reason for this could extend from the fact that none of the students at this university incorporated into their teacher images the teacher-as-migrant-worker image which was more prominent in the accounts of the students at the other two universities. None of the students at this university elaborated on the desire to travel to find a job as teachers in other countries such as Dubai that usually attract teachers from Lebanon. Therefore, I felt that such factors as war, political uncertainty and instability, public sector reforms, and economic competition manifest at their gravest and starkest

in the portraits of students at this university. Mirvat, for example, focuses at one point in her portraits on the competition that students at the Faculty of Pedagogy continuously experience with their counterparts at the Faculty of Letters:

Any graduate from the Faculty of Letters can get a degree and apply to teach elementary classes. However, we [at the Faculty of Pedagogy] should have the priority because it is our specialization! What is happening is that graduates from the Faculty of Letters at this University, when they apply to teach elementary grades in public schools, have to sit for the Bureau of Civil Service exam, as we also do. Yet, observe what is happening, and here resides the major problem that Lebanon is facing today, in education that is: we need to educate children on values and morals yet the Council exams concentrate on in-depth subject-matter knowledge that we, as teachers, will never need to teach first graders. And here at this Faculty, they do not provide us with such in-depth knowledge! We learn about pedagogy, how to interact with students; pedagogy focuses basically on *your relationship with the students*. In the Faculty of Letters, their *relationship is with the subject-matter*! [Education] in Lebanon was first about teaching, then became about learning and now it's about pedagogy! Here is the problem, we are competing with them [graduates from the Faculty of Letters]; they get better results on Council exams, they find jobs, we end up at home! (Sd. & Mv., 1, 14-15)

Mirvat then adds:

Moreover, they have the right, with their B.A. in Letters, to teach all grades and all ages! We, in contrast, are only qualify to teach KG to 3rd grade, and they end up teaching all grades and everything, and they have nothing to do with education. They [Students at the Faculty of Letters] take one course in didactics, but they don't take any courses in learning outcomes, development, like cognitive, affective, sensori-motor, etc and these are really important and hard. We on the other hand have to sit for and struggle with these courses [all emphasis added]. (ibid)

The above relatively long account by Mirvat sheds lights on ideologies about teaching that manifest in official discourse and policy exerting further pressure on student-teachers at this university. Such ideologies construct hierarchies that span subject-matter, grade levels, and institutions which the participants from this university experience and confront. The above quote reveals how certain dimensions of the student-teachers' identities at this university are articulated in comparison, and more specifically in competition, with students at the Faculty of Letters.

Sohad's following argument further highlights this tension:

There is a sort of segregation and favoritism towards teachers specializing in such subject matters as Math as opposed to, for example, early childhood education. People fail to recognize that ECE is really hard; I mean you have to teach all subjects and not only one. Also, you are responsible for the upbringing of the children; you have to be the compassionate mother. (Sd. & Mv., 1, 15)

Above, Sohah reveals several images that she draws on to articulate her perceptions of teaching. Sohah evokes the image of early childhood education teachers as teachers of all subjects (versus teaching as single-subject-expertise). She also highlights an affective component of her teacher image (the compassionate mother) to contrast this with 'subject experts' from the Faculty of Letters. Again, it is important to note that student-teachers at this university construct their images of teaching partially in competition with their counterparts from the Faculty of Letters. Such images reveal high degrees of tensions and confusions especially in light of the latest reforms that were taking place at the time of the interview:

In the past, if one wanted to teach higher grade levels, one could get a one-year teaching diploma from another branch of this Faculty and teach secondary or intermediate levels. Now, no one really knows how this works anymore! Do we need a T.D.? Do we need a Masters? No one really knows. (ibid)

Sohad adds:

In fact, everyone can apply to this [the Bureau of Civil Service Exams], even someone with a high school degree. All can take these exams and it's up to your luck! (ibid)

Such uncertainties further compound the tensions and insecurities experienced by student-teachers at the Faculty of Pedagogy. This situation seems to produce feelings of helplessness and anxiety regarding the career aspirations of the participant student-teacher. Mirvat's statement below foregrounds such uncertainties:

We have tirelessly sought to investigate whether there is a specific law that guarantees the graduates of this Faculty the right to enter the public school sector as teachers without Council exams. I mean we will be graduating with a Teaching Degree and no one is qualified to teach more than us! If students of the Faculty of Pedagogy are not allowed to teach, who else is qualified to do so? I had approached a former Minister who is currently a member of parliament

in regards to our rights as graduates from the public university to be immediately hired in the public sector. I mean, it only makes sense that we should have that right! We are being trained and tested in Education by a governmental university. Why do we have to sit for Council exams just like outsiders applying from other universities or majors? It should be our right and it should be given the priority. We have heard that in the past, any graduate from the Faculty of Pedagogy would directly have a position in a public school without having to compete for it. So I tried to raise this question and apparently, no one knows! We have asked legislators, ministers, members of parliament, and no one knows. I truly believe we are wasting our time with this! (Sd. & Mv., 1, 12-14)

Again, the above relatively long account sheds light on feelings of competition and uncertainty experienced by the students at this university. To explore the issue that was raised in Mirvat's account above, I scheduled interviews with a supreme judge who is considered the foremost legislator in Education in Lebanon, as well as with the director of the Center for Education Research and Development (C.E.R.D.; a government institution responsible for, among other things, teacher training and curriculum design and development). Judge Maddah explained that in the past, students at the Lebanese University and Dar al-Mu'allimin, from the point of entry into these institutions, were considered public employees and were guaranteed teaching positions in the public sector upon graduation. In other words, the "teaching degree was intimately tied to a teaching position in the public sector" explained Judge Maddah. With time, he continues, this changed. He explained that reforms gradually detached employment from degrees earned through governmental institutions and consequently student-teachers in such institutions joined the rest of the workforce in competing for public positions in the education sector. Layla Fayyad, director of the C.E.R.D., expressed extreme concern in regards to this policy arguing that students failing to meet the requirements of such selection processes after a number of trials will not be allowed to apply anymore and would therefore have to consider a career change after having undergone several years of teacher education (LF, 1, 6.). Thus, tensions that arise from ongoing changes in teacher education and employment policy are explicitly manifest in the portraits of the student teachers from this particular university. As was mentioned earlier, such changes are experienced globally as a product of the changing nature of public sector governance especially in the education domain. A number of officials that were interviewed for this study have argued that such tensions emerge from an undeclared strategy adopted by certain

government officials to marginalize graduates from the Faculty of Pedagogy and instead attract desperate graduates from other institutions and disciplines who will settle for contractual employment positions rather than tenure positions in the education public sector.

These conditions and realities are contrasted by Sohad with a romanticized image of the public sector teacher that is still prevalent in the imaginary of her parents' generation. Such an image creates further tensions and contradictions for the student-teachers:

You know what? The image that society has of a teacher [referred to in the feminine] today is very good. I recall that when I got engaged, and observe that my fiancé is a high-ranking officer in the Intelligence Bureau, I recall that in his village, when people spoke of his engagement, they approvingly said: 'Oh, he got engaged to a school teacher!' So today, the word 'school teacher' [in the feminine] is a word that gives you pride! So when we got engaged, people would say: 'A school teacher! And from the Faculty of Pedagogy!' I mean, I was really surprised at the positive and encouraging responses! Perhaps people have this image of this Faculty because the older generation still associates it with the Dar [Institute for Teachers] that existed in the past thinking that you are guaranteed a position in a public school immediately after graduation. They do not know the reality of things today! In any case, when I reflect on my decision, I do not regret coming here. (Sd. & Mv., 2, 2)

The above portrait resonates closely with Sugrue's emphasis that student-teachers' motivations for entering Education is, to a large extent, "shaped by respect for, and the acknowledged status of, teachers within the community" (1997, p. 216). Yet this social status of teaching is fraught with contradictions and tensions, as is evident in many of the portraits so far presented.

The reader will notice that the above participant portraits foreground several social and political changes that were taking place at the time of the interviews. Such contextual forces seemed to highly influence Sohad's and Mirvat's teacher images.

At this point, I decided to probe the participants' perceptions of what makes a 'good teacher'. Interestingly, both participants privileged an apprenticeship approach and both drew on their practicum experiences to stress this point. Sohad and Mirvat explained that in the past, Education students started their practicum from the first year of their study. The new system, they stated, only allows third year students to start their practicum. Sohad then argued:

I believe that students should start practice from day one and not just take theories and wait a while before they can start applying them. When I did my technical degree, I started gaining experience from day one and that benefited me immensely. Perhaps this is why students [student-teachers] of the old system had a stronger personality; because they had more practice. (Sd. & Mv., 2, 7)

Sohad then added:

I have plunged into the work domain of teaching, and I can assure you, nothing that I had learned [in teacher education programs] had anything to do with application [in the classroom]. Okay some things, like some information that you acquire; but not dealing with kids, preparing the lesson, how to get them to understand the material, how one should act, etc. Take my role for example; especially as a KG teacher; you have to be the child's 'second mother', in everything. I remember taking a course here that taught us that we should attend to a child's needs; and how to attend to their problems, and such. Now, who can convince me that graduates from the Faculty of Letters can attend to any of those things! They have never been exposed to this material! (ibid)

The above account is very telling since it reveals contradictions in the participant's perceptions of what makes a good teacher. On the one hand, she regards teaching as a form of apprenticeship while stressing a maternal dimension. On the other hand, Sohad refers to a course she had taken at the university to emphasize the importance of her formal education in comparison to that of graduates from the Faculty of Letters.

Mirvat expresses the following opinion about the relevance of her coursework to her practice:

When I am in the classroom, interacting with children, I love them and I am usually really happy. But when my professor asks me to prepare a lesson plan and such things, I feel that I hate teaching, I don't want to teach. (Sd. & Mv., 2, 9)

Mirvat then relates the following incident:

I went and assisted two teachers who are former graduates from this Faculty. One actually told me that I should forget everything they had taught us in this Faculty and the other taught as if she had never taken a course here! (ibid)

Both participants asserted their view of the superiority of practice over formal courses and theory. However, when they contrasted themselves with graduates from the Faculty of Letters,

technical and formal discourse and terminology were evoked for rhetorical purposes. This was also detected in the portraits of the participants from the American university. Technical and formal discursive dimensions of teaching seemed to be evoked mostly in rhetorical settings where participants were asserting the importance and relevance of their education to an imagined or real audience. However, in imagined classroom settings, maternal, affective and interpersonal colorings dominated the participant portraits. Such contradictions, I detected, created tensions in the participants' images of teaching.

Furthermore, I detected that such tensions become more forceful when private versus public school contexts are evoked. For example, Sohad makes a very interesting statement about the relevance of what they learn at the Faculty of Pedagogy for their practice as future teachers. She points out that "All we learn here can be practiced in private schools but not in public schools" (Sd. & Mv., 2, 11). Mirvat concurs by recounting one of her experiences during her practicum at a private school:

Teaching is an art. Just like an artist painting; he thinks I have to adjust this, color this; a classroom is similar; not just in regards to the student but in managing the whole class. We took a whole course on classroom management and the importance of investing in classroom environment; what the classroom should look like, how the children are seated, etc ... and this is the difference between private and public schools. In public schools, they still adopt the old traditional ways, with no regard to classroom environment and management; just give the lesson and that's it. In private schools, such as the one I did part of my training at, the walls were covered with stimulating materials, and many other things to improve classroom environment. You go into this school and you feel, how beautiful, this is what a school should look like. (Sd. & Mv., 2, 11)

For the student-teachers at this university, images of teaching varied depending on imagined contexts; more specifically, public versus private school environments. As Mirvat explains above, she feels that all the technical and 'new' methods apply more in private schools rather than in public ones; a view that adds to the complexity of the images she draws on to articulate her perceptions of teaching.

I asked the participants about their aspirations and future plans. Both expressed their interest in teaching in public schools upon their completion of their degrees despite the tensions and

complexities that they highlight in their portraits above. To explain her choice, Mirvat distinguished between public-school and private-school students. In particular, Mirvat voiced the following dilemma:

It all depends who we have in mind when we make this decision; the students or ourselves! I graduated from a public school and I know its secrets: corporal punishment, shouting, no regard for individual differences amongst the pupils really. We learn about those here but let's be serious, none of that is practiced in public schools. You don't see this practiced in public schools. (Sd. & Mv., 2, 11)

In the dilemma that Mirvat foregrounds above, the underlying binary image of teachers as either 'selfless' or 'selfish', which Higgins (2010) unpacks in his discussion on teacher motivations, emerges again. Mirvat's image of her teacher-self is affected by this binary image and informs her motivations and aspirations for teaching. Such binary images create tensions for the participants from this university especially when they elaborate on their motivations and career aspirations as teachers pursuing employment in public schools in Lebanon.

In summary, both Mirvat and Sohad draw on their personal and educational backgrounds in constructing their images of teaching amidst tensions that arise from broader political and historical contexts in Lebanon. Sohad's image of becoming a teacher 'against-all-odds' seems to foreground the many challenges that beginning teachers experience as they undergo their education at this particular institution. Both participants stressed images of teaching as a form of apprenticeship stressing affective, maternal, and moral tones and colorings.

Conclusion

Most of the student-teachers at this institution drew on images of teaching that were rooted in broader socio-cultural and political contexts and settings. This is contrasted with the images provided by participants from the other two institutions which focused more on classroom settings as well as the student-teachers' immediate communities. Broader cultural images and political discourses on teaching were explicitly manifest in the student-teachers' portraits from this university.

Furthermore, the participants' images at this university exhibited different dimensions and colorings depending on imagined contexts or backgrounds in which the images were rooted. Formal and technical dimensions of their teacher images emerged in rivalry with graduates from other institutions and disciplines that create a competitive public-sector labor force for the student-teachers from this university. However, the images of teaching as a form of 'delivery' and 'apprenticeship' imbued with affective and interpersonal undertones recurred especially in imagined classroom settings.

Finally, I detected a high degree of ambivalence in the portraits of the participants from this university. The portraits revealed that such ambivalence towards teaching as a career choice partly extends from such binary images of teachers in Lebanese society as, on the one hand, 'adulated, selfless demi-prophets', while, on the other, as 'undeserving selfish egoists'. Such ambivalence may also be compounded by tensions inherent in cultural images of the Arabic language as 'divine' and enduring while at the same time unworthy of a 'true' profession.

Chapter 7 – Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The main aim of this study was to increase understanding of how beginning teachers in Lebanon make sense of their choices and motivations for becoming teachers. The following research question and sub-questions guided this study:

How do student-teachers in Lebanon make sense of their choice to pursue teaching as an occupation? More specifically:

- a. How do student-teachers in Lebanon explain their motivations for and anxieties about becoming teachers?
- b. How do their perceptions of teaching inform their choices?
- c. How can ‘images’ be theorized to better explain how student-teachers negotiate their choices?

The above questions led me to theorize ‘images’ as useful interpretive tools for gaining insight into this sense-making process. In the following discussion and conclusion, I foreground the complexities that are characteristic of this sense-making process and contextualize them within broader cultural perceptions and images of teachers’ motivations in Lebanon. I also examine the implications of the various images that emerge in the personal portraits of the student-teachers for teacher education in particular and educational policy in general.

The main aim of this chapter is twofold. In it, I first discuss the main visualizations and images constructed by the participants in their portraits of becoming teachers. This is achieved through *zooming in* on the various dimensions and aspects of their visualizations of teaching. Second, I contextualize the participants’ images through *zooming out* from their portraits and locating such images in broader discourses on teaching in Lebanon. Through this, I also discuss the implications of the findings of this study for teacher education and policy in general.

Zooming in

As was discussed in the literature review of this study, the preliminary conceptual lenses utilized in this research were initially informed by theory and literature on the subject. However, the overall theorizing process drew iteratively on both theory and data interpretation and resulted in the following conceptualization of ‘image’: images are (a) *linguistic expressions* of underlying visualizations of personal experiences, views, and perceptions. Images exhibit different (b) *colorings or tones* involving moral, interpersonal, affective, pastoral, charismatic, physical, gender, religious, entrepreneurial, among others. They are (c) *rooted* in experiences, past and present, as well as personal biographies and imagined contexts. Images exhibit (d) *articulating power* which denotes both the ability to (i) link, integrate, or synthesize large amounts of personal knowledge with the various aspects of the student-teachers’ experiences and biographies as well as to (ii) cogently negotiate personal choices and preferences in conversation with others. The concept of *articulating power* was deployed to understand how beginning-teachers negotiated their choices and perceptions on both intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. As was mentioned in the Methodology chapter of this dissertation, the various theoretical frameworks that were reviewed in the literature emerge mostly from Western contexts. Although very useful for this study, the reviewed discourses on teacher identity did not provide me with a framework that is sufficient to engage with the specificities of the socio-historical and cultural contexts characteristic of a place like Lebanon. In consequence, ‘articulating power’ as a dimension of image was conceptualized to account for certain cultural and historical specificities of teaching as an occupational choice in a context such as Lebanon. The following discussion of the findings addresses each of the above in turn.

Image as linguistic expression

This study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore the images that student-teachers construct in speech to express their motivations and choices to become teachers. As a consequence, the images emerged as linguistic expressions that were often explicitly metaphorical while at times expressed implicitly through descriptive visualizations. This, in

addition to relevant literature on the topic, informed the conceptualization of this facet of image; viz. *linguistic expressions*.

In their personal portraits, several student-teachers expressed their motivations and views of teaching through metaphors and similes. The reader may recall such vivid and explicit metaphors of teachers as ‘midway between priest and rock-star’, ‘creative communicator’, ‘protective mother’, ‘bearer of a message’, among others that were expressed by the student-teachers. As will be discussed in the section on ‘articulating power’, these linguistic expressions often allowed the participants to synthesize large amounts of experiences, memories, perceptions and tensions into short metaphoric expressions. I also detected that some of these expressions appeared to be rehearsed, as though the student-teachers have previously utilized them as rhetorical tools to negotiate and explain their choices to members in their communities and wider society.

On the other hand, not all the participant visualizations were expressed in explicit metaphors. Many emerged gradually and implicitly in lengthy descriptions and anecdotal accounts. For example, after Salwa had provided a long account of her motivation for becoming a teacher, resorting to watershed experiences, episodic memories, as well as general personal and educational experiences, Salwa concluded that “Teaching is not like in the past; it’s new ... It is all majors [disciplines/subjects]; it is really everything: it has business, it has graphics, it has ... the science, the math, the engineer; it has ... it has everything!” Ruba, for instance, expressed several visualizations through describing episodic memories and observations of her mentor teacher at one of the host schools where she had undergone training. Ruba’s use of such adjectives and phrases as “excited,” “she loves her students as if they are her own kids,” “they are her dolls and no one is allowed near them,” and “if a student fell down she rushes and says [affectionately] ‘my darling, why did you fall down? Get up!’” express very vivid visualizations and identifications. Yara’s elaborate portrait about her previous aspirations to pursue Agriculture and to ‘help change society’ drew on various visualizations of teaching as ‘cultivating’ and as ‘sowing the seeds of change’ in addition to incorporating religious images of the figure of Jesus as a ‘pedagogue’. Hala, Stephanie and Sophie reflected on several experiences and identifications to explain their choices to become teachers. Although not

explicitly stated as such, images of ‘French-ness’ and ‘femininity’ were prominent in their speech as their personal portraits revealed.

Furthermore, I observed that the portraits of male participants in this study revealed more elaborate, explicit, and highly intellectualized metaphors than those of female participants. There could be various reasons to explain this difference; however, and based on the participant portraits, I was able to detect the following. Since teaching is highly feminized in Lebanon (as is the case in many other contexts), male student-teachers feel that they have to construct very elaborate and powerful metaphors with high articulating power to be able to both synthesize many of the contradictions and tensions that feminized teacher images create for them as well as negotiate them in speech with members of their communities. For example, Rami’s image of the teacher as ‘mid-way between priest and rock-star’, Fadi’s (another participant from the American university) recurring allusion to the image of Socrates as a teacher, and Shadi’s (another participant from the American university) incorporation of images of Sufi figures and literature to express his perceptions of teaching revealed very specific and elaborate metaphors that the participants constructed to explain and negotiate their choice to become teachers. Fadi, Shadi, and Rami (the three male participants in this study) all drew on spiritual, charismatic, intellectual and pastoral elements to elaborate on their choices. Both Fadi and Rami drew on the image of Socrates and their perception of his role as a charismatic teacher who ‘defied convention’ and ‘influenced the youth’. In fact, male student-teacher portraits synthesized elaborate images from literature, philosophy, theology, among other disciplines drawing on such figures as Gilgamesh, Socrates, Plato, Sufi figures, and such disciplines as business, astro-physics, quantum mechanics, among others to express and elaborate on the metaphors that these participants expressed in speech. Most of the images that male participants expressed emphasized charismatic, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral elements; in other words, masculine coloring. I detected that male participants had constructed explicit and elaborate metaphorical images of teaching that incorporated masculine coloring in order to cogently negotiate their choices as well as reconcile contradictions in their motivations for and perceptions of teaching.

Such variations in image tones that were often expressed metaphorically by the participants led me to undertake unpacking these images to explore the different tones or colorings that they

expressed. In other words, such linguistic expressions often revealed different characteristics spanning moral, affective, interpersonal, entrepreneurial, gendered, religious, among others. In consequence, another dimension of image was developed to express such tones; namely, ‘tone’ or ‘coloring’.

Image tone or coloring

All of the images constructed by the participants in their personal portraits revealed particular tones or coloring. Almost all of the images foreground moral, affective and interpersonal colorings. The portraits of the participants from the American university in particular expressed entrepreneurial and charismatic colorings in addition to other dimensions. As was discussed above in the section on ‘linguistic expression’, the only male participants in this study were from the American university. The elaborate metaphors they constructed seemed to negotiate male gender tensions regarding their choice to become teachers. In effect, the male participants incorporated charismatic and entrepreneurial tones in their construction of their images. Also, a general entrepreneurial ethos was detected in the narratives of the participants from the American university. The images of the migrant-teacher as well as that of the teacher-entrepreneur were thus prominent in the participants’ portraits. Interviews with both student-teachers and teacher-educators revealed that students at the Department of Education at this American university are often attracted to the program because of entrepreneurial prospects as well as the potential to travel and work as teachers in other countries. As such, the images of both males and females incorporated entrepreneurial elements. These, however, emerged more when the participants expressed their anxieties about imagined and experienced school/institutional settings. When participants spoke about their perceptions of and motivations for teaching inside the classroom, moral, interpersonal and affective tones became prominent. Males drew more than females on charismatic, intellectual and spiritual elements (not strictly religious in the traditional sense of the term) to articulate their motivations and reconcile some of the tensions that certain feminine images created for them.

Religious tones were more prominent in images of the participants from the French and Lebanese universities. For example, at the French university, the image of Jesus, along with

other religious and pastoral images, were expressed in the portraits of the participants. For example, the pastoral coloring in Yara's images of teaching recurred in her descriptions such as when she emphasized "This is why teaching for me is really to accompany people through a journey." Nevertheless, entrepreneurial tones were also recurrent in many of the participant images from the French university. Aspirations for investing their expertise in centers, clinics, or extra-scholastic educational projects were detected in the participants' portraits. As was mentioned in the chapter on the French university, certain fields of emphasis in Education were developed by the university to attract students with entrepreneurial aspirations and not strictly those who plan on pursuing school teaching as a career. Nevertheless, interpersonal, affective, and maternal tones were emphasized when the student-teachers located themselves in imagined classroom settings. Therefore, many of the images of teaching constructed by the participants from the American and French universities were not necessarily those of 'school teachers'. Their images alternated between 'classroom teaching' and 'teacher as entrepreneur' functioning outside of institutional/school settings. This was not the case at the Lebanese university. One reason that could explain this difference stems from the fact that the Lebanese university has its tradition in supplying teachers to the public and private sectors in Lebanon and its culture as an educational institution is therefore deeply couched in school and institutional settings, especially public ones.

Furthermore, all the participants from the three universities emphasized such elements as 'dynamic', 'active', 'lively', among others to articulate their motivations and aspirations. These affective and interpersonal tones were mostly evoked when the participants spoke about their activity and experience inside classroom settings. Most participants expressed anxieties and tensions about working within school settings highlighting that such settings are not conducive to such dimensions of their self-images. Moreover, these interpersonal and affective tones recurred when the participants spoke about their images of good teachers with which they personally identified.

Weinstein, in 'Prospective elementary teachers' beliefs about teaching', explores the optimistic biases and beliefs about good teaching held by a cohort of student teachers in an elementary education training program. According to Weinstein, "Definitions of good teaching remained

largely the same, with strong emphasis on affective and interpersonal issues” (1990, p. 279). Weinstein’s findings are consistent with those of this study. However, I was able to detect that such image tones were mostly evoked in imagined classroom settings but not in other imagined contexts. As such, I detected that different tones were evoked by the contexts or settings (real or imagined) in which the images were *rooted*. In addition to classroom settings, I detected that the participants’ images that displayed such affective and interpersonal tones were also rooted in the subject-matter of their choice. The reader may recall that all the participants in this study were preparing to become language teachers. Images of the French and English languages resonated closely with the participants’ self-images as dynamic, active, and lively. Their images of teachers of these subject-matters were often contrasted with those of Math teachers who were often depicted as rigid and strict. Thus such tones as ‘dynamic’ and ‘active’ were often rooted in classroom settings and foreign language subjects. In effect, *tone* or *coloring* as a dimension of image was detected to be intimately intertwined with another dimension; namely, *rootedness*.

Image rootedness

The images that were expressed by the participants in their personal portraits often emerged in imagined or recalled experiences and settings. The participants often drew on biographical accounts, personal anecdotes, watershed experiences, and episodic memories when they articulated their images. Most of the student-teachers’ images of teaching varied in coloring according to imagined contexts. I detected that the images that were *rooted* in either classroom settings or extra-scholastic contexts were generally expressed in a ‘positive’ manner. What is intended by the term ‘positive’ is the notion that the participants often drew on certain dimensions of their images as well as imagined contexts to articulate their motivations and aspirations about teaching. Conversely, most images which emerged in the accounts that were rooted in the school context were ‘negative’; articulating anxieties about teaching as a choice. In other words, the contexts in which the participants *imagined* themselves as teachers were crucial. Images of themselves as teachers did not exist in isolation; they were always *rooted* in specific contexts. Moreover, not all of these imagined contexts were ‘formal’. Some images emerged in informal and personal settings, both imagined and experienced, such as recollected conversations or imagined or abstracted rhetorical encounters with various members of the participants’

communities. The relationships these images have with their underlying varying contexts seem to influence, in varying degrees, the participants' views and perceptions of teaching in general.

Furthermore, as was mentioned above, the findings of this study demonstrate that the images that the participants constructed of their teacher-selves were *rooted* mostly in either classroom settings or extra-scholastic settings. Images of teachers in school settings revealed varying degrees of anxiety in the student portraits. The recurrent images of the teacher as active, dynamic, 'not stuck', helping students, among others which highlighted interpersonal, affective and pastoral dimensions, were in many cases pitted against the participants' images of traditional, stagnating, or 'stuck' school-teachers operating within school settings. The reader may recall Salwa's (participant from LAU) telling statement: "I do see myself as a teacher, but I do not imagine my world to be restricted to the school; I do not want to repeat myself or be stuck with that. I always love new things. So if I stay teaching in school; okay students change every year, but after all the materials are the same and the thing is the same. So change is nicer" (S., 1, 2). This finding led me to distinguish among three main teacher images that were compared and contrasted in most of the participant portraits from the three universities; namely, 1- 'classroom teacher', 2- 'school teacher', and 3- 'teacher-in-the-community'. The second image was often expressed in negative terms such as 'being stuck', 'stagnating', 'abused', 'commodified', among others while the first and third images expressed positive tones involving interpersonal and affective colorings (first) and moral, technical/professional, charismatic and at times entrepreneurial colorings (third). These categories however are not clear-cut. The findings chapters demonstrate that these dimensions also varied according to the imagined settings in which the images were rooted such as public/private schools, grade-level, as well as subject matter of choice.

In general, within classroom settings, most of the participants' images revealed interpersonal, affective, and pastoral coloring. It is interesting to note that technical and discursive dimensions of teaching often emerged when participants evoked imagined or experiences extra-scholastic settings in their portraits. The participants seemed to draw on such dimensions or tones of their images as rhetorical tools to explain and negotiate their choices to become teachers with community members and to address objections they often face from family members and friends.

This finding, I suggest, has implications for teacher education programs that often focus on classroom settings in their educational discourse at the expense of broader contexts in which the student-teachers also imagine themselves.

Articulating power

The participants' portraits reveal various metaphors and descriptive visualizations that the student-teachers draw on to articulate their motivations for and perceptions of teaching. Their personal portraits often revealed that the student-teachers carefully constructed images of their teacher-selves that provide them with high *articulating power*; a term that is intended to denote both the ability to (i) link, integrate, or synthesize large amounts of personal knowledge with the various aspects of the student-teachers' experiences and biographies as well as to (ii) cogently negotiate personal choices and preferences in conversation with others. As such, many of the metaphors and similes that the student-teachers expressed through their portraits were analyzed according to the various experiences, memories, and identifications that they synthesized as well as through the articulating and rhetorical power they provided the student-teachers to construct persuasive narratives accounts of their choice to become teachers. In other words, such images had implications on interpersonal and intrapersonal levels for the participants. I detected that the higher the tensions that the participants faced regarding their choice to become teachers (especially in the case of male participants), the more elaborate, creative and complex were the metaphors they chose or constructed to *articulate* their choice and motivation. Below are a few examples from the participant portraits that further shed light on this dimension of image; viz. *articulating power*.

Rami's elaborate metaphor of the teacher as 'midway between priest and rock-star' may at first glance appear to be a creative metaphor that expresses Rami's perception of teaching. However, as Rami gradually shared several watershed experiences, career-path changes, existential, religious and spiritual dilemmas that he had faced, among other experiences and memories, slowly I could glean the 'priest' and 'rock-star' aspects of his metaphor in his biographical account. I detected that this metaphor allowed Rami to synthesize, on an intrapersonal level, what he had expressed as stark contradictions and tensions in his career path and past

experiences. This provided him with high articulating (qua linking) power to integrate and synthesize such competing memories, experiences, and aspirations. Furthermore, this metaphor also provided Rami with high articulating (qua expressing) power to negotiate his motivations and choice in conversation with others. This metaphor, as was discussed in the first findings chapter, incorporates masculine, charismatic, pastoral and leadership dimensions (as is characteristic of the archetypes of the priest and rock-star) and therefore somehow legitimizes Rami's choice as a male to become a teacher.

Mira, another participant from the same university as Rami, expressed her perception of a teacher as a 'creative communicator'. Again, Mira's biographical account and personal portrait revealed that this metaphor allowed her to both integrate various aspects of her biography (having studied communications and journalism, being a musician and considering music as a creative endeavor, among others) as well as to address her parents' objections and persuade them that her choice to become a teacher does in fact incorporate all other aspects of her professional past. Salwa's assertion that "Teaching is not like in the past; it's new ... It is all majors [disciplines/subjects]; it is really everything: it has business, it has graphics, it has ... the science, the math, the engineer; it has ... it has everything!" was also detected to provide her with high articulating power to synthesize various aspirations, career choices and past experiences as well as provide her with a powerful rhetorical image to address her parents' objections about having 'wasted' her time pursuing other majors before embarking on Education. In Salwa's portrait, the image of the teacher as a 'graphic designer' emerges repeatedly allowing her to locate alternative aspirations and previous experiences in her teacher self-image. Furthermore, this image of 'education as everything' is contrasted in Salwa's portrait with a stereotypical image of the teacher that is expressed in the popular English phrase "those who can't do, teach" thus providing her with high articulating power to negotiate her choice with members of her community especially in the face of stereotypical objections about teaching as a career choice. In summary, the above examples are intended to illustrate the two dimensions of *articulating power* (linking and expressing) that the data from the participants' personal portraits helped me conceptualize.

Articulating power as a dimension of image varied across the student-teacher portraits from the different universities. In contexts where teaching as a choice was relatively socially sanctioned, such as the Lebanese University, the participants' metaphors appeared to be less elaborate and compound. However, in contexts where the student-teachers experienced higher levels of tensions and contradictions regarding their choice, the metaphors that were expressed in speech seemed to be multi-layered and intricate; providing their authors with higher articulating power to synthesize various experiences and to express their choice to imagined and real objections from their community members. At the French university, a recurring image of 'French-ness' that reflected feminine coloring was expressed by several participants in their attempt to articulate their choices and motivations. I detected that such an image helped several of the participants to articulate the tensions that they experienced between their perceptions of themselves as active and dynamic young female prospective teachers vis-à-vis the more dominant cultural image of teaching as limiting and stifling. Such cultural images of the French working female reinforced by the participants' personal experiences with 'attractive' French teachers at school or through Western media resonated better with their motivations and aspirations as young working females.

This dimension of images drew my attention to a very interesting notion. When the student-teachers expressed their images, they often drew on imagined or recalled conversations with family members as well as other significant figures or characters in their lives. Such *intralocutors* (intrapersonal interlocutors), as I would like to call them, seemed to have a determining effect on the images that the beginning teachers constructed about teaching. For example, I could detect that many participants incorporated technical dimensions into their teacher images mostly in imagined or recalled conversations with members of their own community and with whom they were trying to negotiate their choice to become teachers. Such technical tones were evoked by the participants to stress to such *intralocutors* that teaching is a 'real' and 'worthy' technical discipline or profession. In other words, student-teachers often expressed their images of teaching as if in conversation with imagined interlocutors and consequently chose images of teaching that provided them with high articulating power to do so persuasively. Therefore, it is important to recognize such imagined interlocutors (or *intralocutors*) which beginning teachers bring with them to their programs in order to increase

understanding of how beginning teachers develop their images of teaching during teacher education and beginning practice.

The above discussion was intended to foreground the complexities inherent in how student-teachers make sense of their choices to become teachers through the various image dimensions that this study conceptualizes. Such a finding, I would argue, goes to challenge simplistic and stereotypical accounts of teacher motivations, especially those expressed in popular images that are couched in gender stereotypes. To further highlight the complexities and nuances characteristic of the sense-making processes that the student-teacher portraits reveal, I will now discuss the implications of the findings of this study for teacher education and education policy in general.

Zooming out

Challenging simplistic categorizations of teacher motivation

In their personal portraits, the participants in this study reflected on some of the popular perceptions of teachers' motivations in Lebanon. The popular 'suspicious' rhetoric, as perceived by the student-teachers, entails such images of teaching as an attractive 'part-time' job for housewives or a springboard or temp job for those who cannot find a 'real' career. The participants expressed such popular accounts about teacher motivation through their anxieties about becoming teachers. In their portraits, these suspicious accounts were usually pitted against lofty and altruistic 'inspirational' images of 'real' teachers as bearers of a message or a mission. Such binary images of teacher motivation created many tensions for the participants which they attempted to negotiate and at times resolve through constructing elaborate images of teachers and teaching that provided them with high articulating power. It is interesting to note that such tensions that emerge from such dichotomous images of teachers seem to transcend the cultural/historical specificities of the Lebanese context. Chris Higgins (2010), in *The Good Life of Teaching*, elaborates on this binary image of teachers in Anglo-American contexts:

In the educational imagination—from posters to policies, from monographs to movies—we find more and less restrained versions of the same Noh drama. Enter stage left—the selfless saints, devoted to nothing but the welfare of their students and martyred for the cause. Enter stage right—the selfish scoundrels: narcissists, lechers, and petty dictators of their classroom worlds. What seems clear is that these two characters and, correspondingly, the two main discourses about teacher motivation—the inspirational and the suspicious—are but two sides of the same coin. Inspirational accounts tend to focus on the role of teacher, holding out an image of teaching as a noble service ... Suspicious accounts turn to the person in the role in an attempt to reveal the hidden springs of self-interest and debunk this idea of the altruistic teacher. (p. 189)

The above binary image that Higgins sheds light on foregrounds a very important issue, among several others, that is particularly pertinent to the findings of this study. Higgins addresses a general binary discourse about teachers that represents them through either-ors: as either ‘selfless saints’ or ‘selfish scoundrels’. This, in turn, reverberates into dichotomous categorizations of teacher motivations. The findings chapters of this study provide elaborate portraits of beginning teachers’ perceptions and motivations in order to foreground the tensions that such binary images create as well as to problematize simplistic accounts of teacher motivations in Lebanon. The findings chapters provide rich portraits that express complex images and narratives that the student-teachers construct to elaborate on their motivations for choosing teaching as an occupation. Nevertheless, these popular and dichotomous archetypal images of teachers as either ‘selfless saints’ or ‘selfish scoundrels’ reemerge continuously in the portraits of the students-teachers and deeply influence their sense-making processes. Indeed, Higgins argues that such binary images often dismiss the complexities inherent in teachers’ portraits of their choices and motivations. Higgins stresses²⁷:

What these seeming rivals share is their attachment to the stark opposition between a lofty altruism and a base self-interest; neither lends itself to a believable portrait of teaching. Inspirational accounts ring hollow when they gloss over the immense difficulties and frustrations inherent in the life of a schoolteacher. They portray teachers as having no personal agenda, conveniently wanting only what students need, and needing only to give that. Suspicious narratives do offer a more believable psychology, helpfully acknowledging our human-all-too-

²⁷ Although quoted previously in this dissertation, I cite Higgins’ work here again to stress several concluding themes.

human desires, needs, and weaknesses. However, they tend to assume that teachers have only a personal agenda ... (2010, p. 190)

Therefore, one of the aims of this study was to give a more 'believable portrait' of teaching through foregrounding the images and voices of beginning teachers in Lebanon and exposing the complexities that underpin teachers' motivations for and perceptions of teaching. Teachers' motivations in Lebanon are often dismissed too quickly on stereotypical gender basis. In the findings chapters, I provide elaborate portraits of the participants' motivations to draw attention to how teaching might be understood as involving, among other things, an expression of student-teachers' personal ambitions and deepest motivations that do not easily succumb to simplistic categorizations and explanations.

Although many of the participants did draw heavily on gendered as well as 'lofty' images of teaching in their portraits; however, their images also synthesized and integrated a large spectrum of experiences, perceptions, and aspirations that go beyond narrow categories. The title of this study 'Between prophet and professional', was chosen to express such a finding; that teacher images and motivations for teaching, although at times expressing contradictions and tensions in response to popular binary discourses and images of teaching, nevertheless appeared to be much more nuanced and complex than such binary images would in principle allow.

Almost a prophet; almost a professional

Notwithstanding the complexities that the participant sense-making processes revealed, the abovementioned popular cultural images of teaching seemed to persist in most of the participants' portraits; at times implicitly in their biographical accounts while at others explicitly through metaphors and allegories that they drew on to express both their motivations and anxieties. For example, several teacher images that this study sheds light on drew on broader cultural and religious images of teachers as bearers of a message or a mission and teachers as demi-prophets. The latter is a very popular image in Arab culture in general originating from a very famous verse by an early twentieth-century Egyptian poet by the name of Ahmad Shawqi. In his poem, Shawqi writes: 'Rise to the teacher and praise him for a teacher is almost a prophet'.

Yet, the images constructed by the participants of this study also foreground tensions and contradictions that have their roots in other broad cultural and social images of teaching as a quasi-profession. This binary image of teaching that manifests itself in Lebanese culture as, on the one hand, a message and an almost prophetic undertaking with a very high and esteemed social status while, on the other, not a 'real' career or profession and therefore of a low social status appears to stem from the history of teaching as an occupation.

In his text, Higgins (2010) engages with this contradiction by analyzing teaching and its history as a 'service occupation'. Higgins asserts: "Indeed, we can offer a fairly precise sociological definition of the 'helping' professions: they are those forms of work, historically associated with women, combining difficult working conditions and a caring attention to the client's whole person" (2010, p. 196). Higgins also stresses: "But teaching is not a 'helping profession', if this is taken to mean that one helps others rather than oneself" (2010, p. 191). Therefore, the image of teaching as a form of social service that is highly associated with females is often associated with such virtues as altruism and self-sacrifice for the greater good. Higgins adds: "Rather than recognise the teacher's self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice as a threat to teaching itself, we rationalise them with the rhetoric of service, we hail them as the call of duty and very mark of a teacher" (2010, p. 191). Higgins concludes this argument with the following: "In the helping professions, it seems, one must not 'help oneself'" (2010, p. 189). Many of the themes and tropes that Higgins articulates in the above arguments manifested in many of the portraits of the participants in this study. In the second findings chapter, Yara expresses a poignant analogy between motherhood and teaching as she elaborated on her perceptions of teachers in Lebanon. Yara critically likened teaching to motherhood; a feminized social 'occupation' that stressed self-sacrifice and is often framed as a noble message while at the same time socially downplayed as an almost natural, effortless, and innate endeavor. Many female participants, such as Nour and Samah, expressed the desire to pursue higher degrees and to seek professional careers while at the same time foregrounding the tensions such aspirations created for them as future house-wives and mothers. Mirvat, at one point in her portrait, enthusiastically recounts how one of her (male) teacher-educators stressed that teaching as a 'message' should be regarded as a service to society and that teachers should offer to do it for free. This 'message' dimension of the developing student-teachers' identities that has its roots in the development of the education

sector in Lebanon in 1950's reveals great tensions in their portraits. Major trends in public sector reform around the world are producing new teacher images and identities which current beginning teachers have to confront:

All of these changes indicate a growing complexity in relation to teacher identity. If the service ethic principally informed teachers throughout most of the twentieth century, then the public sector reforms ... have meant that there are other identifiable identities, sometimes supplanting the service-based identity, sometimes complementing it, though often accompanied by some tension or conflict. (Menter, 2009, p. 224)

The various student-teacher portraits that this study presents reveal how 'new' identities are complementing and at times supplanting older teacher identities that were previously prevalent in Lebanese society.

As was mentioned earlier in this study, several unionists and educationists in Lebanon (ex. see Wehbe, 2003) have underscored the oppressive nature of some of these seemingly lofty and adulatory images of teaching in Lebanon arguing that such images often lead to domesticating teachers. It is further argued that such images seem to rationalize institutional unwillingness to allocate resources for the development of teaching as an occupation through such rhetoric as 'message' and 'service': "And this is where the rhetoric of service comes in. In the so-called helping professions, deprivation can become a badge of honour" (Higgins, 2010, p. 196). The participants' portraits expressed many tensions and contradictions that seemed to originate from images of teachers in Lebanese society that elevate teachers to a lofty (albeit not realistic) position of a demi-prophet which eventually leads to an image of teaching as a 'message' and a 'calling' and therefore too 'sacred' for 'earthly' demands. It is thus not too unrealistic to recognize that such images of teaching as, on the one hand, a demi-prophetic undertaking while, on the other, not considered to be a real profession, as two complementary sides of the same coin. Consequently, teaching as a selfless 'message' that is 'too sacred' to be considered a worldly occupation is conveniently considered befitting of women.

It is interesting to note, however, that this same double image of teaching that is arguably domesticating of teachers is often evoked by teachers for its allegedly liberating and

transformative potential. Mirvat's account above is but one example. Here, I would like to argue that such an image of teaching-as-a-message seems to inscribe teachers, especially female teachers, in a mode of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2006). This image becomes an object that causes the attrition of the "very thriving that is supposed to be made possible in the work of attachment [to that object or scene] in the first place" (Berlant, 2006, p. 21). In consequence, my study attempts to problematize the image of teaching as strictly a message as well as to challenge 'lofty' conceptions of teaching that are prevalent in cultural and political discourses in Lebanon. To elaborate further on this point, I will draw on Lauren Berlant's notion of 'cruel optimism'.

In 'Cruel Optimism', Lauren Berlant draws on Lacanian theory to conceptualize relations of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility as 'cruel optimism':

When we talk about an object of desire, we are really talking about a cluster of promises we want someone or something to make to us and make possible for us. This cluster of promises could be embedded in a person, a thing, an institution, a text, a norm, a bunch of cells, smells, a good idea—whatever. To phrase "the object of desire" as a cluster of promises is to allow us to encounter what is incoherent or enigmatic in our attachments, not as confirmation of our irrationality, but as an explanation for our sense of our endurance in the object, insofar as proximity to the object means proximity to the cluster of things that the object promises, some of which may be clear to us while others not so much. In other words, all attachments are optimistic. (2006, p. 20)

Such images of teaching as a message; as demi-prophetic and therefore carrying the elements of change and transformation, constitute a cluster of promises and desires for many of the participant student-teachers as is evident in their portraits. This proximity to the enigmatic and incoherent intonation of teaching qua 'message' creates a certain affect of optimism amongst beginning teachers in Lebanon. Yet, and as Berlant argues, such an optimistic affective position is cruel. To elaborate on this, Berlant proposes that:

"Cruel optimism" names a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility. What is cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have *x* in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object or scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being, because whatever the *content* of the attachment, the

continuity of the form of it provides something of the continuity of the subject's sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world. (2006, p. 21)

It was my intention in this study to draw attention to such dominant images of teaching as a 'message' and an 'almost-prophetic' undertaking as a form of cruel optimism. Such images, I argue, create in their 'subjects' a "relation of attachment to compromised condition of possibility" as the tensions, anxieties and contradictions expressed by the participants of this study demonstrate. In fact, I argue that such images of teaching reproduce the status quo by creating a certain cruel optimism about the possibility of change. Indeed, Berlant argues that "where cruel optimism operates, the very vitalizing or animating potency of an object/scene of desire contributes to the attrition of the very thriving that is supposed to be made possible in the work of attachment in the first place" (2006, p. 21). Student-teachers as 'subjects' of such images or "scene[s] of desire" hold on to them although, as Berlant argues, their presence might threaten the participants' well-being. Moreover, the 'form' of such images rather than their 'content' creates a sense of optimism and continuum, especially in regards to contradictions and dissonance in teacher identity. Thus the very "vitalizing or animating potency" of the images of teaching as a message and a form of 'prophecy' seems to cause the attrition of the thriving that is supposed to be made possible by the attachment of teachers to such scenes or images and consequently reproduces (rather than challenges) the status quo.

Berlant describes this as a mode of "rhetorical indirection that manage[s] the strange activity of projection into an enabling object that is also disabling" (2006, p. 21). She characterizes this as a politically depressed position that "is manifested in the difficulty of detaching from life-building modalities that can no longer be said to be doing their work and that indeed become obstacles to the flourishing of the subjects whose optimism animates them" (2006, p. 23). Berlant's position reverberates closely with Higgins argument that for teachers, deprivation thus becomes a "badge of honour" (Higgins, 2010, p. 196). The facet of 'image' that I conceptualize as 'articulating power' reflects such aspects of desire and attachment that Berlant expounds above.

I am a teacher, but!

Una Hanley, in 'Fantasies of teaching: handling the paradoxes inherent in models of practice' explores the different constructions of teachers and teaching in England as presented by government literature and documentation on the one hand, and by the media on the other. According to Hanley, the former privileges a technical-rational approach while media and advertising present the teacher as a charismatic and altruistic subject. She contends that "In their contrasting ways, both these constructions can be regarded as fantasies for teaching held by the government and wider society, which the teacher has to deal with" (2007, p. 253). Hanley draws on trainee interviews, as well as examples from the media to examine the ways in which student-teachers confront and deal with the seemingly contrasting fantasies and suggests that students "need to be educated into these tensions and that practitioners overall need to maintain their fantasies for teaching as well as accommodating these codes" (2007, p. 253).

One of the aims of this study is to make a case for the importance of teacher education programs to embrace beginning-teachers' images while empowering them to (re)articulate their images in ways that resonate better with current philosophies of teaching and learning. I chose the title of this study as 'Between prophet and professional' because it suggests that the imagery and identifications of beginning teachers in Lebanon often fall between (or even outside) competing monolithic discourses on teaching; whether cultural ones that portray teachers as demi-prophets or official discourses that adhere to formal and technical definitions of professionalism which nevertheless espouse a deficit model of teachers' practice and work.

In effect, teacher education programs must continuously work on developing a revitalized language to speak about teaching with beginning teachers. The technical discursive and the moral dimensions of teaching are important but not sufficient. Most teacher education programs in Lebanon limit their 'language' to such dimensions. Teacher education must start with the language and images that are already in currency amongst the student-teachers and provide them with the tools and contexts to critically rearticulate and develop images with high articulating power to integrate various aspects of their identities with the philosophies and content of the teacher education programs. This, in turn, will empower beginning teachers to develop images of teaching that resist binary discourses and monolithic logics (market, bureaucratic, or other) about teaching and to develop 'new identities' for 'new times' (Sacks, 2003). In doing so,

teacher education can also operate as a site of cultural production through which a cultural capital can be articulated that concomitantly provides students with high articulating power to fashion their identities and desires to resist cooptation by monolithic discourses (Hanley, 2007). As such, developing revitalized images of teaching, beyond lofty and (cruelly) optimistic images, becomes a crucial undertaking for teacher education programs in Lebanon.

In consequence, teacher education programs can recognize and incorporate into their discourses the personal and professional experiences and images that student-teachers bring with them to their programs. The reader will recall the various images of teachers that the participants expressed in their portraits such as ‘midway between priest and rock-start’ or ‘Teaching ... is all majors [disciplines/subjects]; it is really everything: it has business, it has graphics, it has ... the science, the math, the engineer; it has ... it has everything!’ or Yara’s image of teaching as Agriculture, among others. Instead of recognizing such images as possible threats to the development of the ‘professional’ identity of teachers in training, teacher education programs can work on incorporating such images into their discourse. In other words, teacher education discourse can incorporate this image of teaching as a ‘meta-vocation’ to be more inclusive of the aspirations and prior experiences of student-teachers while empowering them to rearticulate such images and to locate within them dimensions that are conducive to teaching and learning in the classroom. Chris Higgins (2010) locates such images in Western education discourse:

Teaching is a kind of meta-vocation. The vocational environment of teachers is framed by the purpose of helping students reach out to the world with their purposes. To be a (Deweyan) teacher is to attend to what occupies students and to what sorts of materials would enrich those occupations ... As Bill Ayers puts it, ‘teaching is the vocation of vocations, a calling that shepherds a multitude of other callings’ (Ayers, 1993, p. 127). It is the project of teachers to help others find and pursue their projects ... (Higgins, 2010, p. 436)

In Lebanon, the cultural image of teaching as the ‘mother occupation’ (Sinjkdar, 2002) can also be incorporated into the cultural capital of teacher education programs to help student-teachers integrate some of their past experiences and aspirations into their developing teacher identities. In other words, I call for the importance of teacher education programs to work on developing and nurturing the personal images that student-teachers bring with them to the program instead

of attempting to supplant them with other images deemed ‘more consistent’ with formal educational discourse and policy.

Furthermore, teacher education programs must also create the ‘holding environments’ (Bibby, 2011) in which teachers are encouraged to express, ‘hold’, and process the various binary images of teaching which often evoke ambivalence (love and hate of children and teachers’ work) that might, with time, lead teachers to burnout and dropout (ibid). Exercises that invite teachers to reflect on such images in order to develop a more process-oriented thinking about teaching may help teachers go beyond binary conceptions and views while developing their identities.

Drawing on the findings of this research and various theoretical works on teacher education, this study asserts that technical approaches to teacher education that locate the prospective teacher in formal educational settings might overlook certain images and underlying contexts that fundamentally influence student-teachers views and perceptions of teaching. The conceptualization process that this study undertakes reveals a multitude of dimensions that underlie teacher images and that go beyond mere technical, discursive, and pragmatic ones. In response, a teacher education *language* must be developed to incorporate the more elusive, experiential and informal dimensions of teacher images which, as this study attempts to demonstrate, have a grave and deep-seated impact on the views and perceptions of beginning teachers.

Implications for future research

The findings of this study have several implications for future research on the subject. The student-teachers’ personal portraits as well as the interpretive exercise that this study offers highlight the complexities inherent in the sense-making processes that beginning teachers undergo at the start of the careers. This finding hopes to offer insights and tools for future research in the field of ‘teacher identity’. In a country like Lebanon that is in the process of ‘emerging’ from a civil war, teaching is often too quickly addressed through deficit models that aim to ‘correct’ incompetence and build professionalism. Such models often overlook available resources which, in the case of teaching, are the teachers themselves. Furthermore, deficit

models also seem to privilege technical discourses that focus too much on the measurable and observable often overlooking tacit and implicit forms of knowledge that are experiential and personal. In response, this study foregrounds the complexities inherent in how (beginning) teachers make sense of their work emphasizing the importance of taking into account forms of knowledge that are usually ‘bracketed out’ by technical political discourses.

A brief reflexive account of the role of images in this study

In the second and third chapters of this dissertation, I provided several discussions about my choice of using ‘image’ as the main theoretical lens in this study. In them, I provided several arguments for my choice while highlighting the strengths of ‘images’ in capturing or expressing the participants’ views and perceptions. In the following short discussion, I will summarize some of these arguments while also shedding light on some of the implications of such a choice for the findings of this research.

My choice to use ‘image’ in this study was reinforced by the recurrent visualizations that the student-teachers drew on when they expressed their motivations for and perceptions of teaching. In expressing their views and perceptions, teachers drew heavily on visualization and imagery. This is evident in the findings chapters of this study. In effect, I conceptualized images as useful theoretical tools for exploring such views and perceptions. This did not come as a surprise since teacher education programs emphasize classroom observations as an important aspect of student-teachers’ developing expertise. As such, a visual element is at play in how these beginning teachers develop their perceptions and motivations about teaching. Furthermore, all student-teachers who have gone through mainstream schooling arrive at these programs having gone through hours of extensive apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) with their own school teachers. This fact further increased my confidence in the efficacy of images in capturing such visual aspects of the participants’ experiences. The use of images in this study provided me with an interpretive and flexible theoretical frame within which powerful analytical work was undertaken without feeling strictly bounded by the theoretical stance that one particular perspective adopts or incorporates.

Although images proved powerful tools for exploring the visual aspects of teacher identity, they at times flattened the otherwise complex terrain of identity formation which involves, as Beauchamp and Thomas explain, various dimensions such as motivations, beliefs, attitudes, narratives, discourses, among others. Furthermore, the emphasis on images in understanding identity might suggest that teachers as subjects are wholly autonomous agents. Such a position might appear to succumb to a phenomenological-humanistic paradigm of identity formation that downplays historical contexts and structures that influence desires, motivations, and perceptions. This is a limitation of this study which I acknowledge in different sections of this dissertation. Yet, and as the findings chapters will demonstrate, images proved to be powerful interpretive tools that often synthesized various aspects of the sense-making processes that the student-teachers undertook which, I argue, is a strength of this study. The reader is referred to the literature review chapter for a more thorough discussion of the implications of my choice to focus on images.

Concluding thoughts

Exploring the personal portraits of the participants in this study through the conceptual lens of ‘image’ shed further light on the complexities and tensions inherent in how student-teachers in Lebanon negotiate their motivations for and perceptions of teaching. One of the aims of this study was to foreground such portraits in order to challenge simplistic and often binary images of teachers and teacher motivations. The student portraits from the three universities provide a rich mosaic of motivations, tensions and contradictions. This study shows that student-teaches, as argued by Sugrue (1997), Clandinin (1986), among others, come to teacher education programs with elaborate images of their teacher-selves. If such images are not addressed and critically nurtured by teacher education programs, these images will be at the mercy of broader yet impetuous images of teaching and teachers that could lead beginning teachers to frustration and burnout. In this study, I show that student-teachers construct images of teaching that provide them with the ability to synthesize large amounts of experiences, perceptions and memories as well as provide them with the rhetorical power to negotiate their choices in conversation with (significant) others. In order to negotiate such tensions and contradictions, beginning teachers may resort to elaborate personalized images that are not always consonant with the educational philosophies of their host teacher education programs.

In conclusion, this study offers an original conceptualization of ‘image’ to understand the developing identities of beginning teachers. In doing so, I hope to contribute a new language and a new way of thinking about the training of prospective teachers in Lebanon and beyond.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Translated Research Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027
general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk www.education.ox.ac.uk

Director Professor John Furlong



Direct dialing: 0044(0)1865 274018
Email: Elaine.sherrott@education.ox.ac.uk

Research Consent form

Between ‘prophet’ and ‘professional’: imagery and identification amongst beginning teachers in Lebanon

Researcher Name and contacts:

Mahmoud A. Natout, Doctoral Candidate

Department of Education, University of Oxford

15 Norham Gardens

Oxford OX2 6PY

United Kingdom

Email: mahmoud.natout@education.ox.ac.uk

Mobile (U.K.): 00447900427439, (Lebanon): 009613716408

Supervisor: Dr. David Mills, email: david.mills@education.ox.ac.uk

Purpose of Study:

To explore the development of teacher identity in teacher education and training programs while investigating the varying cultural, social, and professional representations of teachers that inform participant perceptions of their roles as well as the development of their identity.

Declaration of Consent:

I declare that I ...

...have read the participant information sheet,

...have the opportunity to ask questions about the study and receive satisfactory answers to questions,

...understand that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researchers,

...understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee,

...understand that my personal data will be treated in total confidence, kept securely in a password-controlled ...understand how to raise a concern and make a complaint,

...and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name.....Date.....

Participant's signature.....

Participant's email and/or phone number

.....

Researcher's name.....Date.....

Researcher's signature.....

Appendix B: Translated Information Sheet about Study

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027
general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk www.education.ox.ac.uk

Director Professor John Furlong



Direct dialing: 0044(0)1865 274018
Email: Elaine.sherrott@education.ox.ac.uk

Participant Information Sheet

Between ‘prophet’ and ‘professional’: imagery and identification amongst beginning teachers in Lebanon

Invitation: You are invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate, it is vital to understand what your participation will entail and why this study is being conducted. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and do not hesitate to ask about any aspects of the study that might be unclear or ambiguous. Furthermore, please do not hesitate to ask if you desire more information about the study.

Focus: This study investigates the challenges facing the development of the professional identity of teacher-trainees in three major teacher-training programs in Lebanon, specifically vis-à-vis the multifarious definitions, constructions and representations of teaching and teachers that emerge from socio-political and academic discourses and contexts that are present today in ‘post-conflict’ Lebanese society. In effect, this study seeks to contrast such constructions and representations while exploring how teacher-trainees deal with them as they develop their professional identity during training. I will draw on trainee interviews, teacher-training discourse and curricula, as well as governmental discourse and literature on teaching in order to identify some of the competing representations that may influence the development of teachers’ professional identity. This study hopes to inform teacher training facilities and programs in Lebanon in order to help ‘educate’ trainees into the tensions that may arise from the various definitions and expectations of teaching and teachers.

Methodology: In this study, I will conduct interviews and therefore invite you to participate in two hour-long, audio-recorded interviews.

Participation: Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation in the study at any time. You also have the right to refuse to answer any questions posed during the interviews. Beyond the interviews, I am interested in observing activities on

campus and would welcome invitations to attend classes, meetings, or any other events or activities which might provide me with more insight into the topic of this study. I would attend as an observer and therefore would NOT audio record any of these events or activities. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a written consent form.

Results: The results of this study will constitute the basis of a University of Oxford doctoral research dissertation. Some results may be published in journals, conferences, and/or books. Please inform me if you wish to obtain a copy of the published results. The duration of my research study will vary between two and three years after which the results of the study will become publicly available.

Privacy: Your privacy will be maintained throughout the research and in all written and published data that will result from this study. The interviews and discussions will be treated with utmost confidentiality. All data will be kept on a secure password-protected and encrypted computer in accordance with the United Kingdom Data Protection Act of 1998. One year after the study is complete, the original data will be archived in a secure location.

Benefits and Risks: I will share my results with all participants of this study while recognizing all the privacy issues outlined in the previous section. The intention is to provide insight and feedback about the challenges and complexities of teacher identity development that might inform teacher education programs and institutions in post/protracted-conflict societies such as the case in Lebanon. Data referring to participants will be anonymised and kept confidential. Therefore, there are no risks to taking part in this research. Finally, there will be no financial compensation for your participation in this study.

Contact Details: Should you have any questions, concerns, or queries about this research, please feel free to contact me at the address below.

Mahmoud A. Natout, Doctoral Candidate

Department of Education, University of Oxford

15 Norham Gardens

Oxford OX2 6PY, United Kingdom

Email; mahmoud.natout@education.ox.ac.uk

Mobile (U.K.): 00447900427439, (Lebanon): 009613716408

Supervisor: Dr. David Mills, email: david.mills@education.ox.ac.uk

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix C: Sample Student-Teacher Interview Questions

On school experience:

Which high school did you graduate from?

What are the main languages of instruction?

When did you graduate from school? When did you start college?

How was your experience at school? What was your school like? What were your teachers like? Please elaborate.

What were the characteristics or attributes of your favorite teacher? Who has inspired you as a teacher and why do you think?

What were the characteristics or attributes of your least favorite teacher?

Can you recall particular positive and negative experiences at school that could have influenced your decision to become a teacher?

What was your favorite subject? Why? Is this what you plan on teaching as a teacher? Why?

Which subject have you chosen to teach? Why did you choose it? Would you have preferred to focus on another subject? Why?

What grade/cycle is your emphasis in? Why did you choose this? Would you have preferred to focus on another cycle? Why?

Do you see yourself teaching this subject and this grade level for a long time? Why? If not, what else would you rather do/teach? Why?

Exploring motivations, beliefs, and views of teaching:

How did you decide to become a teacher? Who encouraged you? Why? Who did not? Why?

Have you always wanted to become a teacher? (or have you had a long-standing interest in teaching? Please explain). If yes, why? If not, when did you know?

If Education was not your first choice, what was? Why? What happened?

Would you have preferred to major in something else?

Did your parents encourage you to become a teacher? Why or why not?

What were some of their objections? How do you feel about their objections? How did you convince them?

How do your parents justify your career choice, say, to neighbors or relatives? Why do you think?

Who advised you against applying to Education? What were some of their reasons? Do you agree with any of them? Why or why not?

Did any of your school teachers encourage your choice? What were some of their reasons for or against your decision?

Do you have any family members who are teachers? What do they say about your choice to become a teacher? Why do you think?

Have you had any experiences with teaching or tutoring prior to joining this program? Could you please talk a bit about this experience?

Have you worked prior to entering this program? What kind of occupations? Why did you leave?

In comparison to your previous career, how do you imagine teaching will differ? Please elaborate.

How do your friends majoring in other disciplines or domains regard your decision to study Education? Why do you think? How do you respond to their objections?

Did you know any students at school who joined teaching before you? Did their choice influence you?

Now that you are your (?) year, do you think teaching is more difficult and more complex than you had supposed or is the opposite true? Please explain.

What do you plan to achieve as a teacher?

General about teaching and teachers:

In general, what do you think makes a good teacher? What makes a bad teacher? Please elaborate. In other words, what do you have in mind when you use the phrase “really good teacher”?

What would you liken a good teacher to?

How do you think teachers are regarded in Lebanese society? How have you reached these conclusions?

This is very hypothetical. If you were to ask your parents to describe teachers, what do you think they would say? Why do you think?

What’s your image of the ‘traditional teacher’? What is an alternative in your opinion?

How do your parents describe their teachers or teachers of their time in general? In your opinion, how is this different from teachers today?

What do you think the role of a teacher is in society?

What does teaching involve? What kind of an activity do you think it is?

How do you think the media represents teachers? Do you agree? Why or why not?

What are some of your anxieties about becoming a teacher?

Do you believe it is a challenging occupation? Why?

In your opinion, what other activities, occupations, professions, etc are like teaching? Why?

Do you think education/teaching is a science? An art? A natural ability? An acquired skill? Are teachers born or made in your opinion? Please explain.

How important do you think is the academic program for one to become a teacher? How important are the personal and interpersonal characteristics?

In your opinion, how important is the practicum? Why?

How would you define your ideal classroom?

How would you define your ideal school?

How would you define your ideal teacher?

Personal meaning:

What does being a teacher mean to you?

What influences your thinking about teaching?

Would you recommend it as an occupation? Why or why not?

What do you think are the best things about being a teacher?

What are the main challenges?

What scares you the most about your career choice?

Specific about teacher-education program experience:

Why did you decide to pursue education at this particular institution and not another? Did you face any objections from your parents in regards to your choice of this particular institution?

What do you think are some of the short-comings of this program and why?

What do you think are some of its strengths and why?

What are some of your views about teaching that you think were either confirmed or transformed by your experience in the program?

How do you feel you differ from the rest of the student teachers? How and why? What do you think is a strength that you have over the rest? What distinguishes you as a future teacher?

When you first started the course, did you feel you had what it took to be a teacher and that you had a pretty good idea what teaching is all about? Did this change with the progress of training? How? Why?

How confident are you that you will be a good teacher? Why? Please explain?

Why do you think there are more females than males in this program?

Do you think there should be more male teachers? Why?

Why do you think student colleagues apply to this institution to study education? What are some of their motivations and reasons? What are some of the stereotypes about teaching that you have encountered with colleagues here at this program?

If you could change one thing about the program in general, what would it be?

Practicum:

Have you conducted your practicum?

If yes, how was the experience? What were some of the frustrations? Achievements? Disappointments?

How was the school's environment? Culture? What did you like about it? What would you change and why?

How important do you think the practicum is in your teacher education process? Why?

Future plans and aspirations:

What do you expect your career to look like in a few years?

What do you think will be some of the best things about your career?

What do you think will be some of the worst things about your career?

Do you see yourself as a teacher say in ten years time? If not, what do you see yourself doing? Why? If yes, teaching what and where?

Do you plan on teaching the same grades throughout your career? Why?

Do you plan on staying in the same school? Why?

Will you at one point pursue graduate school? Why?

What could be some factors or reasons that might lead you to quit teaching in the future? Please explain.

Appendix D: Sample Interview

Excerpt from Interview 1

Student-Teacher: Yara

French University

Q: (I asked about basic background information, age, place of birth, educational background)

A: Ok. I am 31 years old, and I was born in Beirut and I lived in Beirut for a long time. Now I live in Maten donc ... ah, I studied in two schools, I started in the St. Coeur (rahbet) missionary school ein najm, and then I moved to College Melkart in hazmieh it's a school laïque and not missionary ... I did matheleme, I did science X matheleme in terminale not philo. I started the first two years doing mathematics at the Lebanese University, I did not do very well (ma twaffa'it) and I left, to start with I was not interested in doing it, I wanted to do so many other things but then ... and from there it happened that I entered education without really knowing that this was what I wanted to do. It was not ... "it wasn't my choice, my first choice" you know ... I always joke and say that even when I was a child I did not play school/teacher heh ... it was not in my head to become a teacher or something ... but thank God I entered this track (majel) and I really liked it. I am a graduate of USJ ... during my time we used to do 4 years of B.A. ...

Q: How is it now?

A: Now it is three years and you get a B.A. but then you do one year extra to do a teaching diploma so just like other universities. It became more unified but before we couldn't do 3 years, we had to do 4 years all together ...

Q: Who enforced this change in program?

A: if I am not wrong, it has to do somewhat with the government. They made it in a way that all normal B.A.s (license) are 3 years and then you start your masters because before we didn't even call it Masters, they used to call it ... I forgot what, it was an old program, like France a long time ago, ahh, they called it maitrise ah donc ... I did my B.A. and then I taught 4 years at a school ahh ...

Q: which school if you don't mind my asking?

A: I have no problem ... Champville ... College Champville in deek el mehbi ... ahh I taught for 4 years French for class grade 3, neuvieme. The first year was included in my studies, you see the fourth year, you know we have 4 years, the last year was stage professionnelle, that is we

teach normally at a school plus we have our courses and follow up from the university. Ah donc I taught three years ah 4 years sorry ah and then I started my masters here, I came back to do my masters, they had already (déjà) started here ...

A: I came back to start with because I wanted to go back, I felt that that's it, at school one sometimes feels stuck/cramped that's it one is boxed and it's clear what he should do and such ... I wanted to go back and open up to what's happening out there, what new things are happening, and I started here and at the end of the 4th year at school I was ... they offered me here the post/position that I have now.

Q: which is what?

A: which is ... training ... we call it charger de stage, I am responsible for the training ... I don't know if you want to go ahead and talk about this, this is the second part ... ok but because my duty is to follow up the students when they are placed at schools. We have, in our formation we have 5 stages (practicum).

A: The first is only for them to choose if they want to be regular teacher or special ... not special educators, we call it ortho-pedagogue, which is at schools or at centers, and it entails only the studies and not other things like behavior and whatnot. Ah, and the 4 other stages (practicum) they are at the school ... I mean encompassing all the stages of the elementary cycle, KG and elementary, primary and younger. Donc I follow them up which means I have to be with them ... we meet once a week for 1.5 hours, plenary (all of us) seminar, and then we go with them for example today I was with 2 of my students giving a class, they give the class and I am present for observation and then I assess them, I give notes but also we talk about what was positive and what was not and we see to these things. Donc this is my (majel) and now I am doing my masters ...

Q: let's rewind for a minute, you mentioned that you did not like mathematics and you favored other things, can you elaborate more on this?

A: I did not know at all what I liked to do. I did not have anything very specific but at one point I contemplated doing agriculture. I love nature and I like these things and it was my thing ... and I still have the same mentality that we can change the country (nghayer el balad, nzabbit el balad) improve the country, in my head, I felt that this was a domain that was neglected in Lebanon and it is a domain ... we have the possibility to benefit ourselves. We don't necessarily have to import from other countries, but at least we can take care of ourselves. But I kind of saw it that way and it did not work out ... it did not work out at the time of the test, I applied to USJ and a few things happened with my diploma and whatnot ... but I did not know, it was late, a late thing when I discovered I was not accepted, and did not have many choices. I like mathematics, I really like it, but not that much to delve deep into it, to put my mind to it, this was not what I was thinking about.

Q: How long were you at LU?

A: two years, yes.

Q: you mentioned agriculture and your concern to change something in the country. Did you find a place for this in education; did you feel you could channel this passion in education and what you do today?

A: yes of course. I mean, when I look back, I say what I am doing today is 100 times better ... its effect is 100 times better and more compared to doing agriculture of course, 100 percent, because the effect that we have as teachers on posterity is a huge effect ... ah, and what is even better is that the position which I currently hold, I feel I have an effect even more since I am impacting people who will in turn make an impact. I mean everything I do, I am helping these trainees, these future teachers, everything I do impacts on a generation ... I mean I really have this in mind a lot always even through the way we work. And the nice thing is that the atmosphere is helpful ... I am not talking about the whole university but only the institute ... the group we have ... I don't know about the rest, but we ... we are all in this spirit of work ... um and this is encouraging. One goes deeply with students and you feel you are making a difference in their lives and everything you immediately think it will, you think, affect the students they are teaching. And you know how many generations pass under a teacher's hand. It's serious ... Hopefully. Inshallah (God willing). We are working ... this is the goal ... it's not 100 percent but we keep ...

A: Just as other people ... I mean I look at many people who were responsible for me when I was here and I know they had an effect on me these people, my teachers, and I say if I leave a small effect on these people ... it has an effect you know ...

Q: I wanted to ask you again about something. Which high school did you graduate from? And what were the main languages of instruction?

A: College Melkart, French.

Q: did you learn Arabic or English?

A: yes, yes they teach, they teach ... we in grade four they used to start with English, but it was our third language you know we take it, but only for 1 or 2 hours a week or something ... Arabic is almost equivalent to French but French was practically more because we took math and science and all in French. So you end up taking more French from Arabic. And to start with (aslan) I am stronger in French than Arabic, I have a greater challenge with Arabic ('andi tahaddi ma' el arabi aktar).

Q: do you think this has anything to do with the fact that you are Lebanese? (Smiling).

A: yeah, for me it's a big problem, I wanted to research this but I stopped. I am only conducting research on French but because there is at some point something wrong with our educational system ... on the one hand it's really nice to know French and English very well but there is something also, "Arabic is essential" whether we liked it or not and we cannot deny this, however, this is a different subject and it's huge.

Q: Can you talk a bit about your parents' background in general. Also, are they in education? Any educators in the family? What do your parents do in general?

A: no, my dad is in insurance, he is a broker in insurance and my mom to start with she is a social worker although she stopped a long time ago after my older sister and I were born.

A: Ah ... do we have educators (mudarrisin)? Yes, I have my uncle who had originally done economics but taught French for a long time and remained teaching French ... ah, my other uncle his wife has a school which is college Melkart which her mother founded and that and he also taught when he had to travel to Cyprus during the war the thing ... donc they were in Cyprus and they had opened a branch there and he was teaching there and that and he still is in teaching, donc ah these are the people who come to mind in education (ta'lim) essentially.

Q: very briefly, how was your high school experience? If you can reflect a little bit on your experience and also whether you feel that certain teachers influenced you positively or negatively and whether you believe this plays a role in your decision to pursue education?

A: you mean the last years essentially? My problem is that I have a very weak memory but certain things do leave an imprint. Ah, I essentially when it came to studying and whatnot, it was fine, I mean I am the kind of person who with teachers am very calm and quiet and I listen a lot and I concentrate a lot and I do not disturb anyone meaning I do not disturb the teacher at all, perhaps I disturb my friends but not the teacher (giggling). Friends do not like people who are very calm.

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