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Reflecting on Canadian Identities: *Canadian Idol* as identity building?

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Ruth E. A. Middlebrook

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA degree in Communication

Department of Communication
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa
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Canada

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomena of Canadian identity in contemporary Canadian society. It looks at how CTV television show *Canadian Idol* constructs Canadian identity for its viewers and how they understand Canadian identity. It also looks at whether the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* is reflected or mirrored in its viewers' discussion. Qualitative content analysis, *agenda setting* and *encoding and decoding* models are mobilized to examine whether the show sets the agenda for viewers' discussion on Canadian identity, and whether viewers decode the meaning as it is encoded. The results of this thesis reveal that *Canadian Idol* represents Canadian identity with specific dominant markers, which fuel forum members' discussion. This indicates that most viewers' discussions are motivated by the discourse on the show. Nonetheless, this thesis also finds that *Canadian Idol's* discourse is not always accepted by all viewers, in the same way, all of the time.

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Introduction

This thesis examines the representation of Canadian identity in contemporary Canadian society, focusing particularly on media and the role it plays in constructing identity for Canadians. It draws on one particular Canadian television show, CTV's *Canadian Idol*, and the response of its online audience (*Canadian Idol* forum participants, 2007).¹

Canadian Idol is one of over thirty adaptations of *Pop Idol*, an entertainment reality television show that originated in the United Kingdom in 2001. The structure of the show relies on a basic format, in which a panel of judges tours a country (albeit their tour is reflected through their visiting a select number of locations, mainly largely populated cities) looking for undiscovered talented singers to be on the show. All persons, of a specific age group, are welcome to try-out (Eye on Idol, 2007).² The hopeful contenders audition before the panel of judges who make their selection. Once recruited in the initial round of competition, these singers are whittled down a few times until only 10 finalists remain. This small group of contestants performs weekly before a live audience including the judges, fans and at-home viewers. Singers' song choice is most often derived from a set list of songs selected by the judges.³ After singing, contestants' performances are critiqued by the judges. The singers are labeled with a number each week that is based on their spot in the performance schedule. For example, the first singer to perform is labeled number "one". Viewers are told by the host of the show to keep in mind the number of their favorite contestant(s) because they need this to vote for the singer(s) of their choice after each show is

¹ The online audience selected for this study is those Canadians who use *Canadian Idol*'s official online forum.

² *Canadian Idol*'s 2007 edition specifies that the age group for eligible contestants is 16-28 year-olds.

³ Singers are only allowed to sing a song of their choice during their first audition performance and during the final round of the competition, where the Top Two performers vie to win the *Idol* competition.

broadcast (if they choose to vote). Following the show, viewers have a couple of hours to vote for their favorite singer(s) by calling⁴ or text-messaging⁵ a telephone number, provided by the show host, and enter the number of their contestant(s) of choice. Fans are able to vote multiple times and for multiple singers. The results of the votes are usually revealed the following day⁶ during a second weekly episode. The singer who receives the lowest number of votes each week is eliminated. At the end of the processes of elimination the final singer left among all contestants is named the national idol, achieves national celebrity, and a recording contract with a major music label.

Although *Idol* shows follow this basic format, producers of these shows, including those of *Canadian Idol*, have the flexibility to adapt some of the show characteristics for their specific national audience. This allows producers to represent certain particularities of national identity. For example, *Idol* producers recruit their talents nationally. That producers of the shows are able to fashion the show for their specific national audience provides an excellent rationale for studying an *Idol* show's representation of national identity.

Idol producers' representation of national identity may influence a wide audiences' understanding of their national identity because it is generally agreed that media play some sort of role in representing and helping their audience to understand phenomena (Halloran, 1996, p. 236). Specifically, *Idol* television shows may have a role to play in doing this for a large group of people. This is because these shows have a large viewing audience, which is evidenced in that they are, "without a doubt one of the most popular programmes of recent

⁴ This number is toll-free for *Canadian Idol* voters. As the focus of this study is on *Canadian Idol*, it has not been determined if other *Idol* shows use a similar cost-free voting system.

⁵ Canadian voters who are Telus mobility subscribers can place their vote(s) by text-messaging. This costs voters 25 cents per vote.

⁶ Most often the result episode airs the day after the performance show. However, sometimes this broadcast follows a couple of days later.

years . . . [which is proven in that] its ratings have been phenomenal” (Reijnders, Roijackers & van Zoonen, 2007, pp. 276, 288). In addition to watching *Idol*, many viewers discuss their reaction to the show online. For example, specific to *Canadian Idol*, over 15,000 viewers of the show discuss their reactions to the show on *Canadian Idol*’s online forum (*Canadian Idol* forum participants, 2007). These messages provide insight into how these viewers respond to the show’s representations. Of particular interest to this study is the response of *Canadian Idol* viewers to the show’s depiction of Canadian identity.

The qualitative content analysis methodology is employed to look at the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol*, and the discussion of Canadian identity by viewers who use the show’s online forum. These two sets of data are compared to examine whether Canadian identity, as represented on *Canadian Idol*, may be influencing fan’s online discussion of Canadian identity. The *agenda setting* and the *encoding and decoding* model are also mobilized in this research. *Agenda setting* provides an indication of whether the representation of Canadian identity on the show is reflected or mirrored in the viewers’ online discussion, and the *encoding and decoding* model provides an indication of the extent to which the producers of *Canadian Idol* have a privileged position to represent Canadian identity for its viewers. Specifically, the *encoding and decoding* model helps to assess whether viewers accept, negotiate or oppose the representation of Canadian identity on the show.

This research contributes to Media Studies, looking at how television’s representation may contribute to how viewers develop meaning; specifically, how *Canadian Idol*’s representation may be reflected or mirrored in how its viewers’ discuss their Canadian identity. This research also explores several analytical perspectives and methodologies (e.g. *agenda setting* and the *encoding and decoding* models) and contributes to Cultural Studies,

specifically to the literature on Canadian identity. This thesis seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How is Canadian identity represented on *Canadian Idol*? (2) How do viewers of *Canadian Idol* who use the shows' online forum discuss their Canadian identity? (3) Is the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* reflected or mirrored in how viewers' discuss their Canadian identity on the online forum?

Literature Review

This literature explores theories on identity including a general understanding of national identity and more specifically an understanding of Canadian national identity. It also looks at how meaning is constructed, in particular the meaning of identity. The focus is on how meaning generating systems in media studies could help us understand the ways in which television (specifically reality television in the Canadian context) represents Canadian identity.

Curticapean (2007) defines identity as the way in which people, “make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from, others” (p. 412). This definition suggests that identity is a sense making activity where people develop awareness of self, and of how they are similar and different from others. This indicates that identity has both personal and relational levels, thus, multiple levels. As people identify themselves in multiple ways, this could signify that identity is complex. Curticapean adds that identity has both “strong” and “weak” conceptions. People who have a “strong” conception of identity have something in common with others, something that distinguishes them from other groups of people; for example, a group of people may share an ethnicity or a race. This conception of identity assumes that people have a sense of shared identity even if they are not aware of it. On the other hand, people may have a “weak” sense of identity. To have a “weak” sense of identity refers to identity being, “unstable, multiple, fluctuating and fragmented” (p. 413). This point suggests that identity is complex, not fixed, made-up of multiple characteristics, and subject to change. Thus, identity has many uncontrollable elements that can be influenced. Perhaps, for example, people’s sense of identity could be influenced by a representation of identity on a television show? The results of this research respond to this question.

Similar to Curticean (2007), Rashid (2007) defines identity as persons defining themselves, at least in part, by how they differ from others. This reinforces the notion that identity is developed through people's interactions with others. Rashid adds that identity evolves and most often people identify themselves in multiple ways. Further, identity is, "incomplete, fragmented [and] even conflicting" (p. 1). Rashid's definition of identity suggests that people may always continue to add elements to their conception of identity, they likely identify on many levels, with many groups, and their various identifications may sometimes conflict with each other. This definition reveals that the process of identity formation is not without potential challenges.

On identity, Rocher (2007) notes that people may identify in one way, however, most often, they adhere to multiple identities. He comments:

If you belong to Quebec or if you belong to your Aboriginal community, do you belong less to Canada for instance? This is not how people think of themselves. You can belong or define yourself as belonging to one or more groups.

This research suggests that Canadians adhere to their Canadian identity, and can identify with sub-groups as well. Rocher, in discussing identity, adds that no one person may identify himself or herself in exactly the same way as another person.

As people identify themselves in relation to others, forming specific group identities, this research looks specifically at how people form national groups. People may align themselves with, or differentiate themselves from others on the basis of their sharing or not sharing a characteristic(s), for example: class, gender or race (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1111), language, culture or sense of meaning (Hall, 1997b). Further, people often define themselves in relation to others to share a nation (Gagnon & Iacovino, 2007, p. 4; Moran, 1998, p. 176). People who share a nation tend to focus on the similarities that they have with people from

within their nation, as well as those characteristics that distinguish them from people who are from other national groups (Servaes, 1997, p. 81).

People often come together as a group as they find it beneficial (Schellenberg, 2004, p. 16). For example, as people are unique and have different talents, by working together they may be able to accomplish tasks that they cannot complete, or do so as successfully, on their own. People may also benefit from being part of a national group. This is because nations are governed by political systems, which provide the people that live within them with certain rights, privileges and forms of protection.

Sometimes, however, there are challenges that result when people come together to share a group identity. Often the reason for such difficulties originates with people identifying with multiple groups. This is because a person's identity may conflict with the identity of another person within their group who also identifies to another group. For example, although people may connect well as co-workers, they may not agree with each other's religious affiliation. Difficulties might take the form of problems in communication, prejudice and discrimination (Johnson, 1997, pp. 524-531). A further challenge, specific to national identity, is that a nation's majority group might attempt to ethnically cleanse their minority group members (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1112; Gellner, 1997, p. 108). Also, some groups may desire to separate from their nation as a result of sub-group differences (Anderson, 1991, p. 3).

Johnson's (1997) research focuses on the difficulties that a group of people, such as a national group, may experience in communicating with each other. He specifically discusses three barriers to communication: "prejudice", "blaming the victim" and "cultural conflict". "Prejudice" refers to negative feelings that people may have towards others based on their adhering to a group that is different from one that they belong to (p. 524). "Blaming the

victim” refers to people discriminating against others on the basis of their having certain characteristic(s) that are different from them. “Cultural clash” is conflict that results due to people having different values (p. 527).

Bhabha (1990) and Desroches and Fleras (1986) specifically note that tension may emerge within national communities. For example, dominant, powerful majority group members may inflict prejudice on or discriminate against their less dominant, less powerful, minority group members. Bhabha (1994) and Gellner (1997) add that majority group members may exert their power so far as to try to rid minority groups from their nation via ethnic cleansing. Bhabha describes this action as “hideous extremity” (p. 1112). However, Desroches and Fleras argue that while violence may occur within nations, it is uncommon (p. 35). Gellner urges national governing bodies to accommodate the diverse cultural practices of their citizens, because ethnic cleansing is not a humane practice (p. 108). Anderson (1991) adds that a result of intra-national tensions is that sometimes groups desire to separate from their nation (p. 3).

National identity has both a denotative and a connotative meaning. Denotatively, national identity refers to a group of people who reside in a specific territory, who share a political and economic system, a group of people who identify themselves as sharing a country (Hall, 1997b). Connotatively, national identity refers to a group of people feeling an imagined sense of belonging to those with whom they share a nation (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). People imagine that they belong together through sharing cultural elements of national identity (Neuman in Eid & Lagace, 2007, p. 128). National identity, in its connotative sense, is not as easily pinpointed as its denotative counterpart. It is less tangible and constructed (Moran, 1998, p. 175), an un-natural phenomenon that is naturalized in the minds of a national group of people (Balthazar, 1997, p. 67).

For this research it is important to examine a body of literature specific to Canadian identity. This literature indicates that like other nation's experiences, defining the identity of Canadians is complex. On the one hand, Canadians share a sense of national identification, and on the other hand, Canadians identify with many other sub-groups that are constitutive to Canadian multi-cultural identity.

Arguably, Canadians share a common link to their nation – to the territorially based, political unit, in which they reside. Canadians share rights, privileges and structures of governance. They live in a democratic, North American nation, bordered by the United States of America. Characteristics that may typify Canada or its people include universal health care, English and French bilingualism, peace keeping, vast physical landscape, northern climate including cold winter season, being kind, polite, hospitable and sensible (Cohen, 2007, pp. 30, 43, 44, 48, 117, 127). The Canadian flag and maple leaf are also symbolic of Canadian society (Wallace, 1999, p. 55), as is hockey (Cohen, 2007, p. 1; Wallace, 1999, p. 55; Whitson, 1997, p. 315). The Department of Canadian Heritage (2007b) adds that the beaver, maple tree, maple leaf, and national colours of red and white are symbols of Canadian national identity. Cohen (2007), discussing competition, notes that in competitions it is un-Canadian to win or win big (p. 1).

Three levels of administration govern Canada: municipal, provincial/territorial and federal. Although sometimes it is difficult for the nation's administration to make decisions as a result of these different levels of government, for the most part, the areas of jurisdiction are specific, resulting in a well-organized bureaucracy. Statistics Canada in *Government* (September 9, 2007) notes:

[T]he federal government [of Canada] is responsible for national defence and international diplomacy . . . The provinces and territories . . . ensure that Canadians have access to essential services such as health care and education.

Local governments take care of keeping [the] streets clean and . . . communities safe (§1).

Rasporich (1997) adds that Canadians have always had faith in their system of governance; that the three different levels of administration work well together, in compatibility (p. 322). That there are these different levels of government within Canada indicates that Canadians have different identities, in this case, related to municipality, province or territory, and federation, and that having different identities can be compatible to sharing a national identity.

The federal government of Canada promotes policies of multiculturalism, bilingualism and immigration. In 1971, as the first country to do so, Canada officially adopted a policy of multiculturalism. This policy is reflected, at least in part, through Canadian citizens using a variety of languages, being of diverse ethnicities, race and religion (Canadian Heritage, 2007a).

The federal government, through its *Official Languages Act* (adopted in 1969 and revised in 1988), promotes English and French as official languages and recognizes Canada as a bilingual nation. English is the language spoken by the vast majority of Canadians; French-speaking citizens are in the minority. This indicates that Canadians exercise different linguistic identities.

The federal government's policy of immigration also affects the identity of Canadians. Through this policy, Canada welcomes approximately 200,000 immigrants annually (Canadian Heritage, 2007c). On Canadian immigration, Cohen (2007) notes, "No country welcomes more foreign citizens, per capita, than Canada" (p. 153). Similarly, Taras (2001) notes, "Canada is the most international of countries . . . most multicultural and indeed multiracial society" (pp. 186, 187). Most especially, the federal government welcomes

talented and skilled persons to immigrate, doing so through the Foreign Credential Recognition Program (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). This policy of immigration contributes to the multiculturalism of Canadian society and reflects Canadians as tolerant towards diverse peoples.

Another aspect of Canadian national identity is the presence of Aboriginal peoples, the descendants of the first inhabitants of the nation's territory. These people have a unique status within Canada, which is, in large part, a result of the treaties that their ancestors signed with British and Canadian authorities (White, 2001, p. 458). These treaties give them rights and privileges, including areas (reserves/heritage land) where they may reside to the exclusion of non-Aboriginal Canadians. Being Aboriginal is also unique in that, recently, some Aboriginal people have asked to be recognized as a nation within Canada (Gagnon & Iacovino, 2007, pp. 80-81), something that not all other Canadian sub-groups have done. The Canadian Constitution presently recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people as residing within Canada – Indians, Métis and Inuit. This recognition is limited however as there are many sub-groups (tribes).

Aboriginal peoples, once the primary dwellers in Canada are, at present, in a minority situation and face many challenges as a result. Such challenges include pressure to assimilate into larger Canadian society (Welker, n.d.), and that Aboriginal people suffer from alcohol and solvent abuse, housing shortages and inadequate health care (Isaac, 1997, p. 477). These challenges are not characteristic of all groups within Canada, most especially the White majority population. On a more encouraging note, Isaac (1997) points out that solutions to these challenges are being sought, including the introduction of community-healing and education programs in Aboriginal communities (p. 477). Aboriginal issues are now prominent in Canadian society, and as a result, there is reason to be hopeful that positive

changes for Aboriginal people might occur in the future (Gagnon & Iacovino, 2007, p. 82; Isaac, 1997, p. 477). Specifically, on the representation of Aboriginal peoples, this group of people has traditionally not been included, and if included, they have been depicted as “other” in comparison to the Canadian White majority population (Higgins, 2001, pp. 10, 15). It will be good for further research to specifically look at how Aboriginal Canadians are represented on television shows, and specifically on reality television show such as *Canadian Idol*.

Canadian national identity is also characterized by the nation’s variety of geography. For example, there is a rural/urban divide as to where immigrants have a tendency to settle (Taras, 2001, p. 187) and the nation is also divided into various regions.

Rural regions are not as densely populated as urban areas. This is, in part, a result of urban areas attracting more immigrants than rural areas (Taras, 2001, p. 187). On this, the 2006 Census of the Canadian population cites, “96 percent of visible minorities live in urban areas” (in *The Globe and Mail*, April 3, 2007, p. A9). Further, Mayor Susan Fennell (in *The Globe and Mail*, April 3, 2007) of Brampton, an urban area, notes, “We’re living in a very diverse city, a very cosmopolitan and multicultural city, where we embrace our multiculturalism” (p. A9). The existence of rural and urban differences is important for understanding Canadian identity as it reveals that the nation’s localities are not equally affected by population size and immigration; which reveals that, in this aspect, the identity of Canadians differ.

Although the nation of Canada is divided into many different regions, researchers disagree on how to specifically classify these divisions. Cernetig (2001, p. 402) suggests that provincial/territorial regions have unique identities, and as a result, dividing the country according to these political boundaries is appropriate. Rasporich (1997, p. 323; 2001, p. 295)

however, classifies the Canadian nation into larger regions, grouping various provinces and territories together. From this logic: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are grouped as Western Canada; or Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are grouped as Prairies; Quebec and Ontario comprise Central Canada; New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, the Maritimes, and, with the addition of Newfoundland and Labrador, Atlantic Canada; the provinces of Central Ontario and Atlantic Canada as Eastern Canada; and Yukon, North West Territories, and Nunavut as Northern Canada.

Canadians are often characterized according to distinct regional stereotypes. For example, Cernetig (2001) classifies Canadians living in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal as living in the “nations’ hub” (p. 415). This is likely a result of these regions including, or being in close proximity to, the nation’s capital city of Ottawa, as well as their being highly populated areas. Francis (1997, p. 434) and McCormick (2001, p. 401) note that Canadians living in Western Canada feel alienated. Likely, this is a result of their being distant from the nation’s capital city and “hub” areas. Finbow (2001, p. 312) and Martin and Srebrnick (1997, p. 356) suggest that Canadians residing in the Maritime and Atlantic regions are characterized according to their coastal environment, reliance on the ocean, depressed economic base, seasonal industries such as the fisheries, high in poverty and unemployment, outward migration, little immigration and dependent on federal contributions. Overton (1997) describes Canadians living specifically in Newfoundland and Labrador as distinct in culture and way of life, vibrant in language, and friendly (pp. 332, 333, 335). Mandel (2007) adds that the people from this province are “generous, hospitable [and] fun-loving” (p. A4).

Canadian national identity is also characterized in relation to other nations, in particular to the United States of America. In 2000, this was reflected through “The Rant”, a popular *Molson Canadian* beer commercial. This commercial defined Canadian identity as

not American. This was illustrated in Joe Canadian (the talent in the commercial) contrasting the differences between these two countries, “I have a prime minister, not a president . . . I speak English and French, not American. I believe in peacekeeping, not policing; diversity, not assimilation” (retrieved from Manning, 2000, ¶2). This advertisement also noted Canadians being close-knit as a population due to their population size being relatively small in comparison with their nation’s large landmass, Canadians as nice, as accepting of multiculturalism, and hockey as a key element of their identity.

Similar to this characterization by *Molson Canadian* beer, Watson (2000) argues that Canadians specifically define themselves as *not* and as *better* than Americans. He illustrates Canadians as better than Americans by commenting, “Canadians think that [they] live in a more civilized society than the United States” (p. 65). He attributes this characteristic of Canadians as better than Americans due to Canada having lower crime rates and less of a rich-poor gap than the United States (p. 65). Watson adds, “[Canadians] should strive to be better than [the United States]” (pp. 131-132). Differently, Whitaker (1997) argues that Canadians formerly thought of themselves as different from Americans, yet, more recently, they have moved to more closely resemble them (p. 124). Characteristics, which he notes differentiated the countries’ in the past, include Canada’s social safety net, social programs, public health care system, national cultural institutions and bilingualism (pp. 120-121). He adds, however, that Canada has recently become more like the United States by moving closer to them economically (p. 124). Taras (1997, 2001) agrees that Canada shares similarities to the United States. For example, the two countries share a continent (2001, p. 186) and their inhabitants consume many of the same cultural products, including American television programmes (1997, p. 265). Although researchers are divided as to how to define the relationship between Canada and the United States, that they discuss this relationship

indicates that they are in agreement that the relationship with the United States is important to defining Canadian identity.

For this thesis it is also important to study the literature on how people tend to develop their sense of meaning, specifically the meaning of their national identity. Hall (1997b) argues that the meaning of phenomena is developed through communication processes. Institutions that are at privilege try to, and usually are successful in, defining phenomena and developing social norms. These institutions may include businesses, governments, legal systems and media (Lorimer & Gasher, 2001, pp. 45). These institutions tend to develop norms that privilege themselves and others who share similar characteristics. This is to the disadvantage of others, people who are different from them (Wildman & Davis, 2002, pp. 92-93). Halloran (1996) argues that institutions that have this privilege cannot be seen in isolation of one another but as interacting with each other (p. 236). This literature suggests that the producers of *Canadian Idol* could occupy a privileged position, which allows them to construct for the show viewers, a preferred set of meaning. However, the show may not have an unadulterated impact as several institutions that create meaning may vie for its viewer's attention.

Although there are several institutions that work to create meaning, Anderson (1991) suggests that media could be the most influential institution in the meaning creation process (pp. 37-46). Taras (1997) notes that in contemporary Canadian society, television plays a significant role: "Television is . . . the particular lens through which Canadians experience their own culture . . . it create[s] common cultural boundaries, a common thread of experience" (pp. 265-266). From this, it is understood that Canadians who view television could feel a sense of closeness to one another.

According to Weber (2007), television acts as a “surrogate for the body” (p. 68), enabling viewers to be privy to events taking place in areas far removed from them. For example, via television, Canadians may be privy to events taking place in various regions across their country and the world. Another specificity of television is that it eliminates the nearness of viewer’s worldview, creating an exotic-familiar world. Television thus renders the notions of distance and separation or space and time invisible by transposing viewers into the vision that television transmits. He notes, “If television thus names ‘seeing-at-a-distance’, what it appears to overcome thereby is the body, or more precisely, the spatial limitations placed by the body upon seeing and hearing” (Weber, 2007, p. 68). For Weber, the codes of representation that are specific to television allow viewers to have an illusion of being in a global village (p. 71). Thus, similar to Taras (1997, pp. 265-266), Weber’s research indicates that Canadian television may provide Canadian viewers with a feeling of being closely connected with each other.

As a result of the literature, which indicates that television may have an ability to foster national identity among viewers, many governments, including the federal government of Canada, have established public broadcasting corporations, mandated to foster a sense of national identity among the people of their country. Specific to Canada, the federal government, in 1936, established the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The CBC provides programming in English and French – the official languages of the country, and for Northern Canadians,⁷ programming in a number of Aboriginal languages. The Broadcasting Act of 1991 mandates the CBC to offer distinctive Canadian programming and foster Canadian identity. The Act states that Canadian programming should:

- be predominantly and distinctively Canadian;

⁷ The majority of the population in Northern Canada is Aboriginal (White, 2001, p. 458).

- reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions;
- actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural expression;
- be in English and in French, reflecting the different needs and circumstances of each official language community, including the particular needs and circumstances of English and French linguistic minorities;
- strive to be of equivalent quality in English and French;
- contribute to shared national consciousness and identity;
- be made available throughout Canada by the most appropriate and efficient means and as resources become available for the purpose; and
- reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada.

Further, many governments, including the federal government of Canada, require private broadcasters to air a significant amount of national content. The government of Canada, through the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, requires private Canadian broadcasters, via its Canadian content policy (Cancon), to devote 60 percent of day-time coverage and 50 percent of prime-time coverage (6:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight) to national programming. The three main characteristics of the Cancon policy are:

1. the producer is Canadian;
2. key creative personnel are Canadian; and
3. 75 percent of service costs and post-production lab costs are paid to Canadians.

These policies reveal that the government of Canada feels strongly about the role of television and its ability to impact its audience, and also that it is important for television to represent national identity for viewers.

It is important to note that public television shows are funded by government dollars, and private television shows depend on other sources of income, namely, paid subscriptions to cable television and advertising revenue (O'Donnell, 2007, pp. 15, 22). O'Donnell (2007) comments:

Advertising income is what pays for television programs that are broadcast on commercial networks . . . In the business of advertising, the goal is to buy time in television programs watched by an audience who fits the demographic characteristics that advertisers market products to and to buy these audiences as

efficiently as possible. In other words, television sells audiences to advertisers for billions of dollars (p. 22).

This difference in funding of public and private television could suggest that the two different types of television have different goals. While public television must be more inclusive, to respond to the needs of a diverse public, private television may only target a specific audience, due to the need to attract advertisers. The goals of the advertisers may also influence the content. Thus, while a large percentage of private television shows may qualify as Canadian content, the goals of the producers may not be to portray Canadian identity but to attract advertising revenue. *Canadian Idol*, as a private television show, could therefore be an excellent example of this kind of business practice.

Television programmes tend to represent national identity using thematic elements. For example, these themes may include territory, institutions, language, religion, history, art, literature and sport (Castello, 2007, p. 49). A further specific example is that television shows have tended to represent minority groups in stereotypical fashion (Harvey, 2006, p. 215).

Macfarlane (2006), in discussing how a television show, *Adventures in Rainbow Country*, represented Canadian identity during the 1960s, notes that the producer privileged representations of Canadians living in harmony with each other. She argues that these representations convinced Canadians “that theirs was a great, powerful, and just society, and that they could show the world how to do things better” (p. 101). She notes however, that in reality, during the 1960s, the Quebec separatist movement was gaining strength and Canada’s Aboriginal peoples were plagued with health issues (pp. 100-101). This could reveal that the reality portrayed on this television show was unlike the lived Canadian experience. The television show also relied on representing Canadian identity according to some themes such as Canada as a Northern nation, and as distinguished from other countries such as the United

States (p. 111). Further, Macfarlane suggests that the show sought to resonate with its Canadian audience by affirming a sense of identity among them. It did so by portraying a representation of the country whereby viewers “could recognize themselves” (p. 102). She emphasizes that popular culture products, such as television can, “undeniably pla[y] a part in Canadians definitions of self” (p. 105). This discussion of the use of themes and example of how Canadian identity has been represented on a Canadian television show indicates that identity has been traditionally portrayed on television in a categorical, limited, producer-privileged way, and not as true reality. It also uncovers the ability of television to influence viewers on issues, including on their national identity. This literature is helpful as it provides an indication of how identity may be depicted on *Canadian Idol* and that its portrayal may have an influence on its audience.

In addition to the use of themes, the selection of film location, cast, and use of editing techniques contribute to a limited and producer-privileged portrayal of identity, affecting the reality of what is portrayed. For example, producers’ decision of where to film is often driven by what location will best maximize entertainment value (Huff, 2006, p. ix). This is to the exclusion of other regions, those not filmed. The consequence of this is that those regions, not filmed, may not exist in viewers’ minds. Also, producers’ selection of cast members is often based on their having certain personality characteristics (Harvey, 2006, p. 213). The consequence of this is that the identity of certain character-types is privileged and other personalities are excluded from representation. Further, producers’ use of editing techniques is influenced by a desire to air the most dramatic and entertaining footage to entice viewers, and producer-deemed less exciting footage is not aired. As media representations provide information that is useful for people to use in making sense of phenomena, it is concerning

that some elements are not represented. The specific concern is that viewers are likely not able to come to truly understand phenomena, in this case, Canadian identity.

Reality television programming grew in popularity in the 1980s (Raphael, 2004, p. 124) and became prominent in 2000 (Magder, 2004, p. 137). It became more popular as television producers came to realize the financial benefits of this type of programming. For example, it is cheaper for producers to hire ordinary people as cast members than to hire professionally trained actors and actresses. It is also cheaper for them to use unscripted programming than hire professional scriptwriters to write content. Furthermore, reality television formats are quite easily sold internationally as it is cost-effective for other television producers to generate already proven successful television shows then to produce new programming that has no track record of being profitable (Magder, 2004. pp. 144-147). Magder (2004) comments: "Formats are designed for international sale; more precisely, they are designed to be adapted locally . . . Using a format greatly reduces the risks associated with first-copy costs and the nobody knows principle" (p. 147).

In this setting where reality television has become prominent, many ordinary people have developed a desire to become media stars/celebrities. Ouellette and Murray (2004) note that the reality television genre feeds into the "dream" of many people of "participating directly in television culture" (p. 8). Couldry (2004) adds that being on television has become a "more significant" experience for people than "nonmediated reality" (p. 61). This "more significant" experience could translate into a reality depicted that is not truly like real life. Ouellette and Murray call this the "entertaining real" (p. 4). For example, the selection of ordinary people as cast members to appear on reality television shows is likely not an effort to depict reality as lived, but rather, a depiction of only select individuals and not a representation of all persons or personality types. On this, Kraszewski (2004) argues that

producers “choose specific types of people to represent reality on their shows” (p. 194) and Kompare (2004) suggests that producers mold cast members into “identifiable characters” (p. 104), which she defines as the “attractive construction of personality” (p. 111). She provides the example of Sharon Osbourne⁸ of *The Osbournes*, who was depicted as “a normative suburban mom, with short, stylish hair, sweats, and running shoes” (p. 110).

This literature suggests that reality television programming depicts a constructed representation of reality, thus not reflecting the real. The majority of people who watch such shows, however, think that what they are watching is real.

Particularly, for *Idol* reality television shows, all members of a nation’s public, within a certain age group (Eye on Idol, 2007),⁹ have the opportunity to try-out to be on the show as cast members. This suggests that all people who try-out believe that they have an opportunity to be selected as a finalist for the show. However, in reality, during the initial rounds of the singing auditions, the panel of judges selects the contestants who continue on in the competition. The decisions of the panel of judges could be based not solely on the contestants’ singing talent, but also on other factors, including their ability to be entertaining, which could attract viewers to the show. Indeed, it is plausible that judges select more entertaining contestants as a result of their motive being to draw viewers to their show, to in-turn encourage advertisers to support the show (Magder, 2004, p. 142). Magder (2004) points out, “TV almost everywhere relies heavily on advertising dollars . . . Advertisers pay for the attention of viewers” (p. 142). He adds:

⁸ Although many reality television programmes rely on the casting of ordinary people, not all reality programmes do so. For example, some reality television shows, such as *The Osbournes* cast celebrities. In this case the Osbourne family. The father of the family is Ozzie Osbourne, a famous heavy metal musician.

⁹ See footnote two.

[W]hat [advertisers] seek in particular are viewers who have money (or credit) to spend or those who are at the stage of their life where they may develop long-term brand loyalty. Not every viewer is valued equally; generally speaking, advertisers pay more for young (adult) viewers – typically defined as eighteen to forty-nine year olds (p. 142).

As private television shows such as *Canadian Idol* depend on advertising revenue, it could be possible that the show selects only contestants' who are young as this is the target audience of advertisers.

The general public may also have an impact on *Idol*, or at least they are told by show personalities that they have this ability. Specifically, they are told that they have the ability to impact the outcome of the show through voting for the winner of the show. However, Canadian viewers only have this ability when the number of singers is whittled down to the Top 22 contestants. The judges make the decisions up until this point and may have an influence on the results even in the further rounds of competition by the commentaries they make on the contestants performances each week. Although viewers are told by reality television personalities, such as those of *Idol*, that they have the power to impact the outcome of the show, Couldry (2004) argues that, in reality, viewers of reality television programming do not have much control over the outcome. He comments:

Popular participation is . . . a useful myth; viewers of [reality television], after all, have no control over its format, the initial choice of participants, the principles of editing, or . . . how the 'popular vote' is interpreted (pp. 64-65).

Viewers of *Idol*, although they can vote for the winner of the show once the singers are whittled down to 22 finalists, have no control over the format of the show, the initial choice of singers, how the show is edited or how the votes are tabulated. *Idol* producers' power to influence could also be evidenced in: "As part of their deals to appear on *American Idol* the winner's first album is produced and released by record companies associated with the producers. The shows producers control what songs and directions they'll take early on"

(Cowell in Huff, 2006, pp. 124-125). This literature suggests that viewers of *Idol* shows do not have as much power as they are told that they do to control the outcomes of the show.

Although Couldry (2004) predicts that producers of reality television programming may have significant privilege to control the meaning and outcome of their shows, Hartley (2004) argues otherwise. He suggests that viewers can usurp producer's power and provides the following example:

Katrina Mianni (of reality television show *Big Brother*) had no more control over her meaning than she did over her tear ducts. What she meant depended not on her own authorial intentions, not those of *Big Brother*'s producers, nor even on its textual content. Katrina very clearly meant what her viewers . . . said she did (p. 318).

Applied to *Canadian Idol*'s case, Hartley's research could suggest that *Idol* show viewers, including those using the online forum, could decide the meaning of the show; in this case they could decide the meaning of Canadian identity.

This literature on the control of meaning of television shows reveals that researchers disagree as to which party (e.g. television producers, viewers) occupies the most privileged position in the meaning making process. This study of *Canadian Idol*'s representation of Canadian identity and its viewer's online discussion contributes to research on meaning making, providing an indication as to which party might occupy the privileged position to control meaning.

In addition to producers decision on cast members influencing the reality of what is portrayed on reality television; that the shows are edited, and the film locations are deliberately chosen, also influence the reality of what is broadcast (Kraszewski, 2004, pp. 179-181). However, because such shows are classified as "reality television programming", viewers may be convinced that what they are watching is real and may take the meaning literally. Ouellette and Murray (2004) argue however, that viewers may be aware of the

construction of reality, yet enjoy watching such shows for their “authenticity” (p. 5).¹⁰ This is a paradoxical experience, as viewers may understand reality television to be both real and unreal at the same time. This has led Lewis (2004) to suggest:

[T]he codes of reality . . . are blurred . . . Television is not a social abstraction – we cannot systematically pluck those hours of the day we spend watching it and disregard them as nothing more than a vicarious, secondhand class of experience . . . even though we may only consciously refer to one reality, we can identify *two adjacent realities* . . . Most of us inhabit a space in the gray area between these two . . . We flit back and forth so often and so habitually that we lose our grip on where we are (pp. 288, 292, 295, 301).

This literature suggests that television has an impact on viewers understanding of phenomena and also suggests that reality television programming has broken down viewers’ traditional understandings of reality. Viewers may give both television and lived experiences credence. This suggests that viewers may take from what is represented on television, to help them make sense of phenomena such as their national identity. This study is valuable, as it will look at how a television show, *Canadian Idol*, may be contributing to how its Canadian audience understands their Canadian identity.

In conclusion to the literature review, the research examined is valuable for this study on Canadian identity as it provides an understanding of the definition of identity, indicating that identity is the ways in which people make sense of themselves and of their relationships with others, including both their similarities and their differences. It also recognizes that people tend to identify themselves on many levels including to their nation. Benefits and challenges may result and identity constantly evolves and is never fixed. Institutions that work to create meaning, such as television shows, may help people to come to make sense of phenomena including their national identity. As *Canadian Idol* is an institution that works to

¹⁰ Crew (2006) notes that reality television shows are deemed “authentic” by viewers because there is the programming is unscripted, non-actors are cast, honest emotions come across and the content is unpredictable (p. 68).

create meaning, its representations may be influential in contributing to how its Canadian viewers understand their Canadian identity. Indeed, the above reviewed literature provides an excellent rationale to examine how television show, *Canadian Idol*, represents Canadian identity for its viewers and how its viewers are making sense of their Canadian identity.

The literature also suggests that Canadian identity could possibly be identified according to multiple markers including: a multiplicity of symbols of Canadianity, varying levels of political administration, multiculturalism, bilingualism, immigration, regional identity including rural/urban differences and regional-based stereotypes, and political distinctions with the United States of America. These markers of Canadian identity could be a useful guide for looking at how Canadian identity might be portrayed on the show, *Canadian Idol*, and discussed by its viewers on the online forum.

The following research questions guide this study:

1. How is Canadian identity represented on *Canadian Idol*?
2. How do viewers of *Canadian Idol*, who use the show's online forum, discuss Canadian identity?
3. Is the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* reflected or mirrored in how viewer's discuss their Canadian identity on the online forum?

Research Design, Methodology and Procedures

To examine how *Canadian Idol* represents national identity for Canadians, and the relationship between this representation and its viewers understanding of Canadian identity, the following three foci are explored in this thesis: firstly, how Canadian identity is represented on the show; secondly, how the viewers of the show discuss their Canadian identity on the online forum; and thirdly, both of these sets of data are compared to examine if the representation of Canadian identity on the show is reflected or mirrored in how viewers' discuss Canadian identity. The research objects, *Canadian Idol* and its viewers' discussions on the online forum are examined via qualitative content analysis. The theoretical perspectives of *agenda setting* and the *encoding and decoding* model are applied to analyze the data.

The research objects, namely *Canadian Idol* and its viewers' online discussions, are analyzed via content analysis. The reason for this is that this method of analysis is used to examine the “content of messages” (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p. 236) and these sets of data could qualify as such messages. Specifically, Comadena (2004) defines content analysis as:

[C]ontent analysis [can be performed] on virtually any message for which there is a record. For example, one may content analyze speeches, advertisements, memos, music, books, letters, television programs, and cartoons, even graffiti in restrooms (p. 45).

Frey, Botan and Kreps (2000) add that content analysis is used to answer research questions that “as[k] about the content of messages embedded within texts” (p. 236). Berg (2007 in Eid and Lagace) defines content analysis as “a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases,

and meanings” (pp. 247-248). The television show, *Canadian Idol*, and the messages that its viewers post online qualify as such content, and therefore can be studied via content analysis.

On types of content analysis, Frey, Botan and Kreps (2000) point out, “Today, content analysis is one of the dominant, if not the most dominant, methodologies employed in mass communication research” (p. 237). They further note, “Most content analyses are quantitative in nature, which involves counting the particular instances of certain types of messages in texts” (p. 237). Similarly, Wimmer and Dominick (2003) suggest that “content analysis” should be quantitative derived “for the purpose of measuring variables” (pp. 140-141). Although Frey, Botan and Kreps point out that most content analysis studies are quantitative, they also mention that in some cases, researchers apply both quantitative and qualitative methods of content analysis, and on occasion, qualitative analysis is the sole way by which researchers analyze data (p. 237). Qualitative content analysis is used by researchers who “are more interested in the meanings associated with the messages than with the number of times message variables occur” (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p. 237). Similarly to Frey, Botan and Kreps, Babbie (2004) argues, “Not all content analysis results in counting. Sometimes a qualitative assessment of the materials is most appropriate” (p. 321). Such studies “focus on major themes and stories contained in the texts” (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p. 237). Specifically on qualitative content analysis, Comadena (2004) notes:

In qualitative research . . . data take the form of narratives, people’s words or quotes, texts, or other kinds of discourse. In qualitative studies, the researcher seeks to explore the meanings people have for communication events and the extent to which those interpretations are influenced by the larger context in which events are experienced. Qualitative researchers are very sensitive to the context in which communication occurs and believe that the meaning people derive from others’ messages are a function of the context in which those messages are sent and received (p. 46).

The focus of this study commands that the content studied, the *Canadian Idol* show and its viewers discussion on the online forum, is done through the qualitative content analysis method. Because the goal of this research is to study the meaning of Canadian identity in *Canadian Idol*; and to compare the extent to which forum members discuss this meaning, represented on the show.

This selection of these research objects commands that I also use the notion of *agenda setting* to analyze the data. Proponents of *agenda setting* have argued that media has a “strong, direct, and specific effect” (Lorimer & Gasher, 2001, p. 129) influencing what people think, talk and worry about (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994, p. 353). *Agenda setting* research shows the most “dominant predictor of public salience for an object is the cumulative volume of coverage that it has received in the [media] during the preceding month” (Chyi & McCombs, 2004, p. 30).¹¹

Another way television shows could be linked to the notion of *agenda setting* is admitting the ways that this medium cues viewers to the salience of particular social issues. In television, this salience is conveyed to viewers by the prominence given to an event; for example, if the event is placed in headlines or other sections of the show, or whether it is “buried” in the middle of many other topics in the show discussion. Prominence of particular events taking place in the middle of television shows could also be suggested by the size of the event, whether it is well developed and accompanied by graphics and pictures to help

¹¹ The incidence of media coverage, an aspect of *agenda setting*, is irrelevant in this analysis, as it is not important to determine the frequency of coverage for this case study. Hence, the (1) total number of times *Canadian Idol* and the (2) interval gaps without talking about Canadian identity (during the timeline of this research) will not be examined for this case study for the reason that it is not a quantitative analysis with a hypothesis that the television show *Canadian Idol* sets the agenda for the viewers who use the online discussion forum.

explain the issue being represented. Conversely, if a television show represents an event in a shorter and less elaborate manner than other topics in the show, this could communicate its lesser status (Grossberg, Waertella, Whitney & Wise, 2006, p. 367). These two aspects of prominence, (1) the placement and (2) the length of the event are mobilized in this research. In the context of this research, *agenda setting* helps me to analyze the parallel of both the content of Canadian identity on the show and in forum members' online conversations to examine whether the show sets the agenda, as it were, for viewers. For example, if the host of *Canadian Idol* devotes significant coverage to an issue, I will look at whether this element is also prevalent in the viewers' online discussions. This approach helps me to answer the third question of this research: Is the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* reflected or mirrored in how viewers' discuss their identity on the online forum?

The *agenda setting* perspective, while useful to examine whether media sets the agenda for viewers discussions, has been criticized to date because research studies have not been able to prove that media exposure has a clear effect on its audience (Lorimer & Gasher, 2001, p. 131). Further, it has been impossible for researchers mobilizing this method to isolate "media effects" on their audience from other possible influencing effects, such as the meanings provided by other institutions.¹² As a result of this, Hall's (2007 [1980]) *encoding and decoding* model has been selected to compliment the *agenda setting* model.

The *encoding and decoding* model is used in this research to examine how the producers of *Canadian Idol* encode Canadian identity and how its viewers decode this representation. Specifically, the *encoding and decoding* model is mobilized to examine whether viewers accept (*dominant-hegemonic position*), negotiate (*negotiated code*), or reject (*oppositional code*) the constructed representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol*.

¹² See pages 16-17 above for information on other institutions that work to create meaning.

Hall (2007 [1980]) discusses the *encoding and decoding* model, noting that media producers encode messages, trying to impose a preferred meaning that the audience, who decodes the messages, will accept. However, the audience, in decoding these messages, may not simply internalize the preferred meanings of producers, but may choose to negotiate or reject these meanings. This suggests that media messages are open to several different interpretations, however, ideologically driven preferred or dominant meanings circulate (Hall, 1997b). These dominant ideologies are valuable because they enable people to develop shared senses of meaning and have a shared reference point, which is useful to help in communicating with one another.

Hall (2007 [1980]) defines *dominant-hegemonic position* as occurring “when the viewer takes the connoted meaning from, say, a television newscast or current affairs programme full and straight, and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded” (p. 477).

Negotiated code, as defined by Hall (2007 [1980]), “contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations, while, at a more restricted, situational level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule” (p. 478).

Finally, Hall (2007 [1980]) defines *oppositional code* as “it is possible for a viewer perfectly to understand both the literal and the connotative inflection given by a discourse but to decode the message in a . . . contrary way” (p. 479).

The *encoding and decoding* model is useful to this study as it helps me to respond to research questions one and two. Specifically, the *encoding* part of the model allows me to look at research question one: How is Canadian identity represented on *Canadian Idol*? The

decoding part of the model allows me to respond to research question two: How do viewers of *Canadian Idol* who use the shows' online forum discuss their Canadian identity?

Sampling/Data

Canadian Idol is examined via a sample of 75 percent of the episodes of the show's 2007/fifth season.¹³ As each season is approximately four months in length, with two episodes airing per week, one episode an hour in length and the other a half hour, the entire number of episodes of the show is too large for me to examine in full.¹⁴ Thus, this study is confined to a large number of episodes from a recent season of the show. This season was broadcast from June-September 2007, with the two weekly episodes usually airing Monday evenings at 9:00 p.m. and Tuesday evenings at 8:30 p.m. (central time).¹⁵ The first weekly episode was devoted to the contestants performing a song from a list provided to them by the judges. After performing, the singers were critiqued by the judges, and following the show, viewers were given two hours to vote for the singer of their choice. On the second weekly show, the results of the viewers' votes were revealed and the contestant with the lowest number of votes was eliminated.

Canadian Idol viewers' discussion of identity is examined via a sample of those viewers who made use of *Canadian Idol*'s online forum during the 2007 show season. Forum discussions from the 2007 season are selected to be consistent with the *Canadian Idol* episode selection being from the same year. The *Canadian Idol* forum is set up with six main areas of discussion with various sub-discussions. These six main categories are: (1) *Season 5 Top 10 Competitors*, (2) *The Show – General Discussion*, (3) *Auditioning Advice*, (4) *Past*

¹³ These episodes are selected via a convenience sample.

¹⁴ The time constraint is the length of time allowed for completing this thesis project.

¹⁵ The weekly episodes aired at these times the majority of the time, however, some weeks the episodes aired at different times.

Idol Winners, (5) *Past Seasons*, and (6) *Everything Else Idol*. More specifically, the scope of this study is narrowed to those viewers who made comments on the fan club threads (a sub-discussion on the forum of *Season 5 Top 10 Competitors*), of Jaydee Bixby, Dwight D'Leon, Carly Rae Jepsen and Brian Melo. The message boards of these four contestants are specifically selected as they represent the Top Four singers of the season, and also represent a wide range of regions from across Canada – Western Canada (Carly Rae Jepsen), Prairies (Jaydee Bixby), Central Canada (Brian Melo), and Maritimes/Atlantic Canada (Dwight D'Leon). This selection of contestants reflects all major Canadian regions except for the North. A contestant from Northern Canada however could not be studied as no contestants from this region made it to the Top 10, and only Top 10 performers had a message board strictly devoted to them.

Several benefits and disadvantages are associated with the sample of viewers selected for this study. Benefits include that the data is free of biases that could result from me, the researcher, possibly influencing the discussions of the participants studied (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p. 123). This is because the forum users are in no way aware that their conversations are being monitored. Further advantages to the selected sample are that forum members discussions are easily accessible online and there is no fee to access the data. Additionally, the sample selected allows me to examine the discussions of a large group of Canadians from a diverse range of regions across the country. Disadvantages associated with the sample of viewers selected could be that in using the online forum, viewers can remain anonymous when posting their messages online, hiding as it were, behind the façade of their computer. Baym (2000) notes that although much research suggests that viewers might hide behind their computer and make-up an online persona, “disclosing an imaginary self . . . is not the norm” (p. 154). She admits that online viewers have the “time to think about what to

write before posting, [and] can enhance their ability to strategically manage the impressions they create” (p. 147). A further limitation of the data selected for observation is that the sample of viewers selected only represents those viewers that engage in discussion on the *Canadian Idol* forum and these viewers likely belong to a group of viewers who comment on television programs publicly. They are likely different from other viewers. On this, Bodroghkozy (1992) argues that viewers who publicly comment on television shows, “tend to be a particularly motivated group of television viewers” (p. 148). The group of viewers who use the *Canadian Idol* online forum therefore may not be reflective of all Canadian viewers of the show.

Berg (in Eid and Lagace, 2007) provides the following steps as a guide for conducting a content analysis study. These steps are useful and are adapted to guide the content analysis of both the *Canadian Idol* show episodes and viewers’ discussions on the online forum:

- Data are collected and made into a text (e.g., field notes, transcripts)
- Codes are analytically developed or inductively identified in the data and affixed to sets of notes or transcript pages
- Codes are transformed into categorical labels or themes
- Materials are sorted by these categories, identifying similar phrases, patterns, relationships, and commonalities or disparities
- Sorted materials are examined to isolate meaningful patterns and processes
- Identified patterns are considered in light of previous research and theories, and a small set of generalizations is established (p. 250).

I study *Canadian Idol* by viewing the sample of episodes and taking field notes

documenting how Canadian identity is represented (Appendix 1). Anderson’s (1987 in Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000) definition of field notes is helpful: “[Field notes are a] record of what [i]s meaningful . . . The goal is not to record everything . . . but to carefully note those critical moments when some meaning of the social action [i]s revealed” (p. 272). The field notes that I take are specific to the representation of Canadian identity on the show, and are studied in light of the existing literature on Canadian identity, helping me to identify the markers of

Canadian identity that could be found on the show. For example, the markers of Canadian identity may include, among other characteristics: pan-Canadianism including close-knit nation, regionalism including rural and urban differences, and cultural elements including bilingualism, race, presence of Aboriginal peoples, sporting activities especially hockey, polite, peacekeeping, friendly, uncompetitive to win big, symbolic elements such as the Canadian flag and maple leaf. The data is studied in detail to discover the specific meaning of Canadian identity in the context of the 2007 season of *Canadian Idol*. For example, on *Canadian Idol* the mention of “Toronto” could be coded as “regional identity” and sometimes “urban identity”, depending on the context. In the *Results and Analysis* section I note the specifics of the meaning of “Toronto”, how it might shift from “urban identity” to “regional identity” in certain contexts.

I examine viewers’ discussion on the online forum via reading the sample of forum postings, and then compiling the set of messages that relate to Canadian identity (Appendices 2-5). I then classify these messages according to the markers of Canadian identity driven from those developed in the literature review. I then examine this data to try to discover the potential meaning of Canadian identity for online forum users. For example, Bixby_fan69’s (August 7, 2007 in Appendix 2) comment, “im from red deer” is coded as “regional identity”. In the *Results and Analysis* section this discourse is examined to contextualize the articulation of “Red Deer”.

I compare the two sets of data, namely the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* and the discussion of Canadian identity on the online forum, and note their similarities and differences. I analyze this compared data via *agenda setting* and the *encoding and decoding* model. I use *agenda setting* to examine whether the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* sets the agenda, as it were, for forum members’ discussion. I argue

that, the similarity of the topic discussed on the show as well as on the online forum could suggest that the show sets the agenda for viewers' online discussion. However, when some markers of Canadian identity found on the show are not reflected in the forum discussions and vice-versa, this allows me to suggest that *Canadian Idol* does not set the agenda for these topics of viewer's discussion, and here viewers' discussion on Canadian identity is influenced by institutions other than television show, *Canadian Idol*. The *encoding and decoding* model contributes to the analysis by indicating whether forum members accept, negotiate, or reject the producer's constructed representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol*. The *encoding and decoding* model is used to explain that in such circumstances, where viewers' *decoding* is similar to that of the show's *encoding*, the viewers could be accepting the encoded messages on the show. However, in instances where viewers note a similar characteristic of identity to that represented on the show, but differ in their interpretation of the marker, this could indicate that *Canadian Idol* sets the agenda for viewers' discussion, but its viewers have the potential to negotiate or oppose the meaning of Canadian identity as represented on the show. These models, used together, suggest the possible influence of the show on its viewers understanding of Canadian identity.

Results and Analysis

Introduction

The television show, *Canadian Idol*, mobilizes specific characteristics or markers to represent Canadian identity. For example, pan-Canadianism including close-knit nation, regionalism including rural and urban distinctions, and cultural elements such as language, race, gender including gender equality, recreational sporting activities, Canadians as polite and friendly, the importance of family, respect for the elderly, and multiple symbols of Canadianity. Using these specific characteristics, *Canadian Idol* represents what it is to be “Canadian” for its viewers, including those viewers who use the show’s online forum to discuss, among other things, the boundaries of Canadianness.

This *Results and Analysis* section is divided into three overarching markers of “Canadian identity”. These characteristics are driven from the literature review and are found in the data collected for this research. These are: (1) Pan-Canadianism including a close-knit nation, (2) Regionalism and (3) Multi-culturality.

Pan-Canadianism including a close-knit nation

Both *Canadian Idol* and forum members note a pan-national sense of Canadian identity. “Pan-Canadianism” refers to the nation of Canada as a whole, to Canadians sharing a sense of national identity. Pan-Canadianism in the context of *Canadian Idol* and forum members’ discussion specifically is demonstrated in contestants: 1) being selected from across the nation, 2) the winner of *Canadian Idol* being chosen by the votes of Canadians from across the country, and 3) the Canadian nation being close-knit together, which is evidenced through descriptions of the nation of Canada being relatively small in relation to its landmass and its people knowing each other.

The show emphasizes pan-Canadianism by hammering again and again that its contestants represent the nation as a whole. For example, show host Ben Mulroney notes that the contestants represent the nation from East-to-West (July 9, 2007 in Appendix 1). The intention of this reference is likely to refer to the Canadian nation as a whole. However, it also suggests a horizontal image of the Canadian population, and ignores the North/South and margins/centers dynamic of the nation. Specifically, the show overlooks Canada's northern population, which is mainly populated by Aboriginal peoples (White, 2001, p. 458). This practice of ignoring the Aboriginal population is also found in the show not holding auditions in the North, which is largely populated by Aboriginal people, and no Aboriginal contestant making it to the Top 10 round of competition.

That a *Canadian Idol* personality ignores the nation's Aboriginal peoples is not surprising. This is because many previous representations of Canada have excluded this section of the population (Higgins, 2001, pp. 10, 15).¹⁶ On this absence of Aboriginal peoples, Ignatieff (1993) points out that when he was a child, "First Nations, the native peoples, they didn't figure in my equation of the country at all" (pp. 109-110). Nicholson (2003) notes that general research and policy on Aboriginal people have always "served broader hegemonic interests that at times, have coincided with Aboriginal interests, but have never included Aboriginal interests in their formulation" (p. 22) of Canada. She continues with a discussion on film representations of Aboriginal peoples between 1895 and 1925, "[they] tak[e] place in a world in which Aboriginal Peoples are believed to be destined for 'extinction' through disease, genetic and cultural assimilation" (Nicholson, 2003, p. 23). This exclusion of Aboriginal people on the show suggests that *Canadian Idol* is following in this trend, and these few commentaries by researchers certainly help to explain why a television

¹⁶ See pages 12-13 above for discussion on traditional representation of Aboriginal peoples.

show such as *Canadian Idol* excludes a vertical representation (North/South) of Canadian identity, excluding Aboriginal Canadians from representation, and representing Canadianness within East/West boundaries.

Another example of how the show represents Canada pan-nationally is in the discourse of the show on how the winner is selected. For example, the show's discourse suggests that the winner is decided by the votes of Canadians from across the nation. This is done, for example, through judge Zack Werner commenting (August 21, 2007 in Appendix 1): "**Canada** picks the *Idol*", and show host Ben Mulroney commenting (July 11, 2007 in Appendix 1): "**Canada**, you decide who stays and who goes, and by the end of the summer there will only be just one [contestant] left, your next *Canadian Idol*." On the forum, Sarah (July 12, 2007 in Appendix 2) writes, speaking similarly to the show, that Canada decides who wins: "**Canada** made a good decision with Annika". Forum member, Mayr agrees (September 12, 2007 in Appendix 5): "You did it Brian!! Everyone in . . . **CANADA** thinks you are terrific!!" (Emphasis added.) These examples, from the forum reflect viewers decoding to accept the show's discourse as common sense – that Canada selects the *Idol* winner. This indicates that the representation of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* is reflected or mirrored in how viewers discuss their Canadian identity on the online forum. These examples from the forum also illustrate the process through which an apparent innocent discourse could become a hegemonic ideology. On "hegemony", Hall argues (2007 [1980]), "[This occurs] when the viewer takes the connoted meaning from, say, a television newscast or current affairs programme full and straight, and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded" (p. 477). hooks adds (1996), "Hegemony requires that ideological assertions become self-evident cultural assumptions. Its effectiveness depends on subordinated peoples accepting the dominant ideology as 'normal

reality or common sense” (p. 75). From this perspective, I want to suggest that the ways in which forum members speak similarly to the show’s discourse: “Canada picks the *Idol*” (Werner, August 21, 2007 in Appendix 1), reflects their participation in this show’s hegemonic construction of common sense. In addition, this level of participation could be an apparent indication that television representations influence the process of viewers understanding of phenomena.

Although some forum members accept the encoded discourse of the show, another forum member, Colin (June 23, 2007 in Appendix 4), questions *Canadian Idol*’s discourse and negotiates with it. Colin comments:

Power voting produces a result that is what power voters want, which in my eyes, is not necessarily what all of Canada wants. This is a show searching for Canadian talent and why not give every Canadian, regardless of their age or ability, or other time commitments, to have equal opportunity at having a say in who we all pick as our next Canadian Idol . . . resulting in us finding a true Canadian Idol that the majority of Canadians can feel pride in . . .

Hall (2007 [1980]) argues that negotiation, “contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations, while, at a more restricted, situational level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule” (p. 478). Based on this meaning, in applying it to Colin’s comment, we see that he accepts the show’s procedure, but adds a new meaning. Like the show’s discourse, he feels that the winner is picked by Canadians and the winner should be someone that Canadians “can feel pride in”. However, he suggests that some structural components of the show, for example, the voting system make it that all Canadians do not select the winner of the show.

Canadian Idol’s discourse seems to lead viewers, such as Colin, to believe that all Canadians decide the winner of the show, that an entertainment television show, *Canadian*

Idol, could in fact function as an official institution which has the privilege to and must, for instance, “give every Canadian . . . [an] equal opportunity at having a say in who [is] pick[ed] as [the] next Canadian Idol” (Colin, June 23, 2007 in Appendix 4). However, the show’s structural components make it that it is impossible for all Canadians to decide who wins the show. Couldry’s (2004) research helps to explain this phenomenon. He argues that viewers of reality television programming do not have much control over the outcome, even though the show’s discourse leads them to believe that they have this control.¹⁷

In this case of this research, the structural components of the show make it that it is impossible for all Canadians to decide who wins the show, even though the show’s discourse suggests otherwise – that all Canadians get to select the winner of the show. These structural components include that Canadians cannot vote whenever they want to, and also that it is a private television show concerned with attracting particular advertisers to the show which are interested in a certain audience, that not all Canadians watch the show and vote for contestants.

In addition to “power voting” (Colin, June 23, 2007 in Appendix 4), other structural elements of the show contribute to the winner of *Canadian Idol* not reflecting the votes of the entire population of Canadian viewers. Specifically, there are cases where the host of the show wrongly identifies the telephone numbers fans are to use to vote for their favourite contestant(s). On busy telephone lines, JDLove (September 13, 2007 in Appendix 2) notes that the telephone lines for voting are busy much of the time and she could not get all of her votes in. On wrong numbers to vote for, Jim (September 12, 2007 in Appendix 2) and <3Morgan<3 (June 26, 2007 in Appendix 5) both try to vote for their favourite contestant and find that the number given to them by *Canadian Idol* host, Ben Mulroney, leads to them to

¹⁷ See page 23 above for Couldry’s research.

vote for the wrong contestant. Other factors, related to technology, are busy telephone lines for voting, and the show being held at different times weekly, making it difficult for fans to know when to watch the show, especially considering that Canada is made-up of multiple time zones. On the show being held at different times weekly, JeffluvzCarlyJ (July 24, 2007 in Appendix 4) comments that the show does not have a regular time slot on CTV's schedule and this could affect the amount of viewers who turn in to watch the show: "it's all over the map, it's the easiest show to miss if you are not a regular viewer." These comments by forum members suggest that while *Canadian Idol*'s discourse suggests that the winner of the show is Canada's choice, in actual fact, some structural aspects of the show prevent Canada from making this choice.

From Pan-Canadianism to a close-knit nation

Canada is stereotypically known as being a close-knit nation (Manning, 2000). The host of *Canadian Idol* feeds into this stereotype. Similarly, it could be argued that some forum members understand their identity in relation to the same stereotype. For example, it is likely with this concept of "close-knit nation" in mind that the host of *Canadian Idol*, Ben Mulroney (July 9, 2007 in Appendix 1), says to contestant Brian Melo, "Let's talk about your fans. Who are all these people? Do you know all these people? Scream if you're related to this man!" to which Melo (July 9, 2007 in Appendix 1) responds, "Ahh, I know most of them, I know some of them." In suggesting that fans across Canada know Brian Melo and vice-versa, Mulroney and Melo are participating in constructing a useful myth of popular participation (Couldry 2004). According to Harrington and Bielby (1995) fans want "to personally connect with" their hero (p. 37). In the case of *Canadian Idol*, the fans and *Idol* contestants are asked to feel close to each other, to know each other, as if this was doable and

possible in this Canadian context. Hartley (2004) notes that in the case of reality television shows, there are situations where the fans participate in the process of creating the meaning of the show, and this seems to be the case here as both the producers and fans feed the stereotype of Canada as a “close-knit” nation.

Another stereotypical representation of Canada as a “close-knit” nation is evidenced on the forum with Hairclip (July 11, 2007 in Appendix 4) asking fellow forum member Murray if he is related to *Canadian Idol* contestant Clifton Murray. She likely draws this conclusion as Canada is stereotypically known as being “close-knit” (Manning, 2000). She does not consider however that Murray may actually be using a pseudo-name online as is a practice among some online users (Baym, 2000). She also does not consider that as Canada has a population of approximately 33,100,000 people it is impossible for all Canadians to know each other. Anderson’s (1991) notion of “imagined communities” could be well applied to this example. Through this notion, Anderson explains that people often “imagine” that they know those with whom they share a nation:

[The nation] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (p. 6).

The notion of “imagined community” could be applied to this example to explain that Hairclip, could be imagining Murray, with whom she shares a country. Weber (2007) specifically suggests that television media encourage people to “imagine” that they know each other by providing their viewers with a window, as it were, into others lives. This could be applied here, in particular to the example, from the show, of Brian Melo and his fans.

Regionalism

In addition to representing Canadian identity pan-nationally, Canadian identity is also represented on the show and discussed on the forum according to region. For example, the host of *Canadian Idol*, Ben Mulroney, on August 20, 2007, introduces the contestants at the start of the show by stating their home province, followed by their name: “Representing Regina, Saskatchewan, it’s Matt Rapley. He’s the pride of West Pubnico, Nova Scotia, he’s Dwight D’eon. From Drumheller, Alberta, Mr. Jaydee Bixby. From Mission, B.C., hello Carly Rae Jepsen, and he calls Hamilton, Ontario, home, he’s Brain Melo” (Appendix 1). Grossberg, Waertella, Whitney and Wise’s (2006) discussion on prominence may help illustrate the significance of Mulroney introducing contestants by their region at the start of the show.¹⁸ This literature helps us understand that by Mulroney opening the episode in associating the contestants by their region, he places emphasis on and suggests prominence to Canadian regional identities.

When Ben Mulroney (August 20, 2007 in Appendix 1) introduces the contestants by region, the show’s camera shoots, directly afterwards, to a shot of their fan-base. This representation emphasizes the relationship between contestants, fandom and regional affiliation.

Zack Werner, a judge on the show, directly suggests that viewers vote for contestants based on the contestant coming from their region of origin. This practice is referred to as “regional voting”. For example, Werner comments (August 13, 2007 in Appendix 1) to Dwight D’eon (of Nova Scotia), “If you’re still here next week . . . [then] the East coast [will have] got[ten] that one right.” Werner is suggesting that votes for D’eon come from his home region of the East Coast; that Canadian viewers vote according to region.

¹⁸ See pages 29-30 above for discussion on prominence.

In looking to the forum, the messages posted provide an example of how, in fact, some viewers are actually voting. According to these online messages, some forum members indeed vote for *Idol* contestants based their being from their region. For example, Babyjenks9 (June 6, 2007) writes, “it’s gonna be great to see someone from our area on Canadian idol!” Similarly, KaylaGrace (June 6, 2007) writes: “I think that it is great that the[re] is someone from around here on Idol.” These examples reveal that these viewers decode the show’s encoding on the practice of voting for contestants based on their region; and that these viewers accept the show’s dominant hegemonic ideology on this. However, not all viewers agree with the show’s encoding of this practice, namely, that fans are regionally based. An example is Idolized_one (June 14, 2007; June 19, 2007 in Appendix 2) opposing the show’s discourse. She writes that she does not base her vote on the contestants region but rather she votes on contestants’ personality: “I don’t care where the “roots” come from. He is ‘Jaydee’ . . . I really like this kid’s personality - he is a natural on stage.” Like Idolized_one, Idoladdict (June 27, 2007 in Appendix 4) writes that she does not vote regionally, and is “annoyed” by this practice. She notes, “how I feel about voting regionally . . . I’m totally annoyed by it, I think it often ruins the show because less talented contestants with more regional support get undeserved spots in the finals.” These examples from the forum illustrate that viewers have diverse reasons for voting, including that some, like the show suggests, vote for contestants based on their region of origin.

Also on regional identity, some viewers of *Canadian Idol*, including those who are members of the forum and those who attend the show, note their regional identity through using phrases/slogans that place emphasis on their home region. For example, on the forum, some fan club members select name identifiers for themselves that are regional in nature. These include: “NLGirl”, “newfieduck33”, “NORTHERN BC FAN” and “BCmomof2”.

Some viewers in the show audience wave signs with regional slogans. These include, “NFLD is here” (July 3, 2007 in Appendix 1) and “Berte Falls, NL Love You” (July 23, 2007 in Appendix 1). Another fan waves a sign in support of Jaydee Bixby from the Prairies. This sign reads: “Howdy Lawtey Jay Dee” (July 23, 2007 in Appendix 1). This sign, through using “twang” dialect (“Howdy Lawtey”), reflects support for Bixby’s rural Prairie lifestyle as “twang” is an English language dialect typically used by people from rural areas. This use of “twang” to show support for Jaydee suggests that this particular fan embraces his dialect.

The notion of prominence could again be applied to *Canadian Idol*’s representation of Canada’s regions, specifically on those locations that are selected for audition and those that are not. For example, for the 2007 season, *Canadian Idol* holds auditions in the following locations: Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, London, Montreal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Halifax, St. John's, Oshawa and Toronto. This selection of audition locations well represents a Canadian identity by *Canadian Idol* that is limited to a horizontal, urban representation of Canada, excluding the nation's northern territories and rural regions. The show also articulates a regional sense of Canadianness through the selection of these particular cities, giving prominence to the nation’s southern and urban areas.

The privileged representation of Canada’s southern urban areas by *Canadian Idol* producers could be a result of the judges deciding that they wanted to hold auditions in places that they relate to, places that are less expensive for them to travel to, and places where they are likely able to draw a larger number of participants. Chambers’ (1983) argument on “researchers” lends itself well here. “Researchers” could be substituted in this context for “producers of *Canadian Idol*”. He argues that researchers tend to stay in urban areas because it is cheaper and safer for them to conduct their studies in these locations (p. 7). These benefits may be applicable to *Canadian Idol* as it is likely quicker, cheaper, and there are

likely larger groups of contestants to draw from in urban regions. Thus, it is more advantageous for the show's production team to travel to urban areas than other Canadian regions.

Canadian Idol reinforces Canadian regional identity by referring to the audition rounds of the competition by the region where they are held. For example, at the start of the audition in Ottawa/Gatineau, show host, Ben Mulroney comments, "Our nation's capital – welcome to Ottawa" (June 5, 2007 in Appendix 1). In applying the *agenda setting* model we discover that forum members follow suit, as similarly to the show, *Idoladdict* (June 16, 2007 in Appendix 4), in referring to the audition rounds, does so in terms of region, "I'm hoping we get a little something [of Carly Rae] in the Toronto rounds." That forum members use similar terms to *Canadian Idol* to discuss the audition rounds reflects the show likely setting the agenda for viewers' discussion, and the *encoding and decoding* model suggests that forum members are decoding the representation of Canadian regional identity like *Canadian Idol*'s encoding.

Regional identity is also be characterized according to Canada's rural and urban regions. For example, in some episodes *Canadian Idol* airs features of contestants in their region of origin. Specifically, during the audition round of the competition, the judges visit the Prairies. This audition round is featured on the show and a female contestant wearing a cowgirl hat and boots is shown shoveling manure at her family farm. Images of horses, a ranch, small bodies of water and snow are included in the representation (June 5, 2007 in Appendix 1). This image suggests that Canadians from the Prairies are hardworking, surrounded by filth and nature. Another example is of the auditions held in Vancouver, British Columbia, a metropolitan area. Here the contestants are depicted as laidback through remaining silent while show host, Ben Mulroney, introduces them and comments that the

West coast is known for being laidback (June 12, 2007 in Appendix 1). This image of urban Canadians taking life easy is drastically different from the depiction of the girl from the Prairies who was shown to be hardworking. This suggests that *Canadian Idol* represents different rural/urban regional articulations of Canadian identity. Another example of the show drawing distinction to Canadian rural identity is in it featuring contestant, Dwight D'eon of Nova Scotia, as a fisher and limiting its representation to this. Indeed, D'eon had previously worked as a fisher, however, that *Canadian Idol* chose to focus its portrayal of D'eon's life solely on him as a fisher reflects the show reinforcing the stereotype of Maritime regional identity, characterized according to its coastal environment and fish industry.¹⁹

This literature on ideology is useful because it helps us explain the ways in which *Canadian Idol* could include and exclude certain details of contestants lives in its representation. Grossberg et al. (2006) point out, "Ideologies are not merely particular systems of representation or ways of seeing. They are also ways of excluding and limiting, for they are the boundaries on what we are able to understand as possible" (p. 199). Similarly, Servaes (1997) notes that ideologies classify phenomena in limited ways, representing and also not representing certain aspects (p. 84). This literature on ideology helps explain that as *Canadian Idol* includes and excludes certain details of contestants' Canadian regional identity, the show naturalizes certain typologies of rural and urban Canadian regional identities. For example, the show naturalizes certain representations of persons from the Prairies as farmhands, persons from the West coast as laidback, and persons from the Maritimes as fishers. However, the girl from the Prairies likely identifies herself as more than a farmhand, the contestants from the West coast likely identify themselves in more ways than being laidback, and D'eon likely identifies himself as more than a fisher. The

¹⁹ See page 14 above for discussion on Maritime regional identity.

show's representation of these contestants however, is limited and stereotypical, excluding other aspects of their identity. This characterization of Canadian rural/urban regional identities by *Canadian Idol* could be problematic for viewers as they may come to understand Canadian identity according to the show's limited and stereotypical representation. As viewers of *Canadian Idol* may come to understand their fellow Canadians and Canadian identity, at least in part, by how these phenomena are portrayed in the media, such as via *Canadian Idol*, this could be troubling as the people represented are likely not depicted as they are in real life, yet viewers may understand these representations as real.

After *Canadian Idol* airs the feature on contestant Dwight D'eon, forum members discuss the segment. Joe_17 contributes to this discussion (July 5, 2007 in Appendix 3). He questions how *Canadian Idol* is able to secure the footage of D'eon dressed as a fisher with the fishing boat. He raises this question as it is not fishing season when *Canadian Idol* filmed the segment: "I was wondering how they managed to go fishing for Canadian Idol where the season was closed . . . Im suprised that the fisheries aloud them to do it!" By Joe_17 noting that the show filmed this segment, although it was not fishing season, indicates that the producers of the show have a certain power, an ability to get things done that normally do not happen. Grossberg et al. (2006) discuss how institutions, such as television stations, tend to occupy this privileged position in society:

[T]he institutions and relationships that constitute a society always embody structures of power and inequality. If a society is to continue existing, it must, therefore, ensure that its particular relations of power – its particular hierarchies of economic, political, and cultural power – continue to operate with some appearance of legitimacy in the lives of the general population. One way of doing this is to use force to control people's lives and to actively suppress opposition (p. 193).

This literature helps explain that the institution, CTV, might have a powerful position to exert control, to possibly influence the fisheries to let *Canadian Idol* staff have access to a boat on

the ocean, even during non-fishing season. In applying the *agenda setting* model to this example, we can see that *Canadian Idol* could be setting the agenda for its viewers' discussion on the online forum. Application of the *encoding and decoding* model suggests that forum member Joe_17 (July 5, 2007 in Appendix 3) reflects on *Canadian Idol's* discourse of D'eon's regional identity, yet he does not simply accept the show's representations. He poses questions.

The show further represents Canada's regional distinctions by noting that people from the nation's diverse regions, specifically those from urban and rural areas, may not understand each other. For example, show judge, Zack Werner (July 9, 2007 in Appendix 1), comments to contestant Jaydee Bixby, "I'm going back to the cement pond personally. You know between the twang and the . . . country song, you couldn't have done anything further away from the kind of music I like and know anything about" and "You and I sure don't come from the same place" (July 2, 2007 in Appendix 1). The use of "cement pond" by Werner could be taken as him denotatively referring to "cement" a substance used to build things such as buildings and "pond" a body of water. Connotatively, however, and the meaning of likely the most importance in this context, "cement pond" could refer to an urban environment made-up of many buildings. The use of "twang" and "country song" in this context could connote Jaydee Bixby's rural lifestyle. By referring to Bixby in this way, that he does not like or know anything about his music, or come from the same place as him, Werner could be pointing out that he, himself, belongs in an urban environment, and he dislikes and does not understand rural Canadian identity.

Hall's (1997a) research may help explain why Werner draws this distinction between his urban lifestyle and Jaydee Bixby's rural one. Hall notes, "Power uses difference as a way of marking off who does and who does not belong" (p. 298). In this case, Werner, as a person

in power due to his position as judge of Bixby's performance, could be attempting to mark who does and who does not belong. By speaking to the differences between himself and Bixby, and by his criticizing Bixby, Werner could be suggesting that Bixby's rural lifestyle does not belong. Specifically, he may be suggesting that urban life is more logical and understandable, and that the rural lifestyle is not comprehensible. In essence, Werner could be articulating that an urban lifestyle is more valued than a rural one in his or *Canadian Idol's* privileged representation of Canadian identity.

On the forum, Canadian rural identity is approached differently then on the show. Whereas the show seems to be representing rural Canadian identity negatively, Startrax (June 17, 2007 in Appendix 2), from Vancouver, writes positively on her visit to one of Canada's smaller communities. She writes, "The people . . . super friendly . . . It felt very tranquil, peaceful and very safe walking around town." Similarly, BehindBlueEyes (July 17, 2007 in Appendix 3) also writes positively on rural Canada, "This is what I always loved about Yarmouth (rural area in Nova Scotia) . . . Everyone bands together and everyone takes care of each other. You certainly don't see that in the big city." These comments by forum members suggest that they are not persuaded by the show personalities, to accept the represented more negative articulation of Canadian rural identity. Their comments also suggest that the show is not all-powerful to influence viewers understanding of their Canadian identity, and they could be influenced by other factors, including their personal experiences.

Forum members also discuss urban Canadian regional identity. Lawdymissclawdy (November 6, 2007; November 7, 2007 in Appendix 2) describes Toronto as "huge", populated by "sketchy people" and adds that she, "cant manage being in a huge city alone". Some forum members respond to Lawdymissclawdy's articulation of Toronto, but offer a different perspective. SingerGirl72 (November 6, 2007; November 7, 2007 in Appendix 2)

writes, “wow I'm like soo the opposite... I love Toronto” and frozenXkiss (November 9, 2007 in Appendix 2) writes, “i'd love to go to toronto, it seems so great and its basically canada's own l.a or something like that, lol.” These comments reveal that forum members understand urban Canadian identity in different ways. Some embrace it. Others do not. These comments do not reference examples from the show. This suggests that forum members are not influenced by the show, in understanding this aspect of their identity.

Canadian regional identity could also be represented on the show through the appearance of the contestants. Kompare's (2004) research helps explain that this could be a common television production technique, to make participants into “identifiable characters” (p. 104). For example, on *Canadian Idol*, contestants are identified by their region of origin. One illustration of this is that *Canadian Idol* represents rural Canadians such as Jaydee Bixby in Western style shirts, which could reinforce his rural heritage as this style of clothing is typical of Western regions. Asa Berger (1992) helps explain that people from different regions tend to dress differently (p. 12). She comments:

Even within California, for example, there are great differences between Northern California and Southern California and between San Francisco (and the Bay Area) and the Los Angeles area. This can be seen in the major industries found in the two cities, in the way people from the cities dress (p. 12).

Another example is that when contestant, Dwight D'eon, of rural heritage wears an outfit that may not be typical of his rural roots – pants with chain attachments, there is quite a stir on the forum. His hometown viewers are taken aback by this style of clothing, however one of his city-based fans notes that this type of clothing does not surprise her. She explains that the reason for her lack of surprise could be that she lives in the city and this style of clothing is typical of city dwellers. She comments, “People have different clothing styles. I guess Im use to it since my brother is a rocker/ i live in toronto?” (Froggurl87, August 14, 2007 in

Appendix 3). This example further reflects rural and urban differences, and it also indicates that *Canadian Idol* sets the agenda for viewer's discussions, yet viewers decode the representation in different ways, depending on their regional identity.

A final point on regional rural and urban identities is that forum members' engage in community-level recruitment of voters, and their voter recruitment strategies seem to be influenced according to whether the area where they are from is rural or urban. For example, ECILA (July 6, 2007 in Appendix 5), from Hamilton, a larger city, notes how she recruits voters for contestant Brian Melo: "called a long lists of ph's fro Hamilton & area media . . . not to mention passed out flyers posted flyers in bus stops & businesses." That this forum member is from an urban area, and that her voter recruitment strategies mainly focus on targeting businesses, reflects her urban environment. Specifically, this is the case, as urban areas are known for their large business-base. Unlike this urban-based fan, rural-based Canadians have tended to rely on more traditional, small-scale recruitment strategies. For example, contestant Dwight D'eon's fans, from a small town in Nova Scotia, hold a "Dwight D'eon Day". The special activities for this day include face painting and potato sac races (KewlSummerBreeze, August 7, 2007 in Appendix 3). These recruitment strategies are quite different from the activities that their urban counterpart undertook and suggests distinction between rural and urban Canadian identities.

In conclusion to this discussion on Canadian regional identities, *Canadian Idol* gives prominence to this aspect – regional identity – of Canadian identity. Specifically, the show grants prominence to areas where contestants are from and select Canadian regions, those it chooses to represent. In granting prominence through representing only certain regions however, the show does not grant prominence/excludes other regions from representation. This connotes *Canadian Idol* working within, or attempting to naturalize a limited

representation of Canada's regions, including provincial and territorial, and urban and rural. It is also a useful, simplistic way, for the show personalities to adapt the *Idol* format for its national audience.

On Canadian regional identity, we learned that forum members sometimes discuss practices of Canadian identity in ways similar to that of the show's representation. For example, both referred to audition rounds of the show by their regional location. In such cases, this suggests that *Canadian Idol* sets the agenda for forum members' discussions, and viewers accept the show's discourse. However, in other cases where *Canadian Idol* may have set the agenda for their discussion, forum members did not accept the encoding of the show. This could be evidenced, for example, through the viewers not accepting *Canadian Idol*'s representations of rural and urban identities. An illustration of this is that the show attempted to portray a more positive image of urban locations than rural ones and several forum members noted a positive experience of small towns.²⁰

Multi-culturality

The literature suggests that Canadian identity is made-up of many cultural elements. In looking to the show and forum data, we learn that this could indeed be replicated here. *Canadian Idol* constructs Canadian identity for its viewers through multiple cultural elements. These include language, race, gender, recreational sporting activities, politeness, friendliness, family, age, the need to have respect for elderly members of society, and a multiplicity of symbols of Canadianity. These various characteristics speak to the multi-culturality of Canadian identity.

²⁰ See page 51-52 above for forum members' discussion on positive experiences of small towns.

Firstly, I want to touch on the point of language. The show is situated within the framework of a dominant Anglophone system: CTV, an English television station. Driven from the television station being Anglophone, the policies make it that *Canadian Idol* contestants cannot sing in any language other than English, even though, in reality, Canadians speak a variety of languages. The institutionalized policies of the government of Canada make it that Canada is a multicultural country, however, in *Canadian Idol* fixing it that contestants' cannot sing in a language other than English, the show manufactures an exclusive privileged representation of Canadian identity centered on Anglophone Canadianicity. This depiction suggests that *Canadian Idol* is not concerned with representing an idol representative of the nation, but instead, an idol that signifies only a certain section of the population – Anglophone.

The show, however, encourages some Francophone Canadians to try-out. This is illustrated in its producers holding auditions in some largely Francophone populated regions, Montreal and Ottawa/Gatineau. However, although some Francophone contestants try-out, they struggle as the show's policies make it that they are not allowed to sing in their primary language, but must sing in English only. Further, when they sing, they are criticized for their inferior English skills. For example, *Canadian Idol* judge, Zack Werner (June 18, 2007 in Appendix 1), speaks critically to a Francophone Canadian who struggles with remembering the lines to the song: "I wonder if [the song] was in French, do you think you could remember faster?" This practice on the show, of not allowing contestants to sing in the language of their choice, but in English, illustrate the show fixing its representation of linguistic Canadian identity on the English language. This show practice is also consistent with Ignatieff's (1993) argument, "English – being the language of global commerce – will sweep other languages aside" (p. 128). As the show airs on an English language private

television station, and relies on advertising revenue for support, it likely best garners these advertising dollars by being an English language show. This could be one rationale as to why the show limits contestants to singing in the English language.

On the forum, linguistic Canadian identity is also fixated on the English language. This is evident in that forum members solely converse in English. Their non-use of French could be a reflection of the viewers of *Canadian Idol* likely being Anglophone, which could be a result of the show being on an English television station. It could however, also reflect Francophone Canadians not feeling able or welcome to participate on the forum, perhaps as a result of the forum members' wide use of English. Although forum members do not converse in French, one forum member briefly references the Canadian Francophone population. In this instance, Canucklehead (June 20, 2007 in Appendix 4) urges fellow forum members to be mindful of the Francophone Canadian population. She specifically suggests that the proposed Carly Rae Jepsen fan club name "Carly Queue" should not be considered as it might be offensive to French Canadians.²¹ Her noting this demonstrates her being respectful of the Canadian Francophone population, and could reflect her having respect for Canada's diverse languages. That Canucklehead takes this action reflects her engaging in friendly behaviour towards the Francophone population. Baym's (2000) research helps us understand this: "Friendliness is associated with the courteousness . . . of the interaction" (p. 29). Indeed, Canucklehead's comment reflects her being courteous, and thus friendly.

Even among the Anglophone contestants who are the most privileged group of contestants on *Canadian Idol*, as a result of their being able to perform in their primary language of choice, there are different levels of Anglophone acceptability as to what the show

²¹ Canucklehead (June 20, 2007 in Appendix 4) however does not specifically note the reason why this name would be offensive.

privileges. This could be a result of *Canadian Idol* privileging those Anglophones who speak the more metropolitan and central Anglophone Canadian dialect, and discriminating against those Canadians who speak another Anglophone dialect, specifically “twang” English. This discrimination could be evidenced on the show by the judges making several comments criticizing contestant Jaydee Bixby from the Prairies for speaking in this dialect. On this, judge Zack Werner (July 29, 2007) comments, “Well Jaydee . . . I think that was dishonest to twang.” Bixby (July 29, 2007) responds by defending himself, “I’m from Alberta though.” While Bixby is criticized for his “twang” dialect, the speech of other contestants; particularly, those contestants from urban, central Canadian locations are not criticized. This reality fits into Dyer’s (in Gitting, 2002) assertion on “Whiteness” which could be replaced in this setting for “Canadians”. He argues, “some white people are whiter than others” and “[T]here is a fluidity in whiteness that ‘determines who is to be included and excluded from the category’ and also discriminates ‘among those deemed to be within it’” (p. 34). The first part of Dyer’s comment on fluidity, that this results in some persons being included and others being excluded from a specific group could be useful, in this context, to help explain that although all Canadians share the same nation and national culture, *Canadian Idol* producers determine that only Anglophone Canadians are included in the show’s privileged representation of what is “Canadian”. The second part of Dyer’s comment, specifically that discrimination also exists within the included group, is also important to consider. This assertion could be applied to *Canadian Idol*’s practices of representation, that even among the Anglophone Canadians that are privileged on the show, *Canadian Idol* only privileges a certain subset of Anglophone Canadian identity, specifically; those Canadians that do not speak “twang” English.

Although *Canadian Idol* personalities criticize contestant Jaydee Bixby for his

“twang” dialect and privilege the cultural identity of urban, central Canadian Anglophones, forum members are not convinced that this is an appropriate representation of Canadian identity. They criticize the show’s representation of Canadian linguistic identity. For example, Fb2169 (July 31, 2007 in Appendix 2) defends Bixby’s use of the English language by noting, “the judges were harsh to Jaydee – ‘cowboy twang’ is part of the lifestyle – especially in Alberta – where [Jaydee] grew up.” The show, in this case, could be setting the agenda for viewers’ discussions; however, viewers are not decoding the representation like the encoding on the show. In this case, some forum discussions produce an oppositional response to *Canadian Idol*’s representation.

Also on Canadian linguistic identity, some forum members note that Canadians, such as show contestant Jaydee Bixby, have good enunciation (Jim, August 30, 2007 in Appendix 2; Lorelaisweetie, August 30, 2007 in Appendix 2). For example, Jim notes (August 30, 2007 in Appendix 2), “I like the fact that I can undersand every word he sings. He enunciates clearly” and Loreleisweetie notes (August 20, 2008 in Appendix 2), “that's the word.. ‘Enunciation’.. Absolutely Jaydee doesn't slurr His words.. He has melody.. and joy.. and soul.. He is Wonderful”. The show however does not mention this point on enunciation. This suggests that *Canadian Idol* does not set the agenda for viewers discourse on this aspect, of Canadian identity and that its viewers have a frame(s) of reference, other than *Canadian Idol*, from which they make sense of their Canadian identity. Lorimer and Gasher (2001) note that indeed there are several different institutions that work to create meaning in society.²² Halloran’s (1996) articulation of how people come to develop their sense of meaning is also be valuable here: “people select from what is provided, and these selections reflect, amongst other things, other media and non-media experience, opportunity, ability, etc. which exist

²² See pages 16-17 above for discussion on our institutions that work to create meaning.

within and between societies” (p. 237). This could suggest that Canadians such as Jim (August 30, 2007 in Appendix 2) and Lorelaisweetie (August 30, 2007 in Appendix 2) learned of enunciation as an element of Canadian linguistic identity through another institution, and apply this meaning to help make sense of the show’s representation.

In addition to representing what counts as “Canadian identity” in terms of language, *Canadian Idol* also articulates Canadian racial identity, naturalizing a preferred representation of race. Race is represented on the show, through the contestants being of a variety of racial backgrounds including Caucasian, Asian and Black. This representation is somewhat reflective of Canadian reality as the government of Canada, through its immigration policy, welcomes people from a variety of countries, thus a variety of races, into the country each year (Canadian Heritage, 2007c). However, *Canadian Idol*’s system of representing race could also be stereotypical. Specifically, *Canadian Idol* could be working within a stereotypical framework of “Black” Canadians. Harvey (2004) discusses this stereotypical framework and notes a consequence of this representation for viewers: “By filming the stereotypes of a certain society, the show reinforces what we are to think of these differences . . . [viewers] enjoy the black caricature, not the black culture” (pp. 215-218). *Canadian Idol* could be one such show that through its representation could help channel how its viewers think of their fellow Canadians’ racial identities. For example, the show has a team of hairstylists who select hairdos for and style the contestants. Their choice of hairdo for Black contestant, Mila Miller, is the afro. This afro hairdo is likely a deliberate hairstyle selection for Miller, to signify her Blackness. This is because Blacks most frequently wear this style. *Canadian Idol*’s representation of contestants racial identities could be problematic for its viewers as they could come to develop their sense of meaning of Canadian racial identities, such as Black Canadian identity, in a limited way, through this narrow portrayal of

a Black contestant, Miller. Although viewers could be influenced by television's representation on race, and Barker (1997) argues that this could be the case, "Races do not exist outside of representation but are formed in and by it in a process of social and political struggle" (p. 61); *Canadian Idol*'s viewers do not seem to be impacted by the show's portrayal of race. I make this argument because forum members do not discuss Black Canadian identity. This non-discussion could suggest that the show does not set the agenda for viewers' discussion on race and viewers are not influenced by the show's portrayal of Black Canadians, or it could suggest that this meaning is already naturalized in the minds of viewers, and they do not discuss it as they do not merit it noteworthy.

On the forum, race is only briefly referred to. This is done through a brief discussion on contestant, Brian Melo's, racial background. On this issue, Canucklover (August 2, 2007 in Appendix 5) poses the question, "So is Brian Portugese . . . a friend at work said he was as she said Melo is Portegese name?" Jesslovesdaryl responds (August 2, 2007 in Appendix 5), "Yeah, I'm pretty sure that Melo is a Portuguese name" and Jman confirms (August 3, 2007 in Appendix 5), "I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT HE IS PORTUGUESE, MELO IS A PORKCHOP NAME ALL THE WAY!!!!!! . . . BY THE WAY NO OFFENCE TO THE PORTUGUESE OUT THERE". That Canucklover asks whether Melo is Portuguese illustrates her interest in *Canadian Idol* contestants' racial backgrounds. Although Melo's descent is discussed on the forum, it is not mentioned on the show. This suggests that the show does not set the agenda for viewers' discussion on race but rather viewers have other sources of knowledge to inform their discussion. In this instance, this knowledge is from particular people, such as Jman, who know Melo's heritage.

Gender is another characteristic of Canadian identity mobilized by *Canadian Idol* show personalities. Its representation of gender could be specific to this context. The show

represents gender, in part, through equality. The show does this through selecting an equal number of male and female contestants for the Top 22 and Top 10 rounds of the competition. Further, the contestants in the Top 22 to Top 10 are placed into two groups: male and female. This element of equality could be particularly important for defining Canadian identity, as it is likely that not all countries in the world promote the equality of both genders, even not all *Idol* shows and seasons may do this.

On the forum, members discuss contestants according to their gender. The division of the contestants into “male” and “female” groups on the show possibly explains why viewers discuss contestants according to their gender. For example, SingerGirl72 (July 4, 2007 in Appendix 2) notes, “I think that naomi will be leaving, and possibly scarlett or martha will be going home for the **girls**. I would love if Mila, and scarlett went but I dont see that hapenning. as far as the **guys**, I dno who will go home”. (Emphasis added.)

Gender is also encoded on the show through its personalities referring to some of the female contestants in a very particular way, through feminine terms, creating a distinct feminine identity. For example, judges call female contestant, Carly Rae Jepsen, “loveable” (Farley Flex, August 20, 2007 in Appendix 1) and “beautiful” (Sass Jordan, July 29, 2007 in Appendix 1). Sturken and Cartwright (2003) help explain that it is not uncommon for females to be viewed in terms of their gender. Specifically, they note that women are often characterized, “by their appearance, in essence their ability to be pleasing to look at” (p. 81). Some forum members discuss gender similar to that of the show, referring to female singers through feminine words. For example, JeffluvzCarlyJ notes (August 12, 2007 in Appendix 4), “Tara ***** for sure. I mean I’d love to date her”, Dontlikeowen (June 13, 2007 in Appendix 4) notes that female contestants, “always strike me as the cutesy, doe-eyed type. Maybe the term I’m looking for is ‘girly’”, and Okrock (June 13, 2007 in Appendix 4) notes

of Jepsen, “She’s cute, can sing pretty well.” These comments by forum members reflect them decoding *Canadian Idol*’s discourse in a similar way to that of the show. However, Idoladdict (June 13, 2007 in Appendix 4) contributes a different sentiment, commenting:

Honestly I think a lot of people like you okrock can’t/won’t get past the cute thing and will refuse to like her and write her off as just cute, and claim that’s helping her even when she’s got a good style, writes her own music, is modest and sings well.

This comment by Idoladdict illustrates her urging other viewers to look past the ideology of females being defined according to their appearance and looks, but to also look to the talent of female singers, such as Carly Rae Jepsen, as a singer and songwriter. This example reveals a forum member negotiating the terms by which female contestants are referred to.

Hall (2007 [1980]) points out that negotiation, “contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations, while, at a more restricted, situational level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule” (p. 478). We see here that Idoladdict (June 13, 2007 in Appendix 4) negotiates, as like the show, she acknowledges the femininity of Jepsen, but she also specifically recognizes her talent as a musician.

On the forum, members discuss Canadian gender identity, also noting the importance of being gender neutral. For example, Jaydee Bixby’s official fan-club name is originally titled “Jaydee’s Laydees (And Gents)”. However, over the process of discussion, the name is changed to “Jaydee’s Jaybirds”. The reason for this is that some forum members criticize the original name for not being gender neutral. On this, Dream Weaver notes (June 8, 2007 in Appendix 2), “[The name] is cute but it would really pigeon hole him. What about male fans? . . . Personally I think it’s better to have a name where all walks of life would feel comfortable joining.” Idoladdict agrees (June 8, 2007 in Appendix 2), “Gender neutral is

key” and SingerGirl72 (June 8, 2007 in Appendix 2), the leader of Bixby’s fan club reconciles. She notes, “I thought [Jaydee’s Laydees (And Gents)] was okay. But I’m starting to think y’all are right . . . I didn’t want it to be gender specific when I thought of it.” That forum fan club members feel it important to be gender neutral suggests that they are respectful of persons’ different identities related to gender. This discussion on the forum, while not the same as the show, does indicate a similar respect for both genders.

Recreational sporting activities are also noted by the show as characteristic of some Canadians identity. Specifically, the show notes the activities of hockey, making snow angels and football. For example, at the start of the Ottawa auditions, an Ottawa Senator’s hockey player faces off against a *Canadian Idol* personality while show host, Ben Mulroney comments (June 5, 2007 in Appendix 1), “The puck is about to drop on the Ottawa auditions of *Canadian Idol*.” That hockey is mentioned at the start of the Ottawa audition suggests a certain prominence to hockey.²³ During the Saskatoon audition, show contestants are filmed making snow angels (June 12, 2007 in Appendix 1) and football is referred to by Mulroney (September 11, 2007 in Appendix 1), contrasting Top Two finalists, Brian Melo of Hamilton, Ontario and Jaydee Bixby of Calgary, Alberta, in part, via the Canadian Football League teams that are from their region of origin. On this, he comments: “East vs. West, Ti-Cats (Hamilton, Ontario) vs. Stampeders (Calgary, Alberta), Jaydee vs. Brian.” On the forum, discussion on sporting activities is focused on hockey and soccer. For example, a forum member asks that her fan club number be the same number that is worn by her favourite hockey players (Kelleighkohl, August 29, 2007 in Appendix 5) and SingerGirl72 (July 30, 2007 in Appendix 2) mentions that her sister plays soccer. It seems that the show does not set the agenda for viewers’ discussion on Canadian sporting identity, but rather viewers are

²³ See pages 29-30 above for discussion on prominence.

influenced by other experiences such as previous hockey viewing and personal experiences.

Both the shows' representation and forum members' discussion on recreational sporting activities are limited. In actuality, Canadians participate in a variety of winter sporting activities including: curling, figure skating, skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling and snowshoeing. Further, Canadians participate in a variety of non-winter sports. It is likely that the discussion of sporting activities is limited as the show airs during the summertime and Canadians are not widely known for their involvement in summertime sports. Also Canadians sporting identity could be naturally limited as the focus of the show is not on sports, but on the singing talent of Canadians. However, the references made to hockey by both the show and a forum member are not surprising as Canada is known for producing talented hockey players (Cohen, 2007, p. 1; Wallace, 1999, p. 55; Whitson, 1997, p. 317). On this, Whitson argues (1997), "Hockey has been a powerful and time-honoured Canadian ritual" (p. 317).

Canadians as polite is another characteristic of identity that is illustrated in the show's discourse and in its forum members' discussion. That Canadians are characterized as polite is not surprising as the literature on Canadian identity suggests that this could be the case. Cohen (2007) notes, "[Canadians] are a polite . . . people . . . there is something sensible and decent about [them] – and something light, soft, and insouciant, too" (p. 152). Politeness is characterized through use of "please", "thank you" and "welcome". For example, 2006 *Canadian Idol* winner, Eva Avila, thanks the audience after her performance on the *Canadian Idol* show on September 11, 2007 (in Appendix 1). On the forum, when asking to join a fan club, Marissa1989 comments (June 24, 2007 in Appendix 5), "hey can I have a # please and thx." Fan club leaders and fan club members respond to the requests of people asking to join the fan clubs by commenting, "Welcome to all new DeeJays!"

(KalanRoxMySox, August 16, 2007 in Appendix 2), and “Welcome to all new FANS!!!” (Lorelaisweetie, August 22, 2007 in Appendix 2). Further, a forum member, BehindBlueEyes (July 18, 2007 in Appendix 3) notes that *Canadian Idol* contestant Dwight D’eon’s mannerisms suggest politeness. She writes, “He always smiles, nods and says thank you – so polite.” It seems that the show does not always set the agenda for viewers’ discussions as its viewers do not discuss many aspects of how the show reflects politeness, but rather it seems to be the case that Canadians are generally polite. However, in other cases, specifically on D’eon’s manners, the show seems to set the agenda for viewers’ discussion and viewers decode the representation like the show’s encoding.

Canadians are also characterized as a peacekeeping people. Cohen (2007) discusses Canadians as a peacekeeping people, noting, “Canadians have come to see themselves as . . . a leading peacekeeper” (p. 241). This facet of Canadian identity is illustrated in forum members’ discourse as members work to keep the peace on the forum. An example taken from the *Canadian Idol* forum is Idoladdict (July 12, 2007 in Appendix 4) recommending that fans not engage in negative discussions. She writes:

[I]f we’re going to continue to post here throughout the season we’ve got to remember that we’re going to get some flack . . . you can’t get too nasty when defending your favourites, you have to stay calm and defend in a way that isn’t stooping to the bashers level. We know Carly has talent and all you have to say is to each his or her own. If people don’t like Carly we can’t help that. We’ve just got to stick by her 100% and keep calm.

A further example of Canadian peacekeeping could be Startrax (July 16, 2007 in Appendix 2) expressing sympathy towards Liamloverxox when her favourite contestant is eliminated and asking her to be respectful of other fans, although she may not feel like being that way. This is a result of Liamloverxox commenting (July 16, 2007 in Appendix 2), “OMG I LOVE LIAM! how did jaydee make is and noty liam???” This negative comment by Liamloverxox

is one of very few negative comments by forum members. These examples could refer to peacekeeping or could be typical of normal fan behaviour on forums. On this possibly being normal fan behaviour, Baym notes (2000):

Expressing a diversity of perspectives on a [television show] often is nonproblematic because [shows] are designed to be open to multiple interpretations . . . At other times, different interpretations are not compatible, and people are likely to disagree with one another (p. 29).

Baym adds that show fans who post messages online generally avoid negative interactions with each other, such as “tense, antagonistic, or hostile argumentative statements” (p. 122), which she refers to as “flaming” activity (p. 29). Peacekeeping does not seem to be an indicator of Canadian identity used by the show. This could suggest that spats on the show did not come to such a place where it was necessary to resolve them in a peacekeeping manner. It could also suggest that the show personalities did not feel the need to represent this aspect of Canadian identity, as this is not a focus of the show. Knowledge of this indicates that the show does not set the agenda for viewers’ online discussions in this case.

Canadians as friendly is another characteristic of Canadian identity that is evidenced on the show and practiced by many forum members. For example, on the show, when contestant Greg Neufeld is voted out, show host and fellow contestants, including Dwight D’eon, encourage the audience to give Neufeld a standing ovation (August 7, 2007 in Appendix 1). Further, when eliminated, Liam Styles Chang comments (July 11, 2007 in Appendix 1), “You’re left with amazing people . . . vote for them.” This friendship among *Idol* contestants is reflective of Cohen’s research (2007), which indicates that Canadians are uncompetitive and it is un-Canadian to win big (p. 1). On the forum, Startrax notes (July 5, 2007 in Appendix 2; July 10, 2007 in Appendix 2), “Liam was cute too, when he kinda hugged JayDee” and “Actually they [Liam Styles Chang and Jaydee Bixby] seem like really

good friends on the show, so it's kind of cute". Further, BehindBlueEyes (August 1, 2007 in Appendix 3) notes of Martha Joy's elimination, "You could tell it was very difficult for [Dwight D'eon] to watch [Martha Joy] crying (he looked very emotional himself) and then once he could get close to her, he gave her a big hug and said "I love you." The show could be setting the agenda for forum member's discussion as forum members discuss friendly behaviours that are evidenced on the show in a similar way.

Friendliness as an indicator of Canadian identity could also be typical of normal fan behaviour. For example, Baym notes (2000) that fans typically, "offer one another social support on personal issues related to the show" (p. 121). The friendliness of Canadian fans of the show is indeed characterized through their feeling free to ask each other questions, including making requests, and asking for support. For example, Tbisuit (July 5, 2007 in Appendix 5) notes her inability to watch the show one week due to another commitment. She posts a message, asking if someone can send along to her, via cell phone, the number of her favorite contestant so she can vote even though she is traveling. Realitytvfan (July 5, 2007 in Appendix 5) responds to her request, saying that she can send her the appropriate number. A further example is of Angela(spain) (June 18, 2007 in Appendix 4) asking forum members to post the link of her friend's (contestant Carly Rae Jepsen) audition. Dream Weaver (June 18, 2007 in Appendix 4) responds that she will send her a private message with the link, as this information cannot be posted on the forum due to *Canadian Idol* producers' regulations.²⁴ The friendliness of *Canadian Idol* fans is also reflected through JeffluvzCarlyJ (August 9, 2007 in Appendix 4) offering to compile and send out, via post mail, a Greg Homecoming

²⁴ That such information cannot be posted could reflect the producer's privileged position to control the circulation of *Canadian Idol*'s television clips. However, that Dream Weaver has come up with a way to circumvent the privileged position of the show's producers through sending content privately, suggests that producer power is not unadulterated.

DVD to Greg Neufeld fans. Idoladdict (August 9, 2007 in Appendix 4) suggests to him however, that it would be less costly for him if he were to upload the video to the Internet. JeffluvzCarlyJ (August 9, 2007 in Appendix 4) responds that such an idea would be cost-effective; however, he does not know how to go about doing this. Other forum members respond by offering advice to help him go about posting the video footage online. That forum members try to help JeffluvzCarlyJ save money by providing instructions as to how to post videos on the Internet displays their friendliness. Further examples of Canadian friendliness include Charrach (September 6, 2007 in Appendix 4), a Carly Rae Jepsen fan, designing buttons for fellow fan club members to wear at concerts, and Greatgranny6 (November 6, 2007 in Appendix 2) offering to give fellow forum member, Lawdymissclaudy, a ticket to a *Canadian Idol* concert.

Canadian Idol fans are not solely friendly among themselves; they also extend their friendship to *Canadian Idol* contestants and contestants' family members. This is exemplified in forum members working together to prepare gifts for contestants. For example, SingerGirl72 (August 7, 2007 in Appendix 2) prepares a couple of gifts for Jaydee Bixby, including a birthday gift, and XxEvaBunnyxx (July 21, 2007 in Appendix 4) prepares a booklet for Carly Rae Jepsen. Further, when Jepsen's mom asks to be added to her daughter's fan club, she asks if number one is available and if not, number 100 is fine (CARLYRAESMOM, June 20, 2007 in Appendix 4). Fan club leader Idoladdict (June 20, 2007 in Appendix 4), who holds number one, volunteers to give her number to her. Jepsen's mom thanks her but asks that she be given number 100 (CARLYRAESMOM, June 21, 2007 in Appendix 4). That Jepsen's mom asks if she could be given the fan club number one, but that she settles for number 100 reflects her being polite and not pushy. That she initially asked to be the number one fan could be a result of her being Jepsen's mother, and as such,

her “number one” supporter/fan for many years, and could also reflect her familial identity.

Further on friendliness, by the end of the *Canadian Idol* season, many forum members are quite close friends and hope to keep in touch. On this, Charrach notes (September 6, 2007 in Appendix 4):

It's been a great summer . . . I hope that we can still have this forum . . . where we can gather together and chat and keep up on the latest Carly Rae news . . . We all have a love of her music in common. let's remain friends, guys, and keep in touch.

Similarly, JeffluvzCarlyJ posts (September 6, 2007 in Appendix 4), “Hey angels (referring to fans of contestant Carly Rae Jepsen) lets always be friends forever!” That forum members want to keep in touch in the future reflects friendship being important to them, a bond that they do not want to lose. This desire to remain friends reflects the literature, that there are benefits of people coming together as a group, in this case, the benefit of friendship. Specifically, on the benefits of coming together as a group, Schellenberg (2004) points out, “Having a strong sense of belonging is an outcome of strong social networks, which in turn broadens feelings of solidarity” (p. 16).

The friendliness of *Canadian Idol* forum members could create an environment whereby members feel able to share personal information about themselves. These people include those who have close bonds with *Canadian Idol* contestants. For example, forum member, Gorgeous77 (June 19, 2007 in Appendix 2), discloses her real name and that she is contestant Jaydee Bixby's girlfriend, “I am jaydee's girl friend and my name is Alicia.” Also, Katiemattie (June 14, 2007 in Appendix 4) reveals that she is Carly Rae Jepsen's best friend: “Hey, just wondering if I could be in the fan club! I am one of Carly's biggest fans. Her best friend!” Other forum members, not related to contestants', also disclose personal information about themselves. Such details included their birthday, health, and activities that they are

involved in such as schooling, reading, and summer holidays. A specific example is of SingerGirl72 (June 16, 2007 in Appendix 2) noting that she does not feel well, and others, including Idolized_one (June 16, 2007 in Appendix 2) send her friendly “get better” wishes. A further example is of idoladdict (June 27, 2007 in Appendix 4) noting her high school graduation and Dleonardo (June 27, 2007 in Appendix 4) responding by congratulating her and reminiscing on her own graduation.

The importance of family to Canadians is another characteristic of Canadian identity. On this, show host, Ben Mulroney notes (June 12, 2007 in Appendix 1), “The love and support from family members is just as important as the competition itself.” This comment by Mulroney suggests that *Canadian Idol* recognizes the importance of Canadian families on par with the show. Mulroney (July 3, 2007 in Appendix 1) also encourages contestants to speak about their family members, further emphasizing the significance of families. For example, he asks contestant Martha Joy: “Martha Joy your mother has been a huge supporter for you. So, what does it mean to you to have her in your corner?” Martha Joy (July 3, 2007 in Appendix 1) responds:

It’s just so comforting to have my mom with me all the time. My dad is a big supporter of me too. Love you dad! Love you too Mom . . . When I got that gold ticket all I could think of was ‘My God! I want to go see my mom!’ My family means everything to me. They’ve always been there and they travel together. Even if I make a mistake, I know that they’ll support me no matter what.

Show contestant, Martha Joy, speaking so strongly of her family, that even if she makes a mistake, her family will support her, speaks to the overwhelming importance of family in her life. Another example of the importance of family is that show contestant, Khalila Glanville (July 17, 2007 in Appendix 1), credits *Canadian Idol* for bringing her family closer together.

Although the data collection of forum discussions does not include Martha Joy's or Khalila Glanville's fan clubs, in looking at other fan club forums, the discussion on these other forums parallels this discourse on the show, on the importance of family. For example, on the forum, contestant Carly Rae Jepsen's sister, Katie Jepsen (June 19, 2007 in Appendix 4), encourages show fans, "tonight [my sister's] performance is going to be amazing . . . no matter what song she's gonna sing". This example is similar to the show in that it demonstrates unconditional support of a contestant by a family member. Another illustration from the forum is that Jaydee Bixby's extended family; living across the country, post messages to try to reconnect with each other. For example, Lorrie Bixby (June 7, 2007 in Appendix 2) posts the following message on Bixby's forum, "This is for any of Jaydee's family that may see this." Fb2169 responds (June 22, 2007 in Appendix 2), "Great to see all the support from all the Bixby's Canada Wide . . . Hope all is well with the 'Clan' out there."

Family is also noted on the forum via *Canadian Idol* fans referring to their family members. For example, fans note their family's feelings on *Canadian Idol*. Specifically, Canadian notes (June 26, 2007 in Appendix 2), "My mom . . . thought [Jaydee] did very well", Aiellwy38 mentions (June 26, 2007 in Appendix 2), "Gosh. Jaydee was so good last night. My dad was angry though, because he missed it", and Lala.xo writes (August 22, 2007 in Appendix 2), "My Gramma called me today saying that [Jaydee] is now her favourite contestant." Sarah (July 4, 2007 in Appendix 2) and SingerGirl72 (July 4, 2007 in Appendix 2) refer to their families not supporting *Canadian Idol*. Sarah notes, "It's not like anyone's going to help me with the whole thing. Stupid un-enthusiastic family members" and SingerGirl72 notes, "haha lol I can't get my family to vote."

Whether or not forum members' families support *Canadian Idol* that the show's fans and the show's personalities refer to family suggests the importance of family to Canadian

identity. As both sets of data reference the importance of family, but not always in a similar way, this suggests that the show does not always set the agenda for viewer's discussion on this marker.

Age is another marker of Canadian identity noted by both the show and forum members. On age, judge Farley Flex (August 13, 2007 in Appendix 1) speaks of Jaydee Bixby's likely fan base consisting of 16 year-old teenagers. He comments, "Jaydee I can feel the 16 year olds hearts throbbing across the nation right now." On the forum, Startrax (July 12, 2007 in Appendix 2) discloses her age, as well as the ages of some of her family members, "My little sister who is 17 is crazy in love with JayDee . I spoke to my aunt today, she is in her early fifties and just casually brought up the topic that I was following CI (I am mid twenties)."

Canadian identity is also illustrated through respect for the elderly members of the nation. For example, contestant Jaydee Bixby is shown on *Canadian Idol*, in his region of origin, visiting a home for seniors. On the forum, a member also discusses a contestant, Liam Styles Chang, working in a home for the elderly. On this, LiamLoverxox notes (July 16, 2007 in Appendix 2), "liam works at a senior home.. isn't that so cute?? LOL." In applying the *agenda setting* model to this discussion, we find that although the topic of discussion is similar to the show, that of respect for seniors, the specific focus is not quite the same. A forum member refers to a different contestant than the shows portrayal. Thus, it does not seem to be the case that the show sets the agenda for viewers' discussion on this characteristic of Canadian identity. Another way by which forum members respect the elderly is by their conversing with older Canadians who use the forum, including Shelbud (July 15, 2007 in Appendix 2), a self-described "baby boomer" and Jim (August 30, 2007 in Appendix 2) who identifies himself as "a granddad."

Multiple symbols of Canadianity are also mobilized by *Canadian Idol* to represent Canadian identity. These symbols include the Canadian flag, former Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, the Peace Tower (which could symbolize Canada's capital city), CN Tower (which symbolizes the large urban area of Toronto), fishery industry including lobster (which symbolizes the Maritimes), and the Canadian national colours of red and white (Appendix 1). Forum members also identify symbols of Canadianity in their discussion; however, they note fewer symbols than the show. For example, Dwight D'Leon fan club members note the fishery/lobster industry in Nova Scotia and the food item rappie pie, a popular dish, also from Nova Scotia. The discussion on rappie pie (June 20-22, 2007 in Appendix 3) is particularly interesting and informative to Canadian forum members across the country as Nova Scotians, on the forum, share stories about how they enjoy their rappie pie. In this case, forum members from across the country connect well with their fellow Canadians from Nova Scotia, learning more about them. This reflects them moving beyond "imagining" those with whom they share their country (Anderson, 1991), to actually getting to know each other.

In conclusion to this section on Canadian multi-culturality, the cultural elements of Canadian identity on the show is defined in relation to many elements including: language, race, gender including gender equality, recreational sporting activities, polite, peacekeeping, friendly, majority and minority groups, multiculturalism, family, age, need to respect the elderly, and multiple symbols of Canadianity.

Canadian Idol represents Canadian identity with specific dominant markers of multiculturalism, which fuel forum members' discussion. Many viewers' discussions are motivated by the discourse on the show and viewers respond to accept the discourse encoded. Nonetheless, all viewers do not always accept *Canadian Idol's* discourse, as on other elements, forum members negotiate or oppose the show's portrayal of identity. In other cases

still, when discussing enunciation and peacekeeping, forum members seem to be influenced by institutions other than the show, for example, their personal experiences.

Conclusion

The show, through its representation of Canadian identity, works to naturalize a Canadian identity that is pan-national, has Canadians close-knit together, with specific regional distinctions including provincial and territorial and urban and rural, Anglophone, racial minorities as stereotypical, gender including supportive of gender equality, and participating in some sporting activities, polite, family-oriented, age, showing respect to the elderly members of the nation, and multiple symbols of Canadianity.

The *agenda setting* and *encoding and decoding* models help to make sense of the viewers' response to the show. They reveal that the show sets the agenda for several discussions among viewers, however this does not occur in all cases. Sometimes forum members articulate a similar sense of Canadian identity to that of the show, thus decoding Canadian identity like the encoding on the show. In these cases the show seems to have a privileged position to influence viewers understanding of their identity. Sometimes, however, the show personalities and forum members' discourse are on similar elements, yet forum member's discussion differs as some members question the privileged position of *Canadian Idol*, taking a negotiated or oppositional decoding of the show's representation/encoding of Canadian identity. However, in other cases, viewers discuss elements of Canadian identity not noted by the show. These characteristics include enunciation and peacekeeping. Such instances indicate that viewers are influenced by institutions who work to create meaning, other than television show, *Canadian Idol*.

Conclusion

The identity of Canadians is diverse. However, a commonality draws this group of people close together, to the nation as a whole. Pinpointing a fixed and complete Canadian identity is something that cannot be done. Canadians belong to multiple and diverse groups and their identity shifts and changes. This research captures Canadian identity at one particular moment, through one particular focus; the representation of Canadian identity on CTV television's *Canadian Idol* during one particular season, and examines the response to the show's representation by its Canadian viewing audience who post messages online.

Canadian Idol's 2007 season constructs for viewers, a Canadian identity that is made-up of many characteristics, including pan-Canadianism, close-knit nation, specific regional distinctions including provincial and territorial and urban and rural regions, predominately Anglophone, having racial minorities, gender including gender equality, participation in some sporting activities, polite, family, age, respect for the elderly members of the population, and multiple symbols of Canadianity.

Although the main motive of the show is to attract advertisers, the show represents an ideology of Canadian identity. The overarching discourse of the show is that it produces an idol, symbolic of the Canadian nation. Although it does this, the show's structural practices make it so that the winner selected is actually not truly representative of the votes of all Canadians. Specifically, the show does this, in part, through choosing select audition cities, thus, only representing and allowing some Canadians to have the opportunity to be represented. In its practices of representation, *Canadian Idol* tends to exclude the identity of Aboriginal, northern and non-Anglophone Canadians. It also does not privilege the identity of Black and rural Canadians as much as it privileges the representation of the White, urban, Anglophone population. For example, this analysis found that *Canadian Idol* represents the

ethno-cultural minority and rural Canadian population in a stereotypical framework, deeming these Canadians experiences to be of less value than White, urban Canadian identities. If Canadians come to understand their identity through media representations, such as those represented on *Canadian Idol*, it is worrisome because the show constructs a Canadian identity not privileging some features of Canadian identity. Its viewing audience could then be coming to understand Canadian identity in a limited way.

The *agenda setting* and *encoding and decoding* model illustrate that the show is successfully persuasive in convincing some viewers to adopt some of its ways to think about their Canadian identity. However, the data also indicates that not all viewers are persuaded, or at least not in all cases, to adopt *Canadian Idol*'s framework for making sense of Canadian identity. Thus, *Canadian Idol* cannot be seen as all powerful, but rather as only one of other factors that occupy a privileged position, to help Canadians understand their identity.

Canadian Idol, through the show, creates a window, albeit a limited and stereotypical window for its viewers into various regions across Canada, and through the forum *Canadian Idol* is creating a space for Canadians to discuss and share their identities with one another. This space is likely valuable for Canadians as they are no longer restricted to their "imagined community" of Canada and their fellow Canadians, but rather they are able to overcome previous limitations of time and space to meet with and come to know each other in a more "real" way. For example, fans correspond with each other, sharing information and experiences on their identity. This is illustrated through viewers' discussion on the forum of Nova Scotia's rappie pie (June 20-22, 2007 in Appendix 3). In this particular case, viewers' across the country learn much about their fellow Canadians, specifically about their culinary habits, and about how they enjoy their rappie pie dinner.

This research can help contribute to the evolution of Canadian identity on *Canadian Idol* as well as on other Canadian television programming. If the goal of the show is, at least in part, to select an idol who is representative of Canadians, to more truly capture this and find this person, it would be good for *Canadian Idol* to consider: (1) allowing Canadians to sing in the language of their choice, (2) visiting more locations during the audition rounds to recruit contestants, and (3) revising its voting system so that the votes collected are more reflective of the Canadian populace. It could possibly do this by permitting voters to only vote once after each show. It is recognized however, that as CTV is an English broadcasting network; as it is likely expensive and unappealing to the judges to visit certain locations; and as phone networks such as Telus mobility, via its text messaging voting at cost, garner financial benefit through the multiple votes of fans, implementing these recommendations, while useful in promoting a more realistic representation of Canadian identity, may not be possible or lucrative. Making these choices is dependent on priorities – what values *Canadian Idol* chooses to privilege.

As noted in the literature review, the federal government of Canada, as like several other national governments, understands media content to be an instrument of public policy. As such, it has regulations in place to ensure that Canadian content is given some level of priority. *Canadian Idol* is a reflection of CTV complying with the government's Cancon policy. The show indeed represents identity for Canadians noting a variety of characteristics; however its portrayal is somewhat limited and does not fully encompass the Canadian multicultural situation. For example, some groups such as Aboriginal peoples, northerners and non-Anglophones are ignored in the representation. Perhaps knowledge of this limited portrayal could encourage the government, through its Cancon policy, to be more stringent on media policies.

The focus of this research is in studying Canadian identity; through one particular focus – its representation on *Canadian Idol* and its viewers' response, and at one particular point in time – the 2007 show season. Specific to studying the *Idol* genre, it will be good for future research to compare *Canadian Idol* show seasons. The results of such a study would reveal the evolution of the representation of Canadian identity over time. It would also be interesting for future research to compare different *Idol* shows, for example, *Canadian Idol* versus *American Idol*. The results of such a study would be valuable in indicating that certain characteristics are indeed unique to “Canadian identity”. Future research could also be done in exploring what constitutes Canadian identity. This is because identity is an evolving phenomenon, and as such, it is always merits observation.

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Appendix 1: *Canadian Idol**

Date of show: June 5, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canada	Ben Mulroney (show host) comments: "Our nation's capital – welcome to Ottawa."
Hockey Region	Ben Mulroney: "The puck is about to drop on the Ottawa auditions of <i>Canadian Idol</i>". (When Ben says this, an <i>Idol</i> personality and Ottawa Senators player face-off.)
Region Rural Family	- Shot of the prairies, horses, a ranch, 75,000 acres, creeks, snow and rivers. - Contestant is featured hard at work shoveling manure. She mentions that she helps her family preserve the land, was raised to work with horses and cattle, yet she wants to be a singer. She wears a cowgirl hat and boots.

June 12, 2007	
Category	Observation
Region Urban Laidback	- Ben Mulroney (show host): "Who said the West Coast is laid back?" - Dave Kerr (show reporter): "Hi Vancouver!" - Portraying Vancouver as laid back – not having contestants make any noise when introduced to Dave Kerr.
Sporting activities (Snow angels)	Dave Kerr asks contestants: "So what do you do for fun here in Saskatoon." They respond: "Well we play in the snow" while making snow angels.
Region Family	- Ben Mulroney says of Martha Joy (contestant): "She'll have the support of her entire family in Toronto and that the love and encouragement of a parent can help child reach greatness." - Martha Joy notes that her mother has so much faith in her. - Ben Mulroney: "You've seen right across the country that the love and support from family members is just as important as the competition itself."

June 18, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (Canadian Flag) (Prime Minister)	On the tour bus that contestants travel in there are images of the Canadian Flag and former Prime Minister John A. Macdonald
Language (French)	Zack Werner (judge) to contestant: "I just wonder if it was in French do you think you could remember faster."

* The appendices only cover the specific period cited in thesis and those specific citations relevant to the understanding of my analysis.

June 25, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red) Urban	- o Jaydee (contestant) Bixby wears a red top. - o Judge says to Jaydee Bixby: "Looks like you took a trip to the city!"
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	o Two other male contestants wear red tops

July 2, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colours: red and white)	- o Contestant wore red bandana - o Zack Werner (judge) wore red jacket - o Farley Flex (judge) wore cream color jacket with red trim - o Liam Styles Chang (contestant) wore red t-shirt
Canadian symbol (Canadian Flag)	o Clifton Murray (contestant) wore Canadian Flag patch on his jacket
Region Difference between rural/urban	o Zack Werner: "Wow you and I sure don't come from the same place."

July 3, 2007	
Category	Observation
Region	o Sign held by audience member reads: "NFLD (Newfoundland) is here."
Black	o Mila Miller (Black contestant) wears her hair in an afro style.
Canadian symbol (colours: red and white)	o Annika Odegard (contestant) wears red top, white tank, red necklace and red shoes.
Family	- o Ben Mulroney (show host) asks Martha Joy (contestant): "Martha Joy your mother has been a huge supporter for you. So, what does it mean to you to have her in your corner? " - o Martha Joy responds: "It's just so comforting to have my mom with me all the time. My dad is a big supporter of me too. Love you dad! Love you too Mom . . . When I got that gold ticket all I could think of was 'My God! I want to go see my mom!' My family means everything to me. They've always been there and they travel together. Even if I make a mistake, I know that they'll support me no matter what.

July 9, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	o Sass Jordan (judge) wears a red top
Gender Pan-Canadianism	o Ben Mulroney (show host): "More of the men in the show, from the East to the West – Tyler and Liam are next!"

(East to West)	
Rural/Urban Dialect	o Zack Werner (judge) comments to Jaydee Bixby (contestant): "I'm going back to the cement pond personally. You know between the twang and the . . . country song, you couldn't have done anything further away from the kind of music I like and know anything about."
Close-knit nation	- o Ben Mulroney says to Brian Melo (contestant): "Let's talk about your fans. Who are all these people? Do you know all these people? Scream if you're related to this man!" - o Brian Melo responds: "Ahh, I know most of them, I know some of them."

July 10, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	o Sass Jordan (judge) wears red tonight
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	o Carly Rae (contestant) wears red earrings

July 11, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	o Carly Rae (contestant) wears red
Friendly	o Liam Styles Chang (contestant): "You're left with amazing people . . . Do your part and vote for them."
Canada	o Ben Mulroney (show host) comments: "Canada, you decide who stays and who goes, and by the end of the summer there will only be just one [contestant] left, your next <i>Canadian Idol</i>."

July 17, 2007	
Category	Observation
Fisher	o Dwight D'eon (contestant): "I've been a fisherman for several years . . . (D'eon is dressed as a fisher and a fishing boat is also included in the feature)"
Family	o Khalila Glanville (contestant): "I'm Khalila Glanville. . . the support coming from my family is very special and it means a lot to me . . . As a family we have been split apart and this competition is bringing us closer than we ever were before."
Respect for Elderly (Seniors home)	o Jaydee Bixby (contestant): "'Community' Seniors Home . . . they're some of my biggest fans."

July 18, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian Symbols (Peace Tower and CN Tower)	o Images of Canadian including the Peace Tower and CN Tower are in the prelude to the show.

Canadian symbol (colours: red and white)	Most of the female contestants wore red or white tops
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July 23, 2007	
Category	Observation
Dialect	"Howdy Lawtey Jay Dee" sign in the crowd.
Region	Tara Oram (contestant) sings and "Berte Falls, NL (Newfoundland) Love You" – sign held by a member of the audience.

July 24, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	- Jake Gold (judge) wore red glasses - Brian Melo (contestant) wears red belt - Martha Joy (contestant) wore red shoes

July 29, 2007	
Category	Observation
Rural/Urban Dialect Region	- Jaydee Bixby (contestant) wears a Western style shirt - Zack Werner (judge): "Well Jaydee . . . I think that was dishonest to twang . . ." - Jaydee Bixby: "I'm from Alberta though."
Gendered terms	Sass Jordan (judge) on Carly Rae Jepsen's (contestant) performance: "Yeah, baby . . . beautiful, unforgettable, vulnerable, wonderful"

August 6, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colours: red and white)	- Sass Jordan (judge) wears red - Zack Werner (judge) wears white
Urban/Rural	Farley Flex (judge): "For a second you had me thinking you were a city slicker, and then I saw the boots, and I thought good going Jaydee."

August 7, 2007	
Category	Observation
Friendly Canada	- Ben Mulroney (show host): "Canada got this wrong (on voting out contestant Greg Neufeld), I don't care if I'm not supposed to say that but Canada got this wrong . . . you're a bonafide star! . . . Your future is absolutely limitless . . . Greg Neufeld is a star and a great, great guy!" - Ben Mulroney: "This guy deserves a standing ovation, on your feet for Greg Neufeld." - Dwight D'eon (contestant) encouraging people with hand gestures to stand up to applaud Greg.

August 13, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	○ Sass Jordan (judge) wears red
Age	○ Farley Flex (judge): "Jaydee I can feel the 16 year olds hearts throbbing across the nation right now . . . But you look good.."
Region	○ Zack Werner (judge): "But I thought it was cool . . . it was you and if you're still here next week and the East coast got one right."

August 20, 2007	
Category	Observation
Region	○ Ben Mulroney (show host): "Representing Regina, Saskatchewan, it's Matt Rapley. He's the pride of West Pubnico, Nova Scotia, he's Dwight D'eon. From Drumheller, Alberta, Mr. Jaydee Bixby. From Mission, B.C., hello Carly Rae Jepsen, and he calls Hamilton, Ontario, home, he's Brain Melo."
Canadian <i>Idol</i> producers privilege	○ Dwight D'eon (contestant): "Think there are misconceptions around that people tell us what to wear or what to sing, but that's not true at all."
Feminine terms	○ Farley Flex (judge): "This girl is memorable, if that girl's not loveable than what is?"
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	○ Zack Werner (judge) wears red jacket

August 21, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	○ Zack Werner (judge) wears red t-shirt
Canada	○ Zack Werner: "Canada picks the <i>Idol</i> ."

September 10, 2007	
Category	Observation
Voting (based on feelings or region)	○ Zack Werner (judge): "People can vote on how they feel or where they come from."

September 11, 2007	
Category	Observation
Canadian symbol (colour: red)	○ Avril Lavigne (guest singer) wears a red and white striped top
Polite	○ Eva Avila (former <i>Canadian Idol</i> winner): "Thank you, merci beaucoup."
Sporting activity (Football)	○ Ben Mulroney (show host): "It is another classic [battle] of east vs. west, Ti-Cats vs. Stampeders, Jaydee vs. Brian."

Appendix 2: Forum – Jaydee Bixby

Category	Forum Member, Date and Forum Discussion
Family	Lorrie Bixby (6/7/2007): This is for any of Jaydee's family that may see this, just letting you know all of us on the island saw him Tues. night and thought it was GREAT..will be watching him to see how he does,,,were sure it's going to be good...one more thing..that song sure brought back a lot of memory's for us.
Gender	Dream Weaver (6/8/2007): Jaydee's laydees is cute but it would really pigeon whole him. What about male fans?
Gender	Idoladdict (6/8/2007): I would suggest against the Jaydee's Laydees (and Gents) concept too. Even with the and gents it doesn't really seem gender neutral and like mentioned (and Gents) will probably be scrapped from the name by the show when they make the trading cards. Gender neutral is the key, make it a fanclub name that fits everyone.
Gender	SingerGirl72 (6/8/2007): I thought it was okay. But I'm starting to think y'all are right. I'll keep it on the list on the front though. I didn't mean it to be gender specific when I thought of it.
Regional fan club name	NLgirl (6/8/2007): How about the Bixby cups? or the Bixby chicks?
Family	Idolized_one (6/14/2007): I don't care where the "roots" come from. He is "Jaydee" and likely would have been no matter who is ancestors were. Some people have the gift to be themselves and to be unique. He is one of them . . . I really like this kid's personality – he is a natural on stage
Friendly (disclose personal information) Multiple belongings (Idol and sick)	SingerGirl72 (6/16/2007): If Im not updating as much this weekend its because im sick, it's pretty gross i can't eat anything i just need to sleep alot.
Friendly (Responding to fan who posted about another aspect of her life)	Idolized_one (6/16/2007): aww, yuck. Hope you get better soon
Region Rural/Urban	Startrax (6/17/2007): I am from Vancouver and noticed your hometown is Guelph. I visited. . . about 8 years ago, and loved it. The people were super friendly.
Multiple belongings (Idol and food) Rural/Urban	SingerGirl72 (6/17/2007): yeah I got a little food into me and then I was feeling better. ha I don't like Guelph that much. there's nothing to do
Rural/Urban	Startrax (6/17/2007): I love your older brick houses, beautiful trees (esp in fall) . . . It felt very tranquil, peaceful and very safe walking around town
Friendly (disclose personal information)	Gorgeous77 (6/19/2007): I am jaydee's girl friend and my name is Alicia☐
Family	Fb2169 (6/22/2007): What an awesome job - he must get his

	singing voice from Auntie - ha! ha! Great to see all the support from all the Bixby's Canada Wide. Poppa "Claudie" George would have been over the moon!! Keep on rocking Jaydee - we are with you all the way. Auntie & Uncle Bix
Family	Lorrie Bixby (6/22/2007): fb2169, just wondering who this is ?? Lorrie Bixby from the Vancouver Island
Family	Fb2169 (6/22/2007): Hi Lorrie: It's Uncle Frank and Linda from Drumheller. We are as excited as can be. Hope all is well with the "Clan" out there. Give our regards to all.
Family	Lorie Bixby (6/22/2007): the Clan out here is doing just great.. have to say it's about time a Bixby took his music and did something with it... We are all watching Jaydee out here... Lorrie
Family	Canadian (6/26/2007): My mom loves that song & she thought he did very well with it.
Family	Aiellwy38 (6/26/2007): Gosh. Jaydee was so good last night. ☐ My dad was angry though, because he missed it. I'll have to show him the video sometime..
Multiple belongings (cheer for multiple <i>Idol</i> contestants)	Sarah (7/4/2007): I voted for about an hour, altering between Jaydee, Tyler, and Liam
Family	Sarah (7/4/2007): it's not like anyone's going to help me with the whole voting thing. Stupid un-enthusiastic family members
Family	SingerGirl72 (7/4/2007): haha lol I can't get my family to vote
Multiple belongings (cheer for multiple <i>Idol</i> contestants)	SingerGirl72 (7/4/2007): Hmm my top 5 are . . . Jaydee, Montana, Carly, Dwight, Naomi. but I also like Liam, Tara, Annika, and Greg, and i dont hate tyler or brian... lol
Gender	SingerGirl72 (7/4/2007): I think that naomi will be leaving, and possibly scarlett or martha will be going home for the girls. I would love if Mila, and scarlett went but I dont see that hapenning. as far as the guys, I dno who will go home
Friendly	Startrax (7/5/2007): Liam was cute too, when he kinda hugged JayDee.
Friendly	Startrax (7/10/2007): Did you see the group picture of top 14 performance guys where JayDee is standing next to Liam. LOL. Actually they seem like really good friends on the show, so it's kind of cute.
Family Age Gender	Startrax (7/12/2007): I think this is a very good sign. My little sister who is 17 is crazy in love with JayDee . I spoke to my aunt today, she is in her early fifties and just casually brought up the topic that I was following CI (I am mid twenties), well all of a sudden she brought up JayDee, and how adorable he was, and she was voting for him. Wow what a surprise, how much she loves him as well. Shows that he covers all age groups when it comes to his female fans.

Canada	Sarah (7/12/2007): Canada made a good decision with Annika.
Age Voting	Shelbud (7/15/2007): You've got my vote and I am also a baby boomer. I vote for two hours straight. Love ya kid.
Rude comment	Liamloverxox (7/16/2007): OMG I LOVE LIAM! how did jaydee make it and noty liam???
Peace keeping	Startrax (7/16/2007): You should be posting this in a Liam thread. I am sorry your favourite didn't make it, but no need to question the ones who did.
Respect for elderly	LiamLoverxox (7/16/2007): K i no this is so off topic but liam works at a senoir home.. isn't that so cute?? LOL
Sporting activities (Soccer)	SingerGirl72 (7/30/2007): Yes! lol I should go with my sister to soccer this week adn try to get those kids to vote Jaydee!
Rural Dialect	Fb2169 (7/31/2007): I thought Jaydee did just fine to-nite - but I think the judges were little harsh - "cowboy twang" is part of the lifestyle - especially in Alberta - where he grew up. Good on ya Jaydee!! Love you lots. Hang in there!!
Friendly (Gift)	SingerGirl72 (8/7/2007): I have a little birthday plan for him, I'll announce it after results tonight. It isn't just another book of letters/support infact it doesn't involve any writing at all.
Region	Bixby_fan69 (8/7/2007): can i please have a number im from red deer and i see that jaydee doesnt have as many fans as greg and carly so we need to add more people please i need a number
Polite	KalanRoxMySox (8/16/2007): Welcome to all the new Dee Jays!
Multiple belongings (cheer for multiple <i>Idols</i>)	SingerGirl72 (8/21/2007): They were all good
Family	Lala.xo (8/22/2007): Hey Guys I just got another person to vote for Jaydee !! My Gramma called me today saying that he is now her favourite and she's going to vote for him each week
Polite	Lorelaisweetie (8/22/2007): Welcome to all new FANS!!!!
Enunciation	Jim (8/30/2007): Along with what everyone else has said about this lad, I like the fact that I can undersand every word he sings. He enunciates clearly. I gues this fits in with the music I grew up with...call me old.
Enunciation	Loreleisweetie (8/30/2007): that's the word.. "Enunciation".. Absolutely Jaydee doesn't slurr His words.. He has melody.. and joy.. and soul.. He is Wonderful.. Glad you brought that up.. Very appealing to hear the words these days huh?
Age	Jim (8/30/2007): I am a grandad..lol
Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and school)	SingerGirl72 (9/2/2007): you should ask if you can vote some anyway. Not the whole time but atleast a little bit. I have a feeling a lot of Jaydee's fans aren't going to be able to vote monday because of school. We need to get the adult fans voting extra hard this week to make up for it. I have school, but I don't care I'm

	voting anyway... some things are more important
Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and school)	theprincessXo (9/2/2007): i'll still be able to vote i know i will i usely i can't sleep on the frist day before we go back anyways
Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and school)	Lawdyimurclawdy (9/2/2007): hahah yeah, i plan on sneaking a phone to my room and voting till 12 anyway.
Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and school)	Lawdyimurclawdy (9/2/2007): hahhaha i got my back to school hair cut last week! god, i know on tuesday im probably going to have anxiety attacks about elimination that night.
Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and school)	SingerGirl72 (9/2/2007): I'll totally be at school all day like not paying attention, and I'll prolly get yelled at and I'll be like "RESULTS TONIGHT!!! IMPOSSIBLE TO FOCUS ON ANYTHING ELSE!!!" and then I'll get in trouble
Voting - Not all desired votes go through – busy telephone lines and problem with incorrect number to vote for contestants(producers privilege)	Jim (9/12/2007): Wife and I got in 150 votes last night, but it wasn't easy.. We couldn't get through for the first half hour. Sometimes we got the wrong contestant to vote for...we had to hang up and have another go. We had two phones on the go at that.
Voting - Not all desired votes go through – busy telephone lines (producers privilege)	JDLove (9/13/2007): We tried voting from 10 to 11 and it was busy most of the time then past 11 or so we were able to vote...could it be that JD only got half his votes?
Region Friendly	Greatgranny6 (11/6/2007): Lawdymisclaudy. Would you like a ticket for the Toronto show? I am getting cold feet about going. I have gone to a couple of <i>Idol</i> shows and hated the loud music. My daughter thinks I am crazy, trying to go , again. I have no idea where you live.
Region Rural /Urban	Lawdymissclawdy (11/6/2007): greatgranny6 i would love to go, but i cant go . . . b/c im from burlington and cant manage being in a huge city alone (also, i am very paranoid when it comes to toronto).
Region Rural/Urban	SingerGirl72 (11/6/2007): wow I'm like soo the opposite... I love toronto
Region Rural/Urban	Lawdymissclawdy (11/7/2007): hahah really? going with my friends for top 4 night was like a huge step for me. i was freaked out of my mind (especially when when it got dark and we had to run to catch the gotrain, and there were a bunch of sketchy people around ). toronto is a big change from the burlington bubble...
Rural/Urban	SingerGirl72 (11/7/2007): that sounds like fun to me... and

	avoiding the sketchy people would be an adventure...
Region Urban/Rural	frozenXkiss (11/09/2007): lucky....i'd love to go to toronto, it seems so great and its basically canada's own l.a or something like that, lol.

Appendix 3: Forum – Dwight D’eon

Category	Forum Member, Date and Forum Discussion
Canada	Babyjenks9 (6/6/2007): it’s gonna be great to see someone from our area on Canadian idol!
Canada	KaylaGrace (6/6/2007): I think that it is great that the[re] is someone from around here on Idol.
Regional symbol (fisher industry)	Babyjenks9 (6/8/2007): i found a few articles mentioning dwight...thought i would share... "Dwight D’eon (28) is my guy pick so far. He sounded great strumming out and singing “A Kiss from a Rose”. The judges didn’t even vote they just handed him a ticket before he finished singing. Since he has experience I think he’ll be in it all they way. No more lobster trapping for him." from: http://idolheaded.com/modules.php?n...r=0&thold=1 "When it rains, it pours, and Blackhall's success was soon followed by that of 28-year-old Dwight D'eon, a lobster fisherman who had moved to Halifax to try to make it in music. His performance of Seal's "Kiss from a Rose" -- accompanied by his guitar -- was so convincing the judges handed him his ticket with even voting and sent him on his way. "Sometimes... they just know," observed the wise and experienced Mulroney." from: http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNe...007&no_ads= If you find any, please post for everyone to see.
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	BehindBlueEyes (6/20/2007): I attribute all the talent down there to the incredibly good rappie pie!!! That's my story and I'm sticking to it! lol
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	Babyjenks9 (6/20/2007): haha ya that's the famous food from down here.
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	Faranya (6/20/2007): It has to be crisp on top though. I usually fry it for a few minutes to get that crunchy coat on the potatoes.
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	BehindBlueEyes (6/20/2007): And it's all because of that yummy crusty rappie pie!! If you ladies were nice, you would send a big tray of it up to me here in Toronto and after I helped myself to a plate or two, I could smuggle the rest down to Dwight - you know, just to help him keep up his strength and keep him from getting homesick. 🍷

Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	Genevev (6/21/2007): I'm really curious now.....what is rappie pie?
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	BehindBlueEyes (6/21/2007): It is a very famous Acadian dish - made from grated potatoes and either chicken, beef, rabbit or seafood (whatever turns you on) and baked to a beautiful golden brown. It is a lot of work to make from scratch but absolutely delicious.
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	Babyjenks9 (6/21/2007): also some people put in corned beef, hamburger, anything you can think of really! but chicken is the best!
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	NLgirl (6/21/2007): I want some rappie pie.
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	Babyjenks9 (6/21/2007): haha it's funny how this turned into a rappie pie fanclub LOL
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	Ogopogo (6/21/2007): I introduced my family (who have never been to ns) to rappie pie and lobster rolls - they hated the first and loved the secondoh well, more for me!
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	Babyjenks9 (6/22/2007): A lot of people who try rappie pie for the first time don't like it. Mostly because of the texture.
Symbol of Nova Scotia (rappie pie)	BehindBlueEyes (6/22/2007): All that talk about rappie pie was making me hungry!!!! 
<i>Canadian Idol</i> producers privileged position (use fisheries during non-fishing season) Symbol (fisheries)	Joe_17 (7/5/2007): I was wondering how they managed to go fishing for Canadian Idol where the season was closed, but Im suprised that the fisheries aloud them to do it! lol
Peace keeping	BehindBlueEyes (7/17/2007): I think it's time for you to move along now, LiamLoverxox. This is not the place to air your bitterness about Liam not making the Top 10 and your adversarial comments toward Dwight and his fans are not appreciated. You cannot blame other people for your favorite contestant not making it. I am sure with Liam's talent he will have a great future and I sure hope his fan base is a wee bit more mature than what you have displayed here.
Region Rural/Urban	BehindblueEyes (7/17/2007): This is what I always loved about Yarmouth . . . Everyone bands together and everyone takes care of each other. You certainly don't see that in the big city. This is one of the main reasons I miss N.S. so much.
Gender Polite	BehindBlueEyes (7/18/2007): I . . . love the way Dwight responds. He always smiles, nods and says thank you - so polite. That is one of his great qualities. He is the gentle giant that never shows his emotions - he is able to keep it to himself and remains very gracious. It looks good on him!!
Regional fan club name	BCmomof2 (7/29/2007): I am new to this forum and I am a big fan of Dwight d'Eon, so I would really like the #66 as a Dwight Lights

	#. Please and thank you. I spend all two hours after the Monday night show voting for Dwight.
Friendly	BehindBlueEyes (8/1/2007): I was very touched by Dwight's reaction to Martha's elimination. You could tell it was very difficult for him to watch her crying (he looked very emotional himself) and then once he could get close to her, he gave her a big hug and said "I love you".
Fan recruitment strategies Rural/Urban	KewlSummerBreeze (8/7/2007): Sunday was "Dwight D'eon Day" in his home town in case it wasn't mentioned here yet. They had face painting and potato sac races etc etc....
Rural/Urban	Froggurl87 (8/14/2007): People have different clothing styles. I guess Im use to it since my brother is a rocker/ i live in toronto?
Rural/Urban	Babyjenks9 (8/14/2007): i never pictured dwight in that type of clothing

Appendix 4: Forum – Carly Rae Jepsen

Category	Forum Member, Date and Forum Discussion
Gender	Okrock (6/13/2007): She's cute, can sing pretty well (even though I couldn't understand a word of what she was singing), but I didn't think she was all that.
Gender	Idoladdict (6/13/2007): Honestly I think a lot of people like you okrock can't/won't get past the cute thing and will refuse to like her and write her off as just cute, and claim that's helping her even when she's got a good style, writes her own music, is modest and sings well.
Gender	Dontlikeowen (6/13/2007): They always strike me as the cutesy, doe-eyed type. Maybe the term I'm looking for is "girly". It just seems like a matter of style - doesn't mean they are good or bad, really. To my tastes, they have to move past cute.
Friendly	Katemattie (6/14/2007): Hey, just wondering if I could be in the fan club! I am one of Carly's biggest fans. Her best friend!
Name for Carly Rae Jepsen fan club (influenced by Marxism and celebrity blending of names)	Idoladdict (6/14/2007): Some interesting suggestions. Carly Rae Jepsen Fanclub would be pretty straightforward and sensible but I think half the fun of being in a fan club is getting to have a fun, goofy name and put your number in your signature. Plus it'd be pretty lame if everyone else got a cool fan club name on their trading card and yours was just like So and So Fanclub, you know. I have a new idea for the fanclub. We could totally be different and be like Carlyists or something like that? You know like Marxists or Leninists. Our ideology would of course be Carlyism. We would be followers of good music. We could come up with lots of fun theories about the music of Carly Rae Jepsen. Anyone think it could work? It's kind of different for a fanclub I think.
Majority/minority groups	Idoladdict (6/15/2007): I personally don't know how many

(selecting fan club name)	people would want to be called red shoes. It's definitely cute but I'm going to do fanclub name selection the way I find is most fair. Once I get enough names I'll put it to a vote, majority rules style. I want the fanclub to have a cool name that the fans really like which is why I like to put it to a vote.
Region	Idoladdict (6/16/2007): I'm hoping we get a little something in the Toronto rounds even if it's only a few seconds.
Friendly	Angela(spain) (6/18/2007): Hello I'm Angela from Spain as you can see in my user name hahahaI had the opportunity to go one year with her to school and to work with her in the musical anny where she was playing anny and she is just a fabulous person and she has an amazing voice. She is just a sweet hurt and I'll follow the program just for her, so cheer up you'll make it!!!
Friendly (Request)	Angela(spain) (6/18/2007): Can you please give me a link to where I can see her audition?I haven't seen it and I would like to see it By the way thank you so much for the wellcome, it's very nice from ya!!
Friendly (Respond to request)	Dream Weaver (6/18/2007): Hi Angela!We arn't allowed to post links to clips here but I'll PM it to you.Just check your private messages
Family	Katie jepsen (6/19/2007): tonight [my sister's] performance is going to be amazing . . . no matter what song shes gonna sing.
Family	CARLYRAESMOM (6/20/2007): Thank-you to all for the support you are showing my daughter.I would like to join the fan club and would love the number 01 or 100 if at all possible.I also would like to vote for the name CARY Q that was suggested by Wayne in an earlier post. When Carly was a little girl, we use to call her Carly Q. I thought the play on the word Queue was very creative. Hope everyone enjoys tonight! Carly's Mom
Friendly (offers to give up fan club number to Carly Rae Jepsen's mom)	Idoladdict (6/20/2007): Hi Carly's mom, at the moment #1 is my number but if you'd like I'd be more than willing to put you in the #1 spot considering your status and her obviously #1 fan. Let me know. If not I'll just give you #100 if you'd like. Everyone else who asked for a number I'll be adding you to the list as soon as I post this reply. As for the name I really like the Carly Queue/Q option and if it wins we can definitely use the Q option instead of Queue, it's the same difference, just cooler.
Language (Respecting bilingualism)	Canucklehead (6/20/2007): I like the name Carly Queue but . . . the negative bilingual connotations of the word.
Friendly	CARLYRAESMOM (6/20/2007): Thanks so much for your consideration in regards to fan#Number 100 is just fine.You do a great job on this fanclub site!CARLY SENDS HER LOVE AND THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT.xxxoooCarly's mom
Religion (Fan club name)	Laterhappyssoon (6/20/2007): Oh I twisted My name suggestion

"Missionaries")	to Carlys Missionaries -still shouting out to her hometown and our mission is still to get her to the top. but I have clued in that I got my suggestion in too late but perhaps cuz really not too many of the names seem to be getting many votes and of the top two I don't like either,
Religion (Fan club name "Missionaries")	Idoladdict (6/20/2007): She's from Mission, BC, missionaries do good work . . . religious.
Producers privilege (Voting system)	Colin (6/23/2007): Power voting produces a result that is what power voters want, which in my eyes, is not necessarily what all of Canada wants. This is a show searching for Canadian talent and why not give <i>every</i> Canadian, regardless of their age or ability, or other time commitments, to have <i>equal</i> opportunity at having a say in who we all pick as our next Canadian Idol. I honestly cannot see how a more fair voting system would hurt the show. Does anyone watch the show only because they can vote like mad for 2 hours? I certainly don't. It's about the contestants for me, and the music, and nothing about the voting. If anything, I see a more fair voting system resulting in us finding a true Canadian Idol that the majority of Canadians can feel pride in
Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and school)	Idoladdict (6/27/2007): I graduate from high school tomorrow so I'll miss the results show so I'll be checking this thread for excitement as soon as I get home tomorrow night to see if Carly made it.
Friendly (Responds to person with multiple belongings - <i>Idol</i> and school)	Dleonardo (6/27/2007): First of all, Congratulations on your graduation. Must be exciting, isn't it? I was very excited when I finished high school. To me high school studies were very structured so having freedom in University was exciting.
Regional Voting	Idoladdict (6/27/2007): how I feel about voting regionally and if you weren't around all I can say is I'm totally annoyed by it, I think if often ruins the show because less talented contestants with more regional support get undeserved spots in the finals
Reginal fan club name	NORTHERN BC FAN (7/3/2007): I want to join the Carly fan club. Thanks
Canada as close-knit	Hairclip (7/11/2007): Welcome Murray, any chance your related to clifton murray?
Multiple identities (Harry Potter and <i>Idol</i>)	Idoladdict (7/11/2007): Today is a very exciting day. I woke up early and went to see the new Harry Potter movie and now I'm anxiously awaiting finding out who made the Top 10. Good luck Carly!
Multiple identities (Harry Potter and <i>Idol</i> and birthday)	JeffluvzCarlyJ (7/11/2007): Ya for me it's Carly day, Harry Potter day and it's also my birthday... how crazy is that??
Canada as close-knit (not really)	Murray (7/12/2007): Can't say I am related to Clifton Murray.
Peace keeping	Idoladdict (7/12/2007): if we're going to continue posting here

	throughout the season we've got to remember that we're going to get some flak. Every fanbase takes some heat when people don't like their favourite and it seems we have already got to put our best foot forward and deal with it. It seems some people out there think Carly can't sing, has no talent and they don't get why so many people love her. Let Carly prove to people why we love her okay. Don't fight fire with fire and alienate people. I personally choose to fight fire with a humor filled defense. It goes over better with people and hey it's funnier. I've learned the hard way that you can't get too nasty when defending your favourites, you have to stay clam
Friendly (Gift)	XxEvaBunnyxx (7/21/2007): Hi everybody. Can ya'll do me a favour and email a message to Carly at carlyraefanmessages@yahoo.ca ? I know I made a thread, I just don't know if anyone's READING that thread. I started it yesterday and I only have 3. Including mine. I know I just started yesterday and submissions are due Monday of the top 9 show, but I really want to do this for her, so if everyone could just drop off a note, I'd really appreciate it! . . . No, I guess I should have been more clear. The messages are to go in a book that I will give to Carly at the autograph session after the top 9 show. So if you want to add a message to the BOOK, send it to that email. And please add a message. Thanks in advance!
Producer privilege (<i>Canadian Idol</i> on at different times may affect voting)	JeffluvzCarlyJ (7/24/2007): they did say on Wednesday show that it would be on on Monday, which is how I found it on today, but it's all over the map, it's the easiest show to miss if you are not a regular viewer.
Region Friendly (share personal information) Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and camping)	Idoladdict (7/25/2007): Hey Angels, I'm off to Niagara Falls for some camping fun. I'll be back on Sunday. I'll update the list then if it needs updating. Enjoy yourselves.
Friendly (share personal information) Multiple belongings (<i>Idol</i> and camping)	Idoladdict (7/21/2007): I'm back from camping and I've got tons of nasty mosquito bites. Luckily I don't have any on my fingers so I'm ready to vote tons tomorrow. Welcome to the club Vincerzz!
Friendly (doing nice things for other fans)	JeffluvzCarlyJ (8/9/2007): I said I would make a Greg Homecoming DVD for them, they were all a bit sad over there and I just wanted to help them be a bit happier. I think it worked, but now I have to give out Free DVD's and it's gonna cost me a fortune. Oh well. GO GO GO GO GO GO GO (times one billion) CARLY RAE (makes my day)
Friendly (trying to help out)	Idoladdict (8/9/2007): Jeff why don't you just make a Greg homecoming video and upload it to the net so people who want it can download it?
Friendly (doing nice things for other fans)	JeffluvzCarlyJ (8/9/2007): Well I totally would like to do that, but the thing is , I have no idea HOW to do that. I'll be making

	videos of Greg and Carly, Carly being my most special one, but a lot of ppl still want Greg's as well. The chances of my uploading video are slim, I tried it many many times.... and no luck, hence the offering the DVD. I hope that is ok, and I am now taking donations for them, instead of Free, just cause it's gonna cost a fair bit to make them, get supplies, and mail them out. If you can tell me how to upload video, please do. (easier, and no shipping cost)
Friendly (trying to help out)	Idoladdict (8/9/10): Well I don't know too much about it and I don't know how you're taking the video but I know some of the people on this board could probably give you information on uploading video to your computer. I know how to upload videos to the net, I just don't have a lot of information on how to get them from a camera to a computer.
Friendly (doing nice things for other fans)	JeffluvzCarlyJ (8/9/2007): Well I have a regular video camera, I dunno, I am not that good with technology, it kinda overwhelms me, so I thought if I could somehow get it into the DVD player I could probably record it on a DVD, but getting it into the computer sounds somewhat difficult but it's probably not. If anyone would like to help just PM me the instructions.
Friendly (trying to help out)	Jeff Thomas (8/9/2007): Well if Jeff has the video on his computer... which I suggest he would if he is making DVD's then he simply needs to set up a Youtube account and upload the video. As Jeff is computer literate (self stated) youtube uploading will be a breeze... and it's free Jeff. There is also software available that can convert video "FROM" a DVD to your computer in the format required by Youtube. If you need to know what that software is please send me a PM. A lot less "stress" and "money" than making your online friends DVDs and will avoid the stalking! Cheers Mate. I look forward to your uploads.
Friendly (trying to help out)	Canucklehead (8/9/2007): It all depends on your software. Your video camera probably came with some sort of editing software if it's relatively new (or you could just use Windows Movie Maker to capture the video to your computer then convert to a file that can be posted on something like Youtube.
Friendly (doing nice things for other fans)	JeffluvzCarlyJ (8/10/2007): No no the video will be on a video tape in a video camera. I really should have a U tube account I make videos all the time, but no one ever sees them, and they are very good. How do you get the video into the computer? Is there any simple answer? OK well I might have to PM you later for more help Jeff, thanks for offering to help me do this, that means a lot... K thanks I might need your help too. It's a good video camera, really good, but not HD, I got it a few years ago. I don't think it came with editing software at all... might have to go the movie maker route... yeaaaaaahhhhhhhh! for my 100 post I thought I would announce something very special. Coming soon,

	on facebook and myspace, I will premiere my Carly painting I did on a t-shirt. I announced it here first cause I consider this to be where the biggest fans are but I will also announce it on my Carly facebook site in a few minutes. Might take a while to get it up but I just wanted to say it is 100% finished after 2 days work and I am hoping people (especially the CRJ fans) will really like it.
Gendered terms	JeffluvzCarlyJ (8/12/2007): Tara ***** for sure. I mean I'd love to date her but as a singer... I can't see her winning.
Fan recruitment strategies	Grandma mary (8/17/2007): hello our there all you mssion angelsyes, I am a grandma and a great supporter of Carly's. I think that the Carly supporters living in Mission (and Abbotsford) need to do a huge publicity push this weeken . . . Perhaps getting signs out, maybe even handing out info at Superstore and Save-On, etc. Phone the school board and ask if they can get up signs of support. Ask local businesses to take down their usual sign and just for now, put up a sign for Carly (I notice that the 14th Ave. Pub has done so). I'm sure you can come up with more ideas. I think that this next vote will be crucial for Carly. Help her as much as you can by getting the work out.
Fan recruitment strategies	JeffluvzCarlyJ (8/17/2007): Hey Grandma Mary . . . I have up 2 signs on my house, the 14th Ave Pub has a nice sign, and there are other signs around Mission, but I can only do so much . . . I feel I have gotten the word out to as many Mission people as possible, but we still need more voters. If you want to go around putting up signs with me I'd love to do that. I am totally all for seeing Carly win this . . . If anyone wants to help me and grandma make Carly win this, please lets do it
Gender Friendly	Jesslovesdaryl (9/5/2007): I'm soooo sorry about Carly going. It really wasn't her time . . . Don't you worry about your girl though, she is going to do amazing!! I'm real sorry though. JeffLuvsCarlyJ, so sorry about Carly. I know your such a huge fan you must be so sad. All of you must! But you guys don't worry you'll get to see her next week at the finale!
Friendly	Charrach (9/6/2007): Thought I would give kudos to our wonderful fanclub leader, idoladdict, for all her hard work in creating and keeping up Carly's Angels. It's been a great summer. Without fanclub leaders, well there would be no fanclubs. Thanks for all you did idoladdict! I hope that we can still have this forum (or the official one Colin did, or another one) where we can gather together and chat and keep up on the latest Carly Rae news -- cause we all know her career is just begining! We can still help each other out if some of us get to go to her concert and others don't, we can get autographs or shout outs or even just tell her hi from other fans. We all have a love of her music in common. let's remain friends, guys, and

	keep in touch.Thanks again, Idoladdict!Long live Carly's Angels!
Friendly	JeffluvzCarlyJ (9/6/2007): Hey angels lets always be friends forever!Carly RAE forever and a day!!!
Friendly (Gift)	Charrach (9/6/2007): I thought well wouldn't it be cool to have something for Carly to identify us by at her concerts, since she won't be performing on the idol stage and her angels may be dispersed, and for us to identify each other with at shows, etc.And so I came up with the idea of a Carly's Angel button/pin. I made one for myself the other day, and it simply says "One of Carly's Angels" and then has my fanclub (angel) # on it. I coloured it in yellow and then the writing is orange and pink. It is also hand written. However, I can do it on the computer and could do it in pretty much any colour. I wanted to offer to make one for any of the angels (with a number or an honorary one) who may want one. You could pin it to your jacket or shirt or something and then Carly would see it at her concert, and/or when you meet her. Or just wear it around town to show your continued support for Carly. It is also a way for other Carly's angels to to see you and know you're an angel just like them. It's just a thought. If you'd like one, let me know and we'll talk. You can PM me or email me . . .

Appendix 5: Forum – Brian Melo

Category	Forum Member, Date and Forum Discussion
Polite	Marissa1989 (6/24/2007): hey can I have a # 23 please and thx
Producers privilege (Problems with incorrect number for voting for contestants)	<3Morgan<3 (6/26/2007): Uh guys when I vote for Brian it says thank you for voting for competitor #1! I don't want to vote for Jaydee! Is it just a mistake or are they REALLY going to Jaydee? Anyone know? Same thing happens when I try Liam's number...my sister tried putting #12 and #13 to see what would happen and they also said Jaydee's number....
Voting Friendly (ask for request)	Tbiscuit (7/5/2007): I realized that this coming monday I will be on the 401 driving... is there anyone out there that would text me his number on Monday?
Friendly (respond to request)	Realitytvfan (7/5/2007): I can if u want !
Region Fan recruitment strategies	ECILA (7/6/2007): I called a long list of ph's for Hamilton & area media (various in city & local papers, radio stations etc.... not to mention passed out flyers posted flyers in bus stops & buisness . . .
Race	Canucklover (8/2/3007): So is Brian Portegese as a friend at work said he was as she said Melo is Portegese name?
Race	Jesslovesdaryl (8/2/2007): Yeah I'm pretty sure that Melo is a portuguese name.
Race	Realitytvfan (8/2/2007): yes Brian is portegese
Race	Jman (8/3/2007): I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT HE IS PORTUGUESE, MELO IS A PORKCHOP NAME ALL THE WAY!!!!!! . . . BY THE WAY NO OFFENCE TO THE PORTUGUESE OUT THERE
Hockey	Kelleighkohl (8/29/2007): Please sign me up!!! If I could I'd like #911 (9 for the Rocket..11 for Saku Koivu). A canadian can never forget hockey, no matter what the season.
Regional fan club name	newfieduck33 (8/31/2007): i know the votes are for Brian... hey did you guys know Brian & Tara are Dating?? yup... its true... yup i know... all of nfl is voting for him now.... they want him to win (Brian) .he has alot of fans!! down there
Friendly	JeffluvzCarlyJ (9/12/2007): Hey I just wanted to say on behalf of the " Carly's Angels" a bit congrats to Mr Melo for winning Idol. The Carly fans decided brian was better then Jay Dee and the majority of us voted for Brian. All of the Top 3 are huge stars in my book, and will go on to do amazing things.
Canada	Mayr (9/12/2007): You did it Brian!! Everyone in . . . CANADA thinks you are terrific!!