The Intergenerational Transmission of Colonial Mentality

Within Filipino Canadian Families

by

Drexler L. Ortiz

B.Sc. (Hons), York University, 2015
M.Sc., University of Victoria, 2019

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Psychology

We acknowledge and respect the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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Abstract

Filipinos have been subjected to centuries of colonization that have led to colonial mentality, a form of internalized oppression. While the process of intergenerational transmission has been theorized, little research has studied the intergenerational process itself. The study uses *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, a storytelling method from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* or Filipino Psychology. Three separate Filipino Canadian families who had at least one adolescent born in Canada participated in the storytelling process. Family members were interviewed separately, and then interviews were analyzed to construct three family narratives illustrating the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. The narratives had five themes or messages demonstrating how colonial mentality is transmitted intergenerationally: Don't Look Filipino, We're Not Enough, We Are Not the Same, It's Better in Canada, and That's Just the Way We Are. Participants simultaneously expressed five themes of how colonial mentality is resisted intergenerationally: That's How We Were Raised, We're in This Together, I am Filipino Canadian, We're More Than Our Stereotypes, and It's Not About Survival Anymore. These findings demonstrate how the transmission of and resistance to colonial mentality can occur simultaneously. Furthermore, the narratives provide evidence that colonial mentality may be an adaptive strategy for surviving oppression in postcolonial Philippines and Canada. While Filipino Canadian families engage in colonial mentality for survival, they simultaneously maintain collective oppression, demonstrating the complex tension between individual survival and collective liberation. Rather than blaming Filipinos for their own oppression, the findings underscore how Filipino Canadian families continue to survive historical and contemporary systemic oppression that should be dismantled.

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Dedication

For my mom and dad.

Introduction

Filipinos (i.e., Filipina, Filipino, and Filipinx individuals) have been subjected to 333 years of Spanish colonization and 48 years of American rule (Nadeau, 2020), including three years of Japanese occupation during World War II, ingraining a pervasive sense of cultural and ethnic inferiority and fostering dependency on their previous colonizers (David, 2013a). The field of psychology has formalized the construct of *colonial mentality*, a specific form of *internalized oppression* (David, 2013b). Colonial mentality refers to the set of self-oppressive beliefs and attitudes an individual has in relation to their Filipino culture, such as preferring Western beauty standards, hatred of less Westernized Filipinos, shame about their Filipino culture, feelings of inferiority towards white people and Western cultures, and being grateful for the colonization of the Philippines (David & Okazaki, 2006). Numerous studies have documented the negative consequences of endorsing colonial mentality, including depression (David, 2008), anxiety (Clement, 2014), poor body image (Cajucom, 2016), and lower overall wellbeing among Filipino adults in the United States (US; David, 2013a). Understanding colonial mentality is crucial to addressing the mental health of the Filipino diaspora, yet research has not yet examined the transmission of these beliefs across generations.

Knowledge about the transmission of colonial mentality intergenerationally includes learning about how it develops over time. At present, most of the research on colonial mentality reflects how it manifests in adulthood. For instance, measurement tools for colonial mentality, such as the Colonial Mentality Scale (CMS), have been devised for Filipino American adults (David & Okazaki, 2006b), leaving a gap in how colonial mentality develops and manifests before adulthood. A developmental perspective on colonial mentality is important to provide insight into how to prevent colonial mentality, rather than only intervene once it has already developed. It is likely that Filipino adolescents have developing

understandings of colonial mentality that are influenced by various contexts such as their parents, peers, institutions, and systems that they live within. Several studies have examined how parents socialize aspects of adolescents' ethnic-racial identity (see Hughes et al., 2006), and for Filipino families, this may include the transmission of colonial mentality. Therefore, Filipino families provide an important context to learn about the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality and how it develops over time.

The present dissertation examined how colonial mentality is transmitted intergenerationally among Filipino Canadian families. The study combined methods from narrative inquiry and *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* ("Filipino Psychology") to construct stories about the lived experiences of Filipino Canadian families. First, I summarize the centuries of history that has led to colonial mentality among the Filipino diaspora. I briefly review relevant aspects of the Philippines' precolonial history, the formation of the Philippines as a nation, and Filipino family migration to Canada. I draw from disciplines outside of psychology to contextualize the study and its later findings for the purposes of understanding the psychological construct of colonial mentality. Next, I review models of intergenerational transmission, and finally a literature review of colonial mentality. The study has the potential to contribute to knowledge about the development of colonial mentality, provide novel areas of intervention for colonial mentality, and decolonize Filipino culture.

Precolonial Philippines

The history and theorized origins of colonial mentality are critical to understanding its transmission and development. Several Filipino scholars have suggested that remembering the cultures and history that were forgotten and erased is pivotal to healing from the historical trauma of colonization (Decena, 2014; Desai, 2016; Halagao, 2010). Memories are not just an individual psychological process but are constructed and reconstructed with others who share their history (Kirmayer, 2022). Memories are also influenced by power structures that may

wish to erase the past, such that “the denial of vital memories (recent or remote, personal or collective) causes fractures in the self that may disorganize the individual, install false consciousness, and cement the exclusionary and disvalued position of colonized, racialized, and marginalized subjects” (pp. 243-44). In other words, memories are not apolitical and remembering is an act of resistance against histories of power that denied their oppression.

Historians have already written in-depth accounts of precolonial and colonial Philippines (e.g., see Nadeau, 2020; Scott, 1980), and others have taken the literature on Filipino history further by arguing how colonization has led to colonial mentality (David, 2013a; Strobel, 2015). I provide a brief overview of precolonial Philippines that highlights the rich cultural, political, and social systems that existed before colonization, and consequently have been destroyed by centuries of colonial rule. I believe that most Filipino Canadians, especially youth, would be unaware of most of this history. I construct this narrative of precolonial Philippines to demonstrate the distance between precolonial Philippines and contemporary colonial mentality.

Several ethnic groups migrated from the surrounding areas of the archipelago of over 7000 islands now called the Philippines. A broad ethnic group called the Negritos have been suggested to have first settled on the islands (Jinam et al., 2017), although the islands have received migrants from several groups across the Malay region (e.g., Taiwan, China) and beyond that promoted the diversity of cultures that existed before the arrival of Spanish colonizers (Apostol, 2012; Larena et al., 2021; Zafra, 1956). For instance, Arab, Chinese, and Indian traders were present as early as 1000 AD, and the strong presence of Islam and its syncretic forms predates Spanish colonialism from Muslim traders marrying into and settling with the Indigenous peoples of the southern parts of archipelago (Herrera, 2015; Nadeau, 2020). At the arrival of Spain in 1521, scholars believe there were over 150 cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups dispersed throughout (Herrera, 2015), with a total population estimated

to be anywhere between half a million to 667,612 based on early reports of Spanish colonizers in 1591 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2011).

While much of the precolonial culture has been lost from Spanish colonization through punishing cultural practices, destroying artifacts, and burning written local histories (Herrera, 2015), aspects of precolonial culture were recorded through the accounts of early Spanish colonizers, and more recent work from anthropologists and historians. For example, Nicolas Zafra (1892-1979), Filipino historian, published *Readings in Philippine History* in 1956 that amalgamated three early accounts of Spaniards on the islands who observed the Indigenous peoples before largescale and intensive colonization practices. Importantly, the diversity of the Indigenous groups is not represented in these writings, and thus the present historical section may be biased towards only a few certain groups. For instance, Herrera (2015) claims that "instead of unifying the diverse local populations under one banner during the almost 400 years of Spanish rule, various groups remained fiercely independent or indifferent to the colonizer" (p. 14). Specific groups such as the Lumad and Moro people successfully resisted the settlement of Spanish colonizers in the South despite Spain claiming this territory (they never ruled this area; Herrera, 2015; Montiel et al., 2012), and the Ifugao groups in the north moved more inwards in the mountains to make their location more difficult to reach (Lapeña & Acabado, 2017). Therefore, the cultures of these groups may not be represented in early accounts, and the extent to which precolonial cultural aspects generalize to all Indigenous groups should be carefully considered.

The smallest political units were called *barangays* which were communities consisting of approximately 30 to 100 families, led by a chieftain called a *datu* or *dato* (Barretto-Tesoro, 2008; Jocano, 1998; Zafra, 1956). While some barangays were dispersed throughout the archipelago, some clustered together and functioned as confederacies with several leaders that worked together (Zafra, 1956). Datus were determined by blood lineage

(i.e., from father to son), but it was not guaranteed should the inheritor not provide for the people (Barretto-Tesoro, 2008; Nadeau, 2020; Zafra, 1956); in other words, if a leader emerged that was successful (in war or securing resources), they would gain their own followers that may include the previous barangay's datu. Power was determined by their number of followers that were gained due to a datu's abilities (in war and commerce), and yet the extent of their abilities relied on their followers, such that "the datu required a following to execute specific routines that made him a datu" (Barretto-Tesero, 2008, p. 79; Neadeau, 2020). Nadeau (2002) claims that "social confusion resulting from a rupture in the network of reciprocity and exchange, or chaos occurring in times of natural calamity, was indicative of a leader's decline, at which point people moved to follow a new authority" (p. 77). In this way, leadership in pre-colonial societies was more readily fluid and empowered by the community rather than protected by the state or an order of divinity.

Aside from datus, the social ranking also included others such as special leaders to help meet the needs of the barangay (*mandadores*), nobility (*Maharlika* or *maginoo*), commoners (*timawa* or *tamiguas*, and *maharlica*, depending on the Indigenous group) and slaves (*alipin* or *oripuen*), and the slave rankings ranged in their rights and privileges depending on the events that led to their enslavement (e.g., debt, war, birthright; Nadeau, 2020; Zafra, 1956). For instance, some slaves could own property, others lived within their masters' household that "were commonly treated like members of family" (Nadeau, 2020, p. 30), and others were treated like property (i.e., bought and sold). Lendio and Valila Jr. (2021) claim that "in Pre-Spanish era, there were existing slaves but not the same definition and treatment of slaves as during the Spanish occupation" (p. 6), contrasting the inhumane treatment of Spanish and other colonial slavery with Indigenous Filipino slavery in which "slavery during those times was not a permanent state of the individual" (p. 6). Social mobility was built into the structure of these communities, whether it be from succeeding by

networking, trading, warring, agriculture, or healing (Nadeau, 2020). One's social ranking was determined, at least in part, by their abilities for the barangay.

Across several scholars involving precolonial Philippines, the Indigenous cultures were more egalitarian between men and women (Bautista, 1988; Certeza-Narcida, 2020; Choy, 2003; Gripaldo, 2000; Nadeau, 2020; Villarta, 2020). Some of these groups' creation myth tells of a great bird who pecked at a bamboo that split in half. On each half there was a man and a woman, presented as equal before the world (Choy, 2003; Herrera, 2015). Consistent with these egalitarian beliefs, early Spanish colonizers observed that women could own and inherit property (with no claim from their husbands), be financially independent, divorce their husbands, and work in the fields alongside men (Bautista, 1988; Zafra, 1956). One aspect that appears to be inconsistent in the literature was whether women could be datus. Some scholars have claimed that "daughters could succeed to the datuship" (Bautista, 1988, p. 145) and "the same right of nobility and chieftainship was preserved for the women, just as for the men" (Zafra, 1956, p. 98). Barretto-Tesoro (2008) claimed the opposite, such that "a datu position was only occupied by males and it was hereditary or could be passed through brothers" (p. 79). Others were in between these spectrums and suspect that the possibility of female datus cannot be completely ruled out (Abinales & Amoroso, 2017). While the gender of datus is an important aspect to consider for cultural recovery and identity, there are also other ways in which women were leaders in other roles within the barangay that is not contested.

Women were considered spiritual leaders, sometimes referred to as *babaylan, baliyan*, or *catalonan* (Apostol, 2012; Barretto-Tesoro, 2008; Herrera, 2015; Strobel, 2010) depending on the Indigenous group. Considered shamans or priestesses, they held a powerful role in their societies as they were connected to the sacred. They had knowledge of relieving their barangay community of "physical, mental, and spiritual illness" (Bautista, 1988, p. 144)

through knowledge of nature, medicine, rituals, and prayer (see Apostol, 2012; Barretto-Tesoro, 2008; Brewer, 1999). Due to the vast knowledge required to perform this healing and spiritual role, they were usually older women. This was why age (i.e., being older) was a more salient aspect of a person than gender (Bautista, 1988). Several accounts have acknowledged the existence of male shamans who wore women's clothing, married and slept with men or women, and were described as effeminate (Bautista, 1988; Brewer, 1999; Villarta, 2020). Brewer (1999) argued that, while a "third gender" category with spiritual roles were found across several regions beyond the archipelago, the Indigenous people of the Philippines were unique in that it was precisely the identification with the feminine that granted spiritual powers:

> in the Animist pre-colonial Philippine archipelago it was the male shaman's identification with the feminine, either as temporary transvestism or as a more permanent lifestyle choice, that reinforced the normative situation of female as shaman, and femininity as the vehicle to the spirit world. (para. 38)

In addition to the priestly class, there were well established spiritual and cultural beliefs that were embedded into their society. They offered sacrifices and rituals to several gods who oversaw different aspects of life (e.g., harvest, illness) when needed, and believed every living being (including plants and animals) had a soul or spirit (i.e., *animism*) which allowed them to call on their ancestors for guidance (Apostol, 2012; McCoy, 1982; Herrera, 2015; Zafra, 1956). A god commonly referenced was *Bathala,* who was the "God of Creation" or the ruler of all other gods (Zaide, 2006). It was believed that after death, being buried with your riches (i.e., gold and jewelry) led to a higher chance of being accepted into the afterlife, which was why people were concerned with being poor before death (Estrella, 2014; Zafra, 1956). Consistent with their spiritual beliefs, early colonial Spaniards observed that the Indigenous people, especially higher ranks, were adorned with gold and jewelry

(Zafra, 1956). Furthermore, the spiritual and religious beliefs of several Indigenous groups were influenced by Islam and Hindu groups from traders (Apostol, 2012; Herrera, 2015; Rafael, 2000). Overall, religious and spiritual understandings of themselves and the universe were long established before colonial religions.

Beyond systems of leadership, more egalitarian beliefs about gender, and spirituality, the Indigenous peoples, their cultures, and society were extremely developed, complex, and sophisticated. They had their own writing system (*baybayin*) prior to the Latin alphabet, developed regional styles of martial arts, wove textiles and created clothing from the land, were masters of shipbuilding and sea navigation, and had extensive knowledge of dentistry, medicine, hygiene, agriculture, and housebuilding (Apostol, 2012; Nadeau, 2020; Zafra, 1956). Despite these accomplishments, they were not treated as equal human beings upon the arrival of Spanish colonizers.

Precolonial Indigenous cultures were rich and diverse and was lost through Spanish and American colonization and Japanese occupation. Retelling this lesser-known history demonstrates how colonial mentality was born out of colonialism and not inherent to Filipino disposition. Instead, perceptions of inferiority were passed down and internalized through centuries of historical oppression, transmitted across generations.

Becoming a Filipino Nation

Before colonialism, there was no "Filipino." Individuals on the archipelago were divided by villages and groups (i.e., *barangays*), even if they lived in relative proximity. As Bernad (1971) described,

> There were Visayans and Tagalogs and Pampangos and Ilocanos and Bicolanos and Ibanags and Gaddangs and Pangasinans. There were Tiruraye and Manobos and Maguindanaos and Marañaos, and Tausugs and Samals. Even these were not united among themselves. There was no such thing as the "Tagalog Kingdom" or the

> "Visayan Empire." Even the people of one island were not united. There were no Leyteños: they were from Cabalian or from Baybay. There were no Samareños: they were from Ibabao or from Tandaya or from Basey. What we know today as the Philippine Islands was indeed an archipelago, but it was not one country, and its people, though racially one, were not one nation. (p. 577)

Other scholars have already discussed the details of how Spanish and American colonialism united the people under one nation (see Bernad, 1971; Constantino, 1976; Francia, 2014; Gripaldo, 2011; Weekley, 1999). Although an exhaustive literature review of Filipino nationalism is outside the scope of a psychology dissertation, I select elements of this literature to draw attention to how colonial mentality may manifest throughout Filipino history, especially the formation of the Philippines nation and the "Filipino" national identity.

In essence, the individuals living on the archipelago were fragmented, and "because of this fragmentation, the people of one region could be pitted against those of another" (Bernad, 1971, p. 579). For instance, certain *barangays* were "won over" by both violent and non-violent means by Spanish colonizers teaming with opposing Indigenous groups. Constantino (1976) discussed that the lack of centralized government or class structure made it relatively easier to dismantle and prevent cohesion among the inhabitants, making it difficult for the *barangays* to organize themselves against a common colonizer. The evolution of Indigenous cultures was interrupted by methods of colonization such as Christianization and replacing Indigenous beliefs and culture with colonial beliefs and culture. These methods also divided Christian and Muslim groups, further fragmenting their unity (Constantino, 1976). "Full-blooded" Indigenous people were referred to as *indios* (Bernad, 1971), and as colonial governance influenced the Philippines' economy and class system, a middle and upper class of Indigenous people emerged, which became part of the new elite or *principalia* who promoted assimilation for their own financial gain (Constantino, 1976; Francia, 2014).

After Spanish colonialism, the American education system promoted ideas that undermined a national identity such as assimilation, dependency, and inferiority (Constantino, 1976; 2000). Overall, it appears that the formation of a Filipino nationalist identity has always stood on fragmented colonial grounds, rooted in coercion and oppression rather than pride and authentic cultural development.

Scholars studying Filipino identity continue to point to more contemporary influences that weaken the Filipino nationalist identity. Gripaldo (2011) suggests that politicians in the Philippines have acted for their own self-interest rather than developing Filipino nationalism. The government is inefficient, which slows national development, and Filipinos move abroad to earn a living because it is not possible in their own country. Gripaldo also describes how other foreign countries (e.g., China, U.S., Spain) are largely in control of the economy in the Philippines. Finally, they discuss how crab mentality, "an attitude of envy (not wanting others to be so much ahead of oneself in many respects and, especially, in material successes) or of one-up-manship (I am better than you and should be ahead)" (p. 266) and colonial mentality are attitudes that inhibit the development of a Filipino nationalist identity. Thus, not only did Filipino nationalism develop from colonial grounds, ties to the Filipino nation-state (i.e., Philippines) continue to be weak for the Filipino diaspora. The lack of Filipino nationalism, which could be a source of national pride and Filipino identity, likely provided a context for colonial mentality to be transmitted over generations.

Filipino Canadian Families

Filipinos have had a long history of migration to Canada. Almost one million of the 41 million Canadians are Filipinos, with over a third migrating in the last decade (Statistics Canada, 2023a). About one in five Filipino Canadians were born in Canada, which suggests that many Filipino families are comprised of a mixture of first-generation Canadian parents and their first- and second-generation children. While the experiences of Filipino Canadian

families are not studied firmly within the field of psychology, several scholars in other disciplines have documented their experiences.[1] I review a select few of these articles to situate the Filipino Canadian family and draw attention to how colonial mentality may manifest and be transmitted within their contexts.

Labour Migration

Upon review of this literature, it appears that the Filipino Canadian experience often revolves around moving from the Philippines to Canada for financial security, oftentimes motivated by wanting to provide for their family. After the U.S. claimed the Philippines as a territory following the Spanish-American War in 1898, the earliest Filipino settlers to Canada arrived from the U.S. to British Columbia to work in restaurants, forestry, and canneries around this time (Malek, 2021). During the first half of the 20th century in Canada, racist policies such as the Chinese Head Tax and the "Gentleman's Agreement" (restricting Japanese immigration) limited Asian immigration (Malek, 2021). Additionally, the Order-in-Council (PC 1930-2115) prohibited "the landing of 'any immigrant of any Asiatic race'" (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d.; Malek, 2021). Early pathways to Canada were often limited based on xenophobic and racist perspectives.

By 1967, the introduction of a points-based system to meet labor market needs became a main pathway for sustained Filipino migration as it selected immigrants based on their skills and qualifications rather than race (Barber, 2008; Malek, 2021). Filipinos tended to meet requirements for sectors such as healthcare (e.g., as nurses) since the American education system in the Philippines produced English-speaking nurses that met western standards (Choy, 2003), and Filipinos often filled the garment manufacturing sector as it was a skill developed during Spanish colonization and industrialized after World War II

[1] For a more in-depth analysis about Filipino Canadian migration and its impacts on the Filipino family, please see Barber (2013), Coloma et al. (2012), Kelly (2015, 2021), Laquian (2023), Malek (2021), Pratt (2003, 2006), and Tungohan (2018).

(Hutchison, 1992). Filipinos effectively filled critical labour shortages for a growing Canadian economy (Pratt, 2003; Malek, 2021). During this period, educated and skilled Filipinos left the Philippines and entered the Canadian workforce.

In 1992, the Live in Caregiver Program (LCP) was introduced to address labour shortages in childcare, elderly care, and homecare services. This policy especially aligned with the cultural and gendered expectations placed on Filipino women (i.e., Filipinas) which emphasized English proficiency, caregiving, and hospitality because of the Philippines' colonial history (Barber, 2008; Malek, 2021). The LCP became a prominent pathway for Filipina migration, and it was particularly enticing for mothers who could support their families financially and then eventually sponsor their families to also migrate to Canada after fulfilling program requirements (Kelly, 2021; Malek, 2021). In contrast to the LCP, the 2002 Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) did not guarantee permanent residency as it was a policy meant to fill short-term labour shortages in sectors such as restaurants, hospitality, agriculture, and manufacturing (Tungohan, 2017). Consequently, Filipinos who migrated through the TFWP experienced employment precarity and uncertainty regarding their migration status, which increased their vulnerability to exploitation (Tungohan, 2017). Overall, the multiple pathways to Filipino Canadian migration reflect the intersection of labour demands, colonial legacies, and systemic inequalities that likely continue to shape their experiences in Canada.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, Malek discusses several reasons that Filipinos desired to move to other countries such as Canada:

> In many cases, immigration is a familial act. Push factors are certainly active in the decision to immigrate, including economic precarity, poor social services, government corruption, and political motivations in the Philippines (such as Martial Law under

> Ferdinand Marcos), but concerns over one's family is also a major consideration. (p. 20)

In other words, the history of Filipino migration to Canada partly reflects the historical, political, and economic conditions of the Philippines. Scholars have named economic precarity and political corruption in the Philippines as reasons for the reliance on labour migration as a survival strategy for the entire Philippine nation (Barber, 2008; Malek, 2021; Tungohan, 2017). In the context of a struggling post-colonial Philippine nation, exporting labour through migration has become a primary means of establishing financial stability for their families. Therefore, it is possible that migration strengthens Filipinos' ties and obligations to their family while weakening their sense of national identity. Prioritizing familial obligations over national identity as a way of survival may reflect the historical legacies of colonization, which may influence how and what aspects of Filipino identity are transmitted intergenerationally.

Impacts on the Filipino Family

Although labour migration to Canada enabled Filipinos to support their families both in Canada and the Philippines, it also provided unique challenges for the family. For many, family separation was the most difficult part of the Filipino Canadian migrant experience. For instance, the LCP and TFWP extracted parents from their families for several years, and both parents and children have reported emotional distress from not being physically present with their family (Pratt, 2006; Tungohan, 2017). Pratt (2006) described the significant impact of family separation via the LCP:

> Feelings of betrayal, of vulnerability to manipulation by a parent, of bewilderment, of not understanding or being able to interpret the sudden departure of one's mother, the repetition of the same memory: these all resonate with standard accounts of trauma… for many youth the trauma is two-fold; they not only experience the trauma of

> separation from their mother but that of the second separation from the person who has cared for them in the Philippines in their mother's absence, often a maternal grandmother or aunt. (p. 49)

Not only was the immediate family impacted by migration, but their relationship with their extended family was also strained, especially during the period of reunification which created another attachment rupture between the child and the extended family member. Despite family reunification being the main goal for Filipino migrants to Canada, the experience of youth was often fraught with resentment, acculturation challenges, and complex feelings from prolonged estrangement (Pratt, 2006). Since it was typically mothers who migrated via the LCP pathway, fathers/husbands had their own unique challenges. For instance, some fathers were also working overseas in a different country, separated from both their spouse and children, and the fathers who stayed in the Philippines with their children "became a father and a mother to [their] children" (Pratt, 2012, p. 30). When fathers rejoined the family in Canada, the spouses had challenges recognizing each other's sacrifices, contributing to marital strain (Pratt, 2012). Additionally, mothers and fathers experienced deskilling, taking jobs well below their experience and qualifications in the Philippines (Kelly, 2021). However, while mothers tended to take on multiple jobs, fathers had more difficulty maintaining stable employment, reversing traditional Filipino gender roles (Kelly, 2021). This created additional strain between members of the family, and fathers may have experienced lower self-esteem and challenges to their sense of masculinity (Kelly, 2021). In addition to challenges during reunification, the families in Canada often sent money (i.e., remittances) back to their family members in the Philippines. Parents often perceived their contributions as a form of caretaking, but also an obligation and burden (Barber, 2008; Tungohan, 2017). For the Filipino Canadian family who arrived through programs such as LCP and TFWP, family separation and reunification were common experiences that could

differentially impact members of the family in exchange for relative economic stability and financial security.

Even when children are born in Canada, these second-generation Filipino Canadian youth may continue to experience challenges from their parents' immigration. Pratt (2003) described that Filipino youth born in Canada experienced challenges such as displacement (e.g., not feeling at home in their birth country), exclusion due to their racialized identity (e.g., perpetual "immigrant status," p. 48), disconnection from their parents due to acculturation and enculturation differences, and having parents that do not have the same cultural capital in Canada as their White peers. The challenges of second-generation Filipino Canadians demonstrate the intergenerational impacts of migration, which is an additional context to consider for the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality.

The psychological impacts of migration on the Filipino Canadian family may be hypothesized from this brief review of literature outside of psychology. In particular, the experiences of Filipino Canadian families have been shaped by historical, political, and economic contexts of the Philippines and Canada, which are both postcolonial nations. Financial precarity, immigration, acculturation, enculturation, racism, family separation, and family reunification are stressful experiences that should be considered when understanding how colonial mentality may manifest and be transmitted over generations.

Models of Intergenerational Transmission

In the broadest sense, "intergenerational transmission" refers to characteristics from individuals in one generation recurring among individuals in the next generation (Branje et al., 2020). This definition permits the study of several psychological constructs such as beliefs and attitudes, identity, psychopathology, and personality, to name a few, with multiple pathways for intergenerational transmission to occur. To date however, there has been no model of intergenerational transmission in the context of colonial mentality. Other theories or

models of intergenerational transmission may provide a useful framework to understand specifically what influences, processes, and pathways create the conditions for colonial mentality to affect multiple generations.

The following section reviews a few intergenerational models from two different areas within psychology, namely historical trauma and ethnic-racial socialization. Each of these fields was chosen for examination because colonial mentality may operate similarly to the intergenerational transmission of such constructs. Each field may also provide unique and sometimes overlapping insight to how colonial mentality may operate over time and across generations and contexts.

Historical Trauma

When researching psychological constructs that are studied across generations, trauma is the most prevalent. Trauma has several definitions that depend on the field, and each has their philosophical, methodological, and practical implications and limitations (Krupnik, 2019). From the literature on intergenerational transmission of trauma, definitions trend towards broader understandings, beyond the highly specific, medicalized, operational definition of trauma within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – 5th Edition (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These broader definitions allow historical events not directly experienced to be labelled as the traumatizing incident (Kirmayer et al., 2014); allow trauma to be conceptualized not only as the experience of an individual, but also of families, communities, and populations (Silove, 2000); allow for institutions, policies, and states to be accountable for perpetrating or perpetuating trauma (Heberle et al., 2020); considers broader indicators for the significance of trauma (e.g., interpersonal difficulties, domestic violence, poverty); and acknowledges how the current political, sociocultural, and demographic contexts of a person or group contribute to the trauma experience. Consistent with a broad definition of trauma, the present dissertation defines trauma as experiencing

negative outcomes as a result of some event(s), both proximal and distal. Colonial mentality may be understood as a negative outcome of the distal events of colonialism.

Among the many intergenerational transmission of trauma theories, historical trauma models are necessarily intergenerational as they explain how historically traumatic events endured by a group of people (sometimes referred to as mass trauma) continued to lead to vulnerabilities, adversity, and negative outcomes for later generations from their group. One model of historical trauma by Sotero (2006) posits that the subjugation of a group through various means (e.g., war, genocide, policies, incarceration, enslavement, cultural erasure, economic destabilization) leads to physical (e.g., epigenetic gene expression, compromised immune system), psychological (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, internalizing), and social (e.g., domestic violence, unemployment, poverty, child maltreatment) trauma responses that dismantle individuals, families, communities, and systems of support, thereby forever altering the trajectory of the targeted group. Sotero further argues that over time, methods of subjugation become less overt and instead can be carried within attitudes, institutions, and economies (e.g., racism, discrimination, social disadvantages) that are lasting legacies of that original subjugation, providing the context for continued, heightened, and renewed traumatization. As a result of the first generation's subjugation, their response to that trauma and their resulting lived conditions also alter the next generation's life experiences, hence the *intergenerational* transmission of trauma.

The "modes" of trauma transmission are numerous, such as physiology (e.g., neonatal stress, maternal malnutrition), genetics (e.g., epigenetics), environment and psychosocial outcomes (e.g., lower socioeconomic background, inadequate parenting, domestic violence, abuse), higher order systems (e.g., laws, policies, institutions), and discrimination (across all levels – interpersonal to societal and legal, from implicit to explicit). Importantly, Sotero also suggests that subsequent generations still experience instances of the original trauma such as

loss of language and culture, racism, poverty, injustice, and social inequity. Later generations may also experience vicarious trauma through oral traditions, storytelling, and collective memory, although these may be culture-specific. With all these modes of transmission, population-specific health disparities in subsequent generations occur. Sotero's model offers valuable insights to the interpersonal, cultural, contextual, and societal factors that lead to the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality.

Other models of historical trauma identify similar modes of transmission, often providing a different perspective in the ways transmission pathways can be categorized. For example, Evans-Campbell (2008) provides a multilevel framework of historical trauma among American Indian/Native Alaska (AINA) communities, and emphasizes two broader levels of transmission pathways – interpersonal and societal. Interpersonal transmission can occur directly (e.g., hearing stories of ancestral trauma) or indirectly (e.g., experiencing more strenuous or difficult childhoods as a result of having traumatized parents). Societal or community level transmission occurs through the experience of "multifaceted losses" (p. 328) that include losing cultures, traditions, and spirituality that lead to other vulnerabilities such as substance use, poor mental health, and loss of identity that affect the next generation. Similar to Sotero's (2006) model, Evans-Campbell (2008) acknowledges the continued presence of the original trauma in present day through cultural and community erasure that has been experienced since the instance of the original trauma.

More recent models extend the transmission of historical trauma literature by identifying pathways that may be specific to a particular group. For example, within the African American populations, Ortega-Williams, Crutchfield, and colleagues (2021) highlighted how colourism functions across physiological, environmental, psychosocial, socioeconomic, political, and legal modes of transmission, overall constructing the hierarchy of skin tones that privilege lighter skin. They argue that there is very little research on how

the mechanisms of historical trauma differentially impact individuals *within* a particular group such as colourism, which may not be a relevant outcome of historical trauma for other groups. Similarly, within Evans-Campbell's (2008) model on AINA communities, it highlights the unique cultural features of Indigenous communities that make historical trauma especially devastating. For example, the cultural significance of extended family, community, and connection with ancestors means that the destruction of these networks and resulting isolation likely exacerbated the intergenerational trauma experience for AINA communities. These models demonstrate how the specific ways historical trauma was experienced by the subjugated group results in unique outcomes. For instance, Kirmayer and colleagues (2014) contrast how the events of the Holocaust and Indigenous historical trauma are different, influencing their post-trauma context. Extending this idea to Filipinos, a unique outcome from the ways they experienced colonialism is colonial mentality.

Importantly, the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma might implicate these communities as part of the transmission itself (e.g., through parenting practices), which may pathologize the very communities as they both partake in and survive from historical trauma. Maxwell (2014) highlighted the issues within studies examining family or parenting as transmitting trauma: "the idea that parenting constitutes a discrete mechanism by which trauma is intergenerationally transmitted provides a new discursive tool for the pathologization of indigenous families" (p. 420). Historical trauma literature tends to locate the problems within the "'traditional' and, therefore, dysfunctional parenting practices" (p. 421) of Indigenous people, presenting a decontextualized understanding of Indigenous parenting. Furthermore, historical trauma in a population does not mean it occurred to every member of that group, and resilient factors are often ignored in the discourse. For instance, many pre-colonial Indigenous groups in the Philippines successfully and completely defended against Spanish colonization and others were unaffected due to living in remote

mountainous locations (David, 2013a). In other words, when studying the transmission of Filipino colonial mentality, not all Filipinos would have experienced colonial oppression to transmit colonial mentality, and the attempts to resist colonial oppression and colonial mentality are often deemphasized. Maxwell's arguments suggest the need to be critical about perpetuating colonial narratives that include state-perpetrated coercion, violence, and colonial policies when studying historical trauma. Furthermore, when studying the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma through families, their actions must be contextualized in the broader context of historical oppression that has lasting contemporary impacts.

Mohatt and colleagues (2014) present a narrative model of historical trauma that appears to be a significant departure from other frameworks as it reinterprets mechanisms of transmission as narratives. Since research cannot reliably measure the distal impacts of historical events, and historical trauma is a collective memory that is therefore contestable, they suggest that "the ways in which people and cultures represent and respond to past traumas become more central than an examination of the facts when we consider historical trauma as a narrative" (p. 130). In other words, the narrative of historical trauma is a "contemporary stressor" and how individuals respond within these narratives impacts their experiences, in their case, health. Contemporary reminders of historical trauma serve as narratives, which include public reminders (e.g., recurrent mass traumas, structural inequities, dominant cultural narratives) and personal reminders (e.g., perceived historical loss, experiences of discrimination and microaggressions). These narratives are then filtered through what they called narrative salience, the personal significance of a historical trauma narrative to an individual, which allows for further differentiation in the individualized experience of historical trauma.

The literature reflects the need to consider mechanisms of historical trauma transmission as well as buffers, resiliency, resistance, and ongoing healing. For example,

Ortega-Williams, Beltrán, and colleagues (2021) conceptualize a post-traumatic growth framework that suggests how individuals heal, and, in turn, how the larger group may heal from historical trauma. Several other theories of historical trauma transmission among different populations have explicitly considered resilience and healing, such as among American Indians (Denham, 2008), Indigenous people in Canada (Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010), and African Americans (Henderson et al., 2021). In order to understand how historical trauma is transmitted, the ways in which it is not transmitted are equally important.

In summary, of all the theories presented, there was considerable overlap in the mechanisms of transmission, but future research should include individual differences and cultural factors. Theories often consider biological and intrapersonal mechanisms, interpersonal and familial mechanisms, community and cultural mechanisms, policy and legal systems, and dominant societal narratives. Current critical theory on historical trauma cautions on overgeneralizing across individuals and pathologizing cultures who endured historical trauma, which may be countered through considering nuanced and culturally-grounded understandings of history and culture, resilience and resistance, and broader systems that have created cumulative stress over generations.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization

Ethnic-racial socialization refers to how an individual learns about race and ethnicity. The literature in this area tends to focus on how parents or other sources of socialization teach both explicitly and implicitly the "meaning and significance of race and ethnicity; racial and ethnic group membership and identity; racial and ethnic stratification; and intergroup and intragroup interactions" (Priest et al., 2014, p. 140). Since ethnic-racial socialization includes learning or constructing self-understandings of ethnicity and/or race, colonial mentality may operate on similar pathways.

The literature on ethnic-racial socialization is large, with a primary focus on parents and family as sources of socialization (Hughes et al., 2006; Priest et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). In a recent systematic review of ethnic-racial socialization processes for white and racialized youth, of the 92 articles reviewed, 93% were focused on parents, particularly mothers (Priest et al., 2014). The types of messages parents were communicating to their youth about ethnic-racial socialization were largely organized into four dimensions suggested by Hughes and colleagues (2006): *cultural socialization* (i.e., implicit or explicit messages about ethnic pride, customs, traditions, history, and pride), *preparation for bias* (i.e., awareness about racism and discrimination, and how to cope or respond), *promotion of mistrust* (i.e., being cautious about other racial or racialized groups), and *egalitarianism and silence about race* (i.e., emphasizing individual qualities over racialized status or avoiding talking about race). Using this organizing framework, aspects of the parent, youth, or parent-youth relationship were examined in relation to each of the messages. For instance, parental experience with work discrimination among African American mothers was associated with cultural socialization and preparation for bias. In another systematic review focused on ethnic-racial socialization in the family (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2021), positive parental attitudes about their heritage culture were related to a higher likelihood of cultural internalization. It appears that the parent-youth relationship likely functions as a moderator of ethnic-racialization, such that parental warmth, parental support, open and high-quality communication, parent-youth relational quality, and low levels of conflict facilitate understandings of race and ethnicity. However, it is not necessarily a requirement. They found that positive parent-youth relationships facilitate ethnic-racial socialization, but even youth with poor relationships with their parents still learn about ethnic-racial socialization. Overall, it appears that parents are one of the most significant transmitters of understandings regarding youths' race and ethnicity.

Other people aside from parents have also been studied as socializing ethnic-racial understandings. Other family members (typically female siblings, aunts, grandmothers), peers (especially same-race peers who are more likely to talk about race), and mentors such as older family friends, and teachers (Priest et al., 2014). Youth may not necessarily receive the same messages about ethnicity and race across different sources, such as one study that reported conflicting messages from family members about cultural pride (Winkler, 2010). In the school context, Saleem and Byrd (2021) suggested a transmission model that identified peers, teachers and staff, and policies and practices within a school as transmitters of ethnic-racial socialization. The method of ethnic-racial messages can be verbal communication, non-verbal behaviours, learning activities, and images, and the content of these messages may range from knowledge about cultures, critical consciousness, cultural competence, assimilating to mainstream culture, and colour-evasive. Importantly, the model considers how transmitters of ethnic-racial understandings are situated in historical and community contexts that influence the effectiveness and significance of transmitters. Despite some consideration of other social factors, ethnic-racial socialization places higher emphasis on family systems.

Ethnic-racial socialization literature suffers the same limitations as historical trauma literature in that unique cultural histories and broader systemic issues are understudied, albeit, difficult to capture reliably. Nonetheless, some attempts have been made to consider broader systems and history by examining the differential impacts of interpersonal versus institutional racism on ethnic-racial socialization among Chinese, African American, and Latino parents (Hagelskamp & Hughes, 2014). They found that African American and Latino parents, when faced with either institutional or interpersonal racism, were more likely to engage in cultural socialization practices and preparation for bias with their youth, whereas Chinese parents were less likely to engage in any of the ethnic-racial socialization practices. The authors urge that the unique cultural histories of each of these groups may have led to differential

perspectives on how their youth should be prepared for or react to racism (i.e., assimilation versus counteracting through ethnic pride).

Other attempts to capture influences beyond the family system have considered neighbourhood characteristics. Neighbourhoods with high discrimination, a higher proportion of a particular ethnic group, and socially disadvantaged (e.g., low SES neighbourhood; high crime rate) tend to have parents who engage in more ethnic-racial socialization. Hughes and Watford (2022) recently suggested that youth may observe "racial regularities," which are the patterns of differential experiences between racial groups in any given space, such as Black students receiving more rules than white students in a classroom setting. This may lead to implicit messaging about race and ethnicity, and the power dynamics one has in a particular space due to their racialized status. While these studies are a step in the right direction, leading scholars in ethnic-racial socialization continuously acknowledge that parenting practices do not operate in isolation, but within an ecological system surrounding an individual at a specific time in history that needs further empirical investigation (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2021).

In summary, the field of ethnic-racial socialization provides empirical evidence of the family processes and messages involved in understanding one's racialized position. A strength in ethnic-racial socialization literature is that it has captured specific messages of socialization transmitted from parent to child that could be applied to colonial mentality. In their review, Umaña-Taylor and Hill (2021) identified that ethnic-racial socialization within highly negative family systems were "another means of demeaning [adolescents]" (p. 256). In other words, ethnic-racial socialization in particular family contexts could lead to internalized oppression such as colonial mentality. The proximal influences and messages about youth's ethnic-racial identity may be useful in understanding how colonial mentality is transmitted intergenerationally within a family system, however, the broader context of historical

oppression and layers of ecology that influence ethnic-racial identity are better theorized in the literature on historical trauma. Therefore, to study the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality, both ethnic-racial socialization and historical trauma models should be considered together.

Colonial Mentality

Historical trauma has led to a contemporary "colonial mentality," a type of internalized oppression that leads Filipinos to believe in the stereotypes, biases, and negative beliefs of the dominant society as a result of the colonization of the Philippines (David et al., 2019). David and Okazaki (2006) outlined five broad ways colonial mentality manifests among Filipino American adults. *Within-group discrimination* refers to distancing from and expressing negative attitudes towards Filipino newcomers; *physical characteristics* refers to a preference for more Eurocentric physical features, especially lighter skin and narrow noses; *colonial debt* refers to being grateful for colonization for civilizing and improving the lives of Filipinos; *cultural shame and embarrassment* refers to the shame and embarrassment towards anything to do with Filipino identity and culture; and *internalized cultural/ethnic inferiority* refers to the perceived inferiority of Filipinos and Filipino culture compared to anything or anyone white and Western. These manifestations of colonial mentality can be organized into two types: covert and overt (David, 2010). Whereas the covert manifestations refer to endorsing aspects of cultural shame and embarrassment and internalized cultural/ethnic inferiority, the overt manifestations refer to endorsing aspects of physical characteristics and within-group discrimination; colonial debt is not categorized as either covert or overt. Colonial mentality also partly operates subconsciously, such that Filipino Americans may not necessarily be aware of their colonial mentality. This has been demonstrated through an implicit association test in which Filipino American adults associated positive characteristics with anything American and negative characteristics with anything Filipino (David, 2010;

David & Okazaki, 2010). Taken together, colonial mentality has been described as one of the most insidious legacies of colonialism (David et al., 2017), which is evident by its numerous manifestations that are not necessarily observable nor conscious.

In the original validation study for the Colonial Mentality Scale (CMS), of the 603 Filipino American adults, 29.4% had a mean score above the halfway point (i.e., 3.5 on a Likert scale from 1 to 6, 3 indicating "slightly disagree" and 4 indicating "slightly agree") on at least one CMS subscale, and 9.1% had a mean score above the halfway point on at least two CMS subscales (David & Okazaki, 2006b). Further, the most commonly reported manifestation of colonial mentality was colonial debt, followed by physical characteristics, ethnic or cultural inferiority, and within-group discrimination. Cultural shame and embarrassment were the least reported. This pattern was replicated in a much smaller sample in a qualitative study, where again colonial debt was the most endorsed and cultural shame and embarrassment were the least reported among Filipino American parents (Benigno, 2016) and Filipino Canadian adolescents (Fontanilla, 2022). Among a sample of 100 Filipino American post-secondary students, a quantitative study found slightly different patterns, with within-group discrimination as the highest reported manifestation and cultural shame and embarrassment as the lowest (Morente, 2015). It appears that at least moderate forms of colonial mentality are fairly common across Filipino American adults, and there are individual differences in the strength of each domain of manifestation, suggesting different ways these manifestations were learned or transmitted.

Emerging evidence suggests that there are no differences in Philippines-born and American-born Filipino Americans in the endorsement of colonial mentality manifestations, although higher levels of within-group discrimination among US-born Filipinos and higher levels of colonial debt among Philippines-born Filipinos approach significance (i.e., $p = .059$ and $p = .051$ respectively; Morente, 2015). There appears to be evidence that men and women

present similar levels of colonial mentality, except men may endorse more colonial debt than women (Morente, 2015). There is also no difference in colonial mentality among those below 30 and over 30 years old or based on level of maternal education (Morente, 2015).

The following sections review the literature on the relations between colonial mentality and mental health and ethnic identity. Next, although the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality has no prominent theory, several studies are reviewed that shed light on possible transmission pathways.

Colonial Mentality and Mental Health

Colonial mentality is linked to poorer mental health. The validation of the CMS has led to several quantitative studies examining how colonial mentality relates to other psychological constructs such as mental health. For example, colonial mentality has been shown to directly and indirectly be positively correlated to depressive symptoms (David, 2008; David, 2010; David & Nadal, 2013), and research has found that body dissatisfaction mediated the relation between colonial mentality and depression (Cajucom, 2016). Similarly, higher endorsements of cultural shame and embarrassment, physical characteristics, and cultural/ethnic inferiority were correlated with anxiety (Clement, 2014). Some relations between colonial mentality and mental health symptoms were examined qualitatively, such as the intertwined experiences of endorsing aspects of colonial mentality and low self-esteem, depression, and suicidal ideation (Decena, 2014). One study examined mental health help-seeking attitudes and colonial mentality and found that higher endorsement of colonial mentality was a stronger predictor of bias against mental health help-seeking than ethnic identity, acculturation, social support, and demographics (Tuazon et al., 2019). Finally, higher levels of colonial mentality predicted lower psychological flexibility (Estrellado et al., 2022), meaning individuals had more difficulty living in alignment with their values when faced with conflicting thoughts and actions. This is a key concept in Acceptance and

Commitment Therapy (Ciarrochi et al., 2010). Taken together, these findings suggest that colonial mentality contributes to the development of internalizing symptoms, and then impacts access to and progress in therapy.

Findings regarding the relations between self-esteem and colonial mentality have demonstrated the layers of nuance to Filipino American mental health. As one might expect, collective self-esteem is negatively related to most manifestations of colonial mentality, with the exception of colonial debt (David & Okazaki, 2006b). In contrast, personal self-esteem has been found to have no significant correlations with overt aspects of colonial mentality, such as physical traits, within-group discrimination, and feelings of colonial debt (David, 2010). Colonial debt appears to be distinct from other manifestations of colonial mentality in its relation to self-esteem. For instance, colonial debt has been found to be unrelated to personal self-esteem (David, 2008; David & Okazaki, 2006b) and unrelated or even positively related to public collective self-esteem (i.e., outgroup evaluations of Filipino people and culture; David, 2008; David, 2010; David & Okazaki, 2006b). These findings for colonial debt and self-esteem may be explained by Filipino Americans feeling grateful for the opportunities newly provided (Benigno, 2016; Ferrera, 2016) and a possibility of upward social mobility relative to what they would have been able to achieve in the Philippines (Benigno, 2016). In other words, some Filipinos may have higher personal and collective self-esteem because they see themselves with new opportunities that would not have been provided them unless they moved to the US; conversely, opportunities in the US have led them to believe more in their capabilities.

However, these perspectives from a critical-historical lens reveal the insidious nature of colonial mentality, such that Filipino Americans may not connect the socioeconomic difficulties of the Philippines to Spanish and American colonization. These ideas were explored in an ethnography of Siquijor informants in rural Philippines, in which Bulloch

(2013) argues that the people in Siquijor, and likely the rest of the country, believe that the state of the Philippines rests in two key assumptions: "that poverty is an original state, and… that development is brought about through factors endogenous to the society" (p. 235). In other words, while colonial debt may function as motivation and gratitude that may help them strive and achieve, it is disconnected from the historical trauma of colonization, which, in turn, leads them to internalize their socioeconomic circumstances as their own doing.

Colonial Mentality and Ethnic Identity

Colonial mentality and ethnic identity are similar in that they are both internalized understandings of what it means to be Filipino, and a few studies have examined these constructs together. Studies measuring the extent to which a Filipino American adult has explored and committed to their Filipino ethnic identity (e.g., using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure; MEIM) found a negative relation with colonial mentality (David, 2008; David, 2010; Morente, 2015; Tuazon et al., 2019). However, one study found no relation (Murillo, 2009). Qualitative studies provide some nuance that can help explain these findings. One study found that before taking a Filipino culture and language class, Filipino American students in Hawaii endorsed higher levels of colonial mentality, which was reduced after that class (Eisten et al., 2015). After the class, however, their reflection essays revealed that despite a reduction in colonial mentality, their understanding of Filipino ethnic identity was externalized and prototypical, such that "identity construction was a process of adopting the characteristics of being Filipino rather than exploring and incorporating knowledge to understand what being Filipino meant to each individual" (p. 38). In other words, having less colonial mentality only improved ethnic identity by promoting an idealized version of being Filipino rather than having the authority to explore one's personal relationship with their Filipino identity.

In another qualitative study exploring the manifestations of colonial mentality within ethnic identity among Filipino Canadian adolescents, only physical characteristics were found, although unique aspects of colonial mentality, such as height and weight (which are not part of the CMS) were reported (Fontanilla, 2022). Additionally, Filipino adolescents distinguished between having done something to approximate colonial beauty standards versus an awareness of the beauty standards within Filipino culture. Taken together, Filipinos appear to be striving to learn more about their ethnic identity while being constrained by colonial mentality. Ferrera (2017) labelled this *constrained enculturation,* in which they observed second-generation Filipino American emerging adults desire to learn about their ethnic identity but also endorsing colonial mentality. Therefore, it is difficult to understand colonial mentality as in isolation and may be better conceptualized as occurring in parallel with other processes like enculturation, ethnic identity development, and decolonization, which all overlap in the search towards the meaning of Filipino identity and culture.

Colonial Mentality and Intergenerational Transmission

No model in psychology has been developed to explain the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality, but numerous studies have converged on similar findings regarding transmission pathways and socialization processes, which I review here. The following examines the colonial mentality literature that may speak to the processes of intergenerational transmission in family, peer, and larger societal contexts.

Parents and Family. Similar to other fields of research, parents and family continue to be a primary factor in the transmission of colonial mentality. One study found that higher levels of colonial mentality exposure from family (parents or other members), such as witnessing a parent talk poorly about Filipino culture in contrast to American culture, were correlated with higher levels of internalized cultural/ethnic inferiority (David & Okazaki, 2006b). Qualitative findings among first-generation Filipino Americans reported similar

socialization from parents and family before immigrating to the US. For instance, they were socialized to consider marrying a white person, praised for being *mestizo* or light-skinned, and encouraged to speak English over Filipino (David & Nadal, 2013). Similarly, Filipino college students in Hawaii also identified their family as a main source of colonial mentality socialization (Eisen et al., 2015). While both qualitative studies identified that parents and family members did not want to teach their children their heritage language, among second-generation Filipino American emerging adults, their parents wanted them to speak English without an accent (Ferrera, 2017). Furthermore, only a third of 30 Filipino American emerging adults reported being taught Filipino history by their parents, and that their parents idealized American culture, encouraged assimilation, and promoted aspects of colonial debt, physical characteristics, and within-group discrimination of colonial mentality (Ferrera, 2017). Among Filipino American post-secondary students, several participants retold instances in which their parents and extended older relatives would comment about their bodies and at times apply these beliefs through cultural myths (Morente, 2015). For example, relatives might make comments implying that having darker skin is akin to being dirty or make comparisons to their lighter-skinned cousins or celebrities with narrow noses. Other participants recalled that they were scrubbed in the bath extra hard as a child in an attempt to lighten their skin or told to pinch their nose and use skin whitening products. Overall, these findings demonstrate that parents and family members play a significant role in transmitting colonial mentality to their adult children through socialization processes beginning as early as childhood.

Only one study to my knowledge has directly examined colonial mentality during adolescence. Second-generation Filipino adolescents in Canada participated in group interviews about their ethnic identity which were then examined for characteristics of colonial mentality (Fontanilla, 2022). The study found that parents and family members were

key socialization agents in teaching youth about how they should look (Fontanilla, 2022). Particularly, parents told youth not to stay in the sun or get a tan, promoted skin whitening products (creams, scrubs, pills), encouraged youth to pinch their noses, and openly shamed youth for their weight. This study provides initial evidence for the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality through familial socialization behaviours.

To my knowledge, only one study has examined colonial mentality transmission across three generations (Benigno, 2016). The study examined the parenting behaviours and family values of 11 1st, 1.5, and 2nd generation Filipino American parents (8 mothers and 3 fathers who had children primarily in elementary and middle school). The study explored the parenting behaviours and family values that the participants received from their own parents, as well as the family values they pass onto their own children with respect to colonial mentality. High colonial mentality parents tended to want their children to learn about respecting others, which they had learned from their own parents. Furthermore, high colonial mentality participants reported "uninterested and behaviourally conforming parents" (p. 64) who did not want them to challenge the status quo and wanted them to follow their parents' rules. They also reported a pattern of uninvolved fathers, and that they should be hospitable to others, even at the expense of their own well-being. These findings, however, must be understood within the larger context of colonialism, where systemic oppression and historical trauma influenced parenting practices. In contrast, parents with low colonial mentality tended to want their children to learn about cultural pride, which they learned from both their own culture and parents, and they did not want their children to learn about following norms without question. Participants reported that they themselves had supportive parents and reported close relationships with their fathers. However, participants with low colonial mentality also mentioned that their own parents still endorsed some colonial mentality beliefs, particularly about skin tone, appearing wealthy and high status, and, among female

participants, being told that their educational goals should be limited. This study adds to the emerging evidence about the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality as well as the transmission of positive aspects of Filipino identity and culture.

Overall, these findings are corroborated by David and colleagues' (2017) appraisal of colonial legacies: "receiving such messages consistently from important characters in one's life such as parents and other family members may lead to CM [colonial mentality], as familial expression of CM manifestations has been shown to be related to CM development" (p. 51). These studies demonstrate how colonial mentality may be transmitted intergenerationally. Some of the findings also suggested Filipino parents with low endorsement of colonial mentality still received socialization about colonial mentality from their own parents, but they were able to buffer, at least in part, the transmission of these beliefs to their children. However, few studies directly examined children and adolescents, leaving a significant gap in the literature about how colonial mentality is transmitted or resisted into adulthood.

Peers and Community. A handful of studies found evidence of peers and their local communities as socializing colonial mentality. For example, among Filipino American adults, more exposure to peers and other Filipino Americans in their community endorsing colonial mentality correlated with higher internalized cultural/ethnic inferiority (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006b). However, more exposure to colonial mentality within their community correlated with lower endorsement of physical characteristics and lower colonial debt and peer exposure was unrelated. Higher exposure to colonial mentality from peers and the greater community may differentially impact the characteristics of colonial mentality. Furthermore, among Filipino Canadian adolescents, they reported that peers contributed to learning about the physical characteristics of colonial mentality (Fontanilla, 2022). The

literature on peers and Filipino community beyond their family is small, perhaps reflecting the significance of familial transmission.

Culture and Society. Although very few studies have examined how culture and society as broad constructs socialize colonial mentality, I considered findings that may speak to the higher-level factors that could influence colonial mentality transmission, including racism and other forms of discrimination, stereotypes, Filipino and American cultural values, and broad references to culture (e.g., "the Filipino culture") that were kept at an abstract level.

Experiences of racism appeared to be consistently related to internalizing colonial mentality. Among Filipino American adults, there was a positive relation between experiences of racism and covert manifestations of colonial mentality (i.e., internalized cultural/ethnic inferiority, cultural shame and embarrassment). On the other hand, experiences of racism were unrelated to the endorsement of within-group discrimination and higher experiences of racism was correlated to lower endorsement of physical characteristics and colonial debt (David & Okazaki, 2006b). These findings held true when examining only first-generation Filipino Americans, except that recent racist events were not related to participants' cultural shame and embarrassment (David & Nadal, 2013). Similarly, higher internalized inferiority predicted more experiences of racism and sexism among Filipina American women (Felipe, 2019). Taken together these findings demonstrate that experiences of racism are consistently related to internalized Filipino inferiority, but other aspects of colonial mentality may be unrelated or inconsistent depending on other factors particular to each Filipino individual. David and Okazaki (2006b) suggest that Filipino Americans with higher colonial debt and higher endorsement of physical characteristics may experience less racism because they want to appear more aligned with the dominant group, such that they are more assimilated. Alternatively, I also suggest it may be that experiences of racism, although

promoting inferiority and shame, create an explicit division of being in the out-group that may promote rejection of the dominant group (i.e., beauty standards and indebtedness), or vice versa. However, there are no longitudinal studies of colonial mentality and racism. Importantly, these studies used a version of the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE; Landrine & Klonkoff, 1999), which examined experiencing racism across several contexts, such as from different people (e.g., teachers, employers, friends, strangers) and institutions (schools, universities, the police), demonstrating that broader factors and dominant narratives that create the conditions for racism to occur can transmit colonial mentality.

Reports of interpersonal and institutional racism as socializing colonial mentality were also found among qualitative studies. Filipino American post-secondary students in Hawaii reported that marginalization and racist events "in the broader society" contributed to their colonial mentality (Eisen et al., 2015). Specifically, students were mocked for their accent and often faced Filipino stereotypes. Additionally, students felt that the education system contributed to their self-oppressive beliefs when they were told to repeat a grade after immigrating to the US since the Philippines' educational system was "not up to par" (p. 37). Similarly, it was found that second-generation Filipino American emerging adults blamed the US education system for not giving them access and opportunities to learn about their own history and culture (Ferrera, 2017). Beyond educational settings, workplace settings were also found to recreate and reinforce colonial narratives among Filipina American woman (Bustos-Choy, 2009). Further, Filipinos in Hawaii justified the overrepresentation of Filipinos in the service industry to tropes such as "Filipinos love to clean" and "Filipinos love to serve and take care of others" (Eisen, 2019, p. 249). In other words, it appears that experiences of racism and structural inequities lead to the internalization of cultural and ethnic inferiority.

The media was another reported source of colonial mentality across a few studies. Filipino Canadian youth reported that they had learned about what they should look like on

Filipino television (e.g., The Filipino Channel; TFC) as well as the mainstream Western and European celebrities that they were exposed to through TV, movies, and Tiktok (Fontanilla, 2022). Similarly, first-generation Filipino adults noticed that Filipino shows are becoming more Americanized, such that they started assimilating and preferring American standards and society before they immigrated to the US (David & Nadal, 2013). One study found that Filipino high school students in the Philippines reported observing values consistent with colonial mentality beliefs in a popular Filipino TV show, Pinoy Big Brother (Chico, 2012). Although the possible transmission of colonial mentality through media is less studied, it still appears to be a relevant pathway to consider, especially when media can take several forms (e.g., TV, movies, music) and the emergence of social media.

Finally, references to Filipino cultural values were found a few times throughout the literature. David and colleagues (2017) argue that the loss of *kapwa*, the Filipino core value meaning "shared selves" or "oneself in the other," is another legacy of historical trauma that may facilitate the transmission of colonial mentality over generations. For example, Filipino American parents recalled that their own parents modelled and gave them lectures about *kapwa* that may have buffered against some aspects or the severity of their colonial mentality (Benigno, 2016). Furthermore, the value of *hiya* (shame) was discussed as possibly promoting a lack of communication and strict obedience to rules that may have made it difficult to talk about colonial mentality or family history openly. Parents also reported that they witnessed their own parents' "religious fatalism," such that parents would not stand up for themselves when mistreated. Finally, more than one study (Benigno, 2016; Ferrera, 2016) mentioned a form of gratitude that may be related to the Filipino value of *utang na loob* (debt of reciprocity). One study examined Filipino American parents and found that they felt grateful for having opportunities such as a stable income or higher education in the U.S. (Benigno, 2016). Similarly, findings with second-generation Filipino Americans suggested

that “socioeconomic achievement and assimilation to American values and culture seems to support movement away from ties to the Philippines… some [second-generation Filipino Americans] in this study explained that, in the end, Filipino Americans sustain a loyalty to America for very collectivist, or family-focused reasons” (Ferrera, 2016, p. 168). Filipino Americans often take the responsibility of family still in the Philippines, typically by sending them money (David et al., 2017; Ferrera, 2016). Most scholars in this field suggest that colonial debt can have two meanings, “helpful and hurtful” (David & Okazaki, 2006b, p. 250), such that it can be “a support but it can be a burden as well” (Ferrera, 2016, p. 172). Benigno (2016) suggests that “understanding how a person develops values related to colonial mentality is just as important as recognizing the existence of these ideas within a person’s belief system” (p. 73), further demonstrating the need for research to understand the transmission of colonial mentality more closely.

Summary

Although other disciplines have documented colonial mentality for several decades, the psychological literature on colonial mentality among Filipinos is less than two decades old, and the field has mainly examined how colonial mentality relates to mental health outcomes and ethnic identity. To my knowledge, no psychological research has focused specifically on the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. The gap in transmission research may exist because there has been no formalized model to guide hypotheses and studies about various intergenerational transmission pathways. Thus, the present dissertation study is informed by the literature and theories on trauma and ethnic-racial identity, which provide a base to speculate on the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality within Filipino families. Individual differences, parents and family, peers, communities, systems, culture, and society provide an important multilevel framework for understanding how Filipino families today continue to experience the effects of colonialism

in the form of colonial mentality. Typically, the literature tends to only acknowledge the context in which colonial mentality manifests, such as a racist society or the lack of opportunities in the Philippines. More research is needed to explore how these broader contexts specifically influence individuals' day-to-day experiences of colonial mentality.

The review of colonial mentality presented five key takeaways for the present study. First, while emerging evidence suggests that specific messages from parent to child about colonial mentality may happen in each generation, Filipino adults and adolescents were affected by multiple systems that contributed to transmission. This means that when understanding the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality across families, parents and children alike may continue to learn (and unlearn) colonial mentality over time that creates a network of influence on each member of the family. Second, sources or processes of transmission are interrelated, and understanding the bigger picture can shift the interpretation of a specific transmission pathway. Parents telling their children to stay out of the sun is likely nuanced by how they were parented themselves, the socioeconomic status of the family, and the demographics of their neighbourhood, among many other factors. Third, protective factors, resilience, and healing should be considered as part of the non-linear process to internalizing colonial mentality. Filipino families who migrated often have stories of survival or overcoming difficulties that simultaneously reinforce colonial mentality (e.g., colonial debt) and assert self-esteem that buffers against it. Fourth, what follows from the previously mentioned key takeaways is that individuals internalize various forms of colonial mentality to different degrees. Among family members, differences in colonial mentality endorsement may create tensions from how colonial mentality should influence the family's lives. Fifth, there is still little literature about colonial mentality in adolescence or the developmental understandings of colonial mentality in general. Understanding how colonial mentality develops before adulthood might illuminate unique aspects about colonial mentality

socialization and how colonial mentality manifests, which in turn would provide additional insight into how colonial mentality transmits across generations.

The Present Study

The present dissertation aimed to understand the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality among Filipino Canadian families consisting of two parents and at least one adolescent child. Each family member likely has a unique understanding and presentation of colonial mentality, influenced by their own historical, cultural, social, and personal contexts that influences the family on how colonial mentality is transmitted. The dissertation aimed to investigate the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality through family narratives. The study used *pakikipagkuwentuhan* ("storytelling") within the field of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (i.e., "Filipino Psychology") to use a culturally grounded approach that complemented the principles within the more dominant field of narrative inquiry. Specifically, the dissertation aimed to answer the following research question: what is the narrative of the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality within Filipino Canadian families?

The stories and narrative themes within the present study that address intergenerational colonial mentality may provide significant contributions to the decolonization of Filipino identity and culture. Stories co-constructed with marginalized groups create opportunities for counterstories (Clandinin et al., 2010; Markussen & Knutz, 2020), stories that challenge dominant and oppressive narratives of these groups. When racialized groups engage in storytelling, their stories provide opportunities for other marginalized individuals to connect and reconcile with their own experiences (Samuel & Ortiz, 2021). Filipinos who encounter these stories may relate their own experiences of colonial mentality that may instigate an awareness or change in themselves, which may affect other Filipinos and the broader culture. In other words, the study has the potential to contribute to decolonization by instigating individual change through Filipino individuals resonating with the co-constructed narratives, which may ripple outwards and affect the

greater community (Chioneso et al., 2020). On a practical level, retelling narratives of the intergenerational origins of colonial mentality, as well as co-constructing how colonial mentality manifests among different family members, can inform the development of intervention strategies within this population.

These stories and themes may also have implications for advocacy and social justice. Colonial mentality is a form of internalized oppression (David & Okazaki, 2006), and stories that tell of its origins begin to expose how history, institutions, and systems have upheld and continue to uphold colonial mentality that manifests in the Filipino Canadian family. Exposing how families have been affected may lead to some Filipino individuals to navigate their historical and systemic oppression differently. They may use these stories to refute the continuity of colonial mentality, creating new counterstories that challenge the dominant story of Filipinos. Some of these avenues for social justice and advocacy are already occurring. For instance, grassroots organizations that focus on Filipino decolonization often use stories to portray how larger systems contribute to their oppression and urge Filipinos to make political actions towards justice (e.g., Migrant Rights Network, Asian Prisoner Support Committee). Stories are able to personify historical legacies such as colonial mentality that galvanize action. The present study may provide another resource for co-constructed narratives that represent the continued need for liberation and may be shared with the Filipino Canadian community through various mediums.

Method

The dissertation studied the narratives of the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. Colonial mentality has been predominantly studied quantitatively, which has provided numerous insights, but it also has its limitations. The main way of measuring colonial mentality, through the Colonial Mentality Scale, presumes the manifestations of colonial mentality and has the risk of decontextualizing the multiple and layered influences on Filipino individuals. Hence, the dissertation used a qualitative approach which offers the nuance needed within the colonial mentality literature and provides alternatives to positivist paradigms that promote a singular objective truth (Park et al., 2020). The present chapter describes how *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology) and narrative inquiry formulate a culturally based narrative methodology to studying colonial mentality transmission within Filipino Canadian families.

Epistemological Foundations: Social Constructionism

The dissertation approached colonial mentality as socially constructed. The core perspective of social constructionism is that knowledge of the world is not discovered but rather created (or constructed) through social processes such as language, culture, history, discourse, and power relations (Burr & Dick, 2017). Therefore, an individual's experience of colonial mentality is subjective, co-constructed through social exchanges between themselves and other individuals, groups, institutions, policies, systems, and history. Some of these social exchanges occur between individuals and their family which demonstrate the intergenerational co-construction of colonial mentality. Since these social exchanges are continuous and transient, an individual's experience of colonial mentality changes over time.

The intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality was studied through family narratives. Narratives have the ability to illustrate the co-construction of colonial mentality over time. Family narratives can also reveal how individuals within a family context

differentially engage with the world and each other to create a collective understanding of colonial mentality across generations. In addition to the rich information family narratives provide, methods from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* show that a narrative approach is culturally appropriate and consistent with social constructionism. The following section details *Sikolohiyang Pilipino,* and then demonstrates how narratives can be used within this framework and that it is consistent with social constructionist epistemology.

***Sikolohiyang Pilipino*: Major Concepts for Research**

Over the last five decades, there has been a development of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino,* the scientific study of the psychology of people indigenous to the Philippines using their own understandings, culture, and experiences (Pe-Pua, 2006; Yacat, 2013). Virgilio Enriquez is credited as the pioneer of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino,* a Filipino man who completed his doctorate in social psychology in 1971 at Northwestern University in the United States. He returned to the Philippines shortly after to begin to develop a psychology based on Filipino culture and history (Gastardo-Conaco, 2005; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Recognition of the need to study the psychology of Filipinos from within their own perspectives reflects how Western psychological thought dominated psychology in the Philippines and the study of Filipinos (Gastardo-Conaco, 2005; Pe-Pua, 2006).

After the three and a half centuries of Spanish and American colonization in the Philippines, the indigenous *diwa* (psyche) of the inhabitants of the Philippines have been fragmented, leaving behind a colonial mentality or internalized oppression that impacts the mental and physical functioning of contemporary Filipinos (Yacat, 2013). Rediscovering and recovering the Filipino psyche are steps towards decolonization (Laenui, 2000). In fact, many scholars argue that the main purpose of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* as a field is to promote the "decolonization of the Filipino mind as a stage in the development of national consciousness" (Yacat, 2013, p. 552) and "the liberation of the Filipino psyche from a colonized mentality,

that is, the undoing of those psychological mechanisms whereby Filipinos become unwitting accomplices in their continuing colonial subjugation, mainly through internalization of their own victimization" (Mendoza, 2002, p. 66). In other words, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is ultimately concerned with "cultural revalidation" (Enriquez, 1992, as cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000) or "indigenization from within" (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000) which reinstates Filipino indigeneity as a source of authority and power over their own experiences and identity.

The major characteristics of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* from Enriquez has been summarized by Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino (2000):

1. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is ultimately reasserting and rediscovering the Filipino identity and national consciousness.
2. It favours a triangulation method, which entails using multiple data sources through multiple methods, a "cross-indigenous method, multi-method multi-language approach, appropriate field methods, total approach" (p. 53), in order to converge on information to discover truth. Pe-Pua (2006) notes that *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* favours cross-cultural knowledge that equally values the input of other cultures and distinguishes itself from the myth of cross-cultural Western psychology in which cultures with less power unidirectionally "receive" Western knowledge that is then attempted to be incorporated into the less dominant cultures.
3. While receptive of other cultural perspectives, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is firmly against any psychology (theory, method, or result) that "perpetuates the colonial status of the Filipino mind" (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 53).
4. Applications of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* are towards Philippine contexts. In their examples, industrial/organizational psychology becomes "livelihood" psychology

and clinical psychology becomes “health” psychology. Folk practices, indigenous healing, religion, and rural psychology take centerfold, which otherwise may be at the margins in Western psychological contexts.

5. Psychology is both a science and an art, giving way to humanistic approaches to rediscovering Filipino knowledge.
6. There is a greater emphasis on the collective experience than the individual experience.
7. Interpretations of analyses should consider the holistic context of research topic.

These major characteristics emphasize how *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* positions itself against Western hegemony in research by redefining cross-cultural research from within. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* exposes how Western methods, even when labelled cross-cultural, has the tendency to dominate over other cultural perspectives. Thus, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* attempts to use and promote methods and perspectives that are developed from anywhere (i.e., not necessarily emic to the Philippines) to study psychology because it perceives these perspectives as all equal and valid ways of knowing. In line with the third major characteristic, using psychological theories or methods developed outside of the Philippines is permitted as long as researchers are critical of whether these outside perspectives are maintaining the colonization of Filipinos. As Paredes-Canilao and Babaran-Diaz (2013) put it, the discipline attempts the creation of a “truly cross-cultural and universal psychology” (p. 767) by promoting the agency and self-validation of Filipino perspectives while still accepting of outsider perspectives.

It seems that *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* describes itself as “truly cross-cultural” mainly as a foil to the hegemony of Western cross-cultural research. If Western cross-cultural research involves adapting a scale to a specific marginalized group, the extent to which the marginalized group’s perspectives are prioritized and represented may be questioned.

Sikolohiyang Pilipino asks researchers to simultaneously critique the intentions of and challenge the boundaries of Western cross-cultural psychology to find more meaningful, equitable ways of integrating multiple cultural perspectives that represent valuing alternative ways of knowing.

Particular guiding principles common across all *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* methods have been established that are grounded in Filipino values which allow for alternative perspectives to be valued. Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino (2000) summarize them as follows:

1. The quality of the data depends on the relationship between the researcher and their participants. Filipinos have different ways of interacting with others depending on their familiarity with one another. Upon first interaction, an individual places the other either as *Ibang-Tao* ("outsider") or *Hindi-Ibang-Tao* ("one of us"), which determines the type of relationship the researcher has with the participants. Within these two categories exist hierarchical subcategories that determine the quality (i.e., adequacy and depth) of the data obtained, and therefore it is recommended that researchers reach at least the lowest level of *Hindi-Ibang-Tao* before engaging in research with Filipino groups. The lowest level of *Hindi-Ibang-Tao* is *pakikipagpalagayang-loob* ("being in understanding/acceptance with"), followed by *pakikisangkot* ("being involved with"), and finally *pakikipagkaisa* ("being one with") as the highest form of connection.
2. Research participants should be treated at least as equal. Their involvement is therefore as varied and participatory as they would like to be across all aspects of the research process. Most methods within *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* refer to this principle to suggest that participants decide the flow of conversation, how long they should meet for data collection, and allowing the participant to ask questions back to the researcher.

3. Participant welfare takes priority over data collection at all times. Researchers should be aware of when participants are tired, anxious, disinterested, or confused and make accommodations that promote their wellbeing.
4. The research method should be appropriate for the population rather than sophistication or innovation of a method.
5. The research should be conducted in the language of the participants, such that interpreters be used should researchers not speak their heritage language. Using one's heritage language allows a person to "truly express their innermost sentiments, ideas, perceptions, and attitudes" (Pe-Pua, 2006, p. 124) that may be difficult to construct in English.

These guiding principles within *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* research demonstrates how the researcher's understanding of their relationship with the participants is key to successfully conducting research that promotes the cultural revalidation of Filipino communities.

The priority placed on relationships reflects the core values of Filipino culture. The most commonly referenced core value of Filipino is *kapwa* (David et al. 2017; Desai, 2016; Enriquez, 1994; San Juan Jr., 2006; Strobel, 2024; Yacat, 2013), which is treating others as a "fellow human being" (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 56). Scholars of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* argue that English definitions of *kapwa* tend to differentiate the self from the other, which is not the spirit of this value (Yacat, 2013). Instead, *kapwa* should be thought of as a "shared self" or "shared identity" that develops from within. Another important value is *pakiramdam* which is a shared inner perception (Yacat, 2013) or a highly attuned sensitivity to or intuition of a fellow human being's internal states (David et al., 2017). David and colleagues suggest that "*pakiramdam* serves as the processor or the pivot that allows a person to express *kapwa* and behave according to *kapwa*. If one does not have the ability to feel for others, then it will be impossible for that person to also have and display shame (*hiya*), feel a

sense of gratitude (*utang na loob*), or put others' desires ahead of one's own (*pakikisama*)" (p. 48) which are considered more surface values. Without *pakiramdam*, there is nothing that operates to connect *kapwa* to surface values which are necessities to conduct research with this population.

Kapwa and *pakiramdam* are often referenced throughout *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* literature as necessary values to embed and use throughout the research process. *Kapwa* as a core value guides researchers to make broad decisions that not only prioritizes the wellbeing of participants throughout the research process but is also central to achieving the goal of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, such that the interpretation of participant stories is conducted collaboratively and with intentions of decolonization and liberation. *Pakiramdam* is more useful for instances in the research process in which the researcher is directly in contact with the participant. Since relationality is pivotal to *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* methodology, the researcher must rely on *pakiramdam* to understand whether they have built enough rapport to be considered *Hindi-Ibang-Tao*, and whether the researcher needs to make accommodations or adjustments to the research depending on the comfort level or state of the participant. Pe-Pua (2006) suggests that *pakiramdam* is important for knowing when to pursue personal questions, when it is time to leave or end a meeting, and how to interpret an indirect and non-verbal methods of communication, common within Filipino culture. Overall, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is an established field of psychology that is equipped with principles and methods for studying Filipino populations.

Kuwento and Pakikipagkuwentuhan

Within the field of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, one of the established ways of gathering and representing knowledge is through *kuwento* or "story." Storytelling has been part of indigenous cultures since precolonial Philippines (Santiago, 2017). Both oral and written stories have been used to pass down ways of knowing, particularly in the maintenance of

culture and traditions, passing down intergenerational wisdom, explanations of natural phenomena, sharing principles of ethics and morality, and locating one's personal experience within the ancestral collective experience (Orteza, 1997). Therefore, in line with the characteristics of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, *kuwento* serves many relational functions by binding individuals, both living and deceased, through a collective memory or by sharing an experience. *Kuwento* are repositories of knowledge that may be subject to psychological study (Javier Jr, 2016; Orteza, 1997).

Orteza (1997) is credited to have first outlined *pakikipagkuwentuhan* ("storytelling") method within *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. *Pakikipagkuwentuhan* is employed by researchers to understand the lived experience of an event, experience, or life more broadly (Javier Jr, 2016). In *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, the researcher engages the participants in casual storytelling to generate salient aspects of someone's life experiences. This can be done with one person or in a group, where the researcher becomes both facilitator and active participant (Orteza, 1997). In line with the other principles of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, participants may ask questions of the researcher and the researcher should be prepared to also contribute to the discussion in order to exemplify the equality in status between researcher and participants, as well as create a casual atmosphere that Filipino individuals are accustomed to when exchanging *kuwento* with others outside of a research context. Furthermore, in line with the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* principles of being casual and participatory, it is recommended that researchers using *pakikipagkuwentuhan* have a very limited set of questions or interview protocol to follow (Orteza, 1997; Pe-Pua, 2006), allowing participants to control the pacing and direction of the conversation. Other research principles within *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* still apply, such as the embeddedness of *kapwa* and *pakikiramdam* as values that guide the research process. The result of this process is a culturally grounded approach to generating stories about a specific event or life experience.

The outcome of *pakikipagkuwentuhan* is a story or *kuwento* (or many stories or *mga kuwento*) that is *co-created* between researcher and participant (Orteza, 1997). Co-creation is an essential aspect of *pakikipagkuwentuhan* because it is only through collaboration that meaning is generated. In fact, Javier Jr (2016) distinguishes between *kuwento* (story) and *kuwentuhan* (storytelling). In *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, participants are engaged in storytelling or *kuwentuhan*, which is the active and collaborative process in which a story is being co-composed to be later retold. Participants in active *kuwentuhan* are still grappling with their experiences that have yet to make meaning through a cohesive story (i.e., *kuwento*). In other words, the process of *pakikipagkuwentuhan* is intended to use *kuwentuhan* to create *kuwento* – a story that makes meaning from their experience through collaboration with *kapwa* (i.e., fellow human being with a shared inner self).

Through the explanation of *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, its connection with social constructionism emerges. Again, social constructionism views that knowledge, such as colonial mentality and its transmission, is co-constructed through social processes such as language, culture, history, discourse, and power relations (Burr & Dick, 2017). Since *kuwento* is co-constructed between the teller and the listener, the relationship quality between participant and researcher (e.g., whether the researcher is considered *Ibang-Tao* or *Hindi-Ibang-Tao*) is one of those social processes that contributes to how a *kuwento* is told, interpreted, and how knowledge is produced. The *kuwento* of the storyteller is not likely to be trusted if the relationship between storyteller and listener is poor (Orteza, 1997). Furthermore, *kuwento* hold meaningful social constructions of what is regarded as true, right, and good, which reflect the current state of Filipino culture, identity, and position (Orteza, 1997), which suggests that the meaning of *kuwento* is co-constructed with broader social processes such as culture, society, and history. Therefore, *kuwento* may be thought of as socially constructed by processes such as the researcher-participant relationship, the specific

contexts of each individual participant (e.g., migration, socioeconomic status), as well as the broader sociocultural-historical narratives such as colonialism and its legacies. It is within this social constructionist interpretative framework that the dissertation is situated.

Pakikipagkuwentuhan and Narrative Inquiry

Before presenting the specific details of the dissertation's methodology which used *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, it is necessary to examine where this methodology has provided the least guidance and how another similar methodology, namely narrative inquiry, complements its gaps. While the theory and conduct of *pakikipagkuwentuhan* is well established, this methodology lacks a tradition of analysis. References to how *kuwentuhan* (stories) are analyzed are vague (e.g., broadly naming content analysis, structural analysis, and analysis of relationships; Orteza, 1997) and less informed. The first area of analysis that could use more guidance is how to examine the multiple social influences within a *kuwento*. While *pakikipagkuwentuhan* references the subjective and interpretative nature of a *kuwento*, it does not provide guidance for these multiple interpretations beyond recognizing that the listener and storyteller have their own interpretations of one *kuwento* (Ong, 2016). Within a social constructionist framework, examining a *kuwento* through other social influences such as immigration, family, workplaces, racism, and colonialism may create a more nuanced understanding of participants' stories. The second area of analysis that *pakikipagkuwentuhan* is underdeveloped is how to collaboratively re-story participants' *kuwento*. While participatory methods were often referenced, there was no indication of an approach that guided how a *kuwento* was co-created. Finally, *pakikipagkuwentuhan* did not specify a specific method of analyzing data into narrative themes or other forms analysis. These limitations should be addressed before using *pakikipagkuwentuhan* for the present dissertation.

Narrative inquiry presents several similarities to *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, which demonstrate its suitability as a field to fill in areas of underdevelopment. Similar to *kuwento*, *narratives* are an organizing principle of human life, such that the meaning of life is derived from the interpretation of events in sequence (Crossley, 2000; Riessman, 2008). Individuals "*impose structure* on the flow of experience… [which] invokes a humanistic image of the self as a teller of stories, of heroes and villains, plots, and images of actors performing and engaging in dialogue with other actors" (Crossley, 2000, p. 3). Narratives are not merely retold stories, but rather a psychological construct of knowledge, the human experience in which individuals "perceive, think, remember, feel, imagine, act, and make moral choices according to narrative structures" (Popp-Baier, 2013). Thus, *kuwento* and narratives both represent the meaning of lived experiences in storied format that possess cultural and personal knowledge which guides personal and collective behaviour. Narrative inquiry uses this construct of narrative in order to learn about the lived experiences of individuals.

Narrative inquiry is also consistently situated within a social constructionist epistemology. Similar to *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, narratives are co-constructed between the storyteller and listener (e.g., the researcher), as well as the broader interpersonal, social, and cultural processes (Esin et al., 2013). Furthermore, the principles of *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, which prioritize participants' wellbeing, and the goal of cultural revalidation in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* align with the relational ethics of narrative inquiry. In both approaches, the relationship between researchers and participants, who entrust them with their stories, guides the research process (Clandinin et al., 2018).

Drawing from narrative inquiry to enrich *pakikipagkuwentuhan* is compatible with the principles of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, which welcomes perspectives from more prevalent fields as long as they are seen as equal with *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* methods and promotes the cultural revalidation of Filipino perspectives (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). The study

will primarily draw from narrative inquiry's established traditions of narrative analysis. Previous research has integrated narrative inquiry with Indigenous research approaches within Māori communities (Ware et al., 2018) and Indigenous groups in Canada (Medved & Brockmeier, 2018). By using a culturally grounded data collection strategy with narrative analytical techniques, the stories and narrative themes from participants will be more culturally relevant and representative of their lived experiences.

Research Design

Participants

The study examined Filipino Canadian families. Families met the following inclusion criteria: (1) two Filipino parents who were born in the Philippines and arrived after the age of 12 (i.e., first-generation), (2) at least one adolescent between the ages of 14 and 17 who was either born in Canada or immigrated before the age of 5 (i.e., 1.5 and second-generation), (3) comfortable speaking in English, Tagalog, or Taglish (a blend of Tagalog and English).

In order to construct the family stories of intergenerational transmission, both parents were included in the study. The criteria were limited to first-generation parents and 1.5 and second-generation adolescents to construct the experience of migration within stories of colonial mentality transmission. Previous literature has only begun to explore the role of immigration on colonial mentality (David & Nadal, 2013), and thus the study sought to specifically examine families that had experienced immigration. I also sought to study families who may illustrate the impacts of generational differences and levels of acculturation, and therefore it was important to study families with adolescents who were primarily raised in Canada. I did not make restrictions about where they lived (e.g., rural or metropolitan) or other aspects of their identity (e.g., religion, sexuality). Variations among Filipino Canadian family members across these contexts likely provided unique understandings to the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality.

The goal was to recruit three to five Filipino Canadian families who met the criteria, meaning a minimum of nine participants (6 parents, 3 adolescents). Braun and Clarke (2021) suggest that participant group size for qualitative research may be difficult or even unnecessary to assess a priori, and sample size estimates in qualitative research may be a matter of practicality as much as other aspects of the research project. Specifically, they suggest to reflect on the breadth and focus of the research question, data collection methods, level of desired diversity within the population of study, and demands of the discipline. I created my inclusion criteria to be fairly specific to understand the varied stories within a narrow group. As such, it is likely unnecessary to go beyond five families, especially when the literature on *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (and narrative inquiry) suggests that the gathered data will be rich and extensive. In the spirit of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, one research method is known as *pakapa-kapa* ("groping" or "feeling around") which represents the exploratory and unplanned quality of some aspects of research (Pe-Pua, 2006), especially within areas that have received much less scholarship.

Procedures

After receiving ethics approval from the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board, participants were recruited through snowball sampling by posting recruitment information on social media, contacting organizations who serve Filipino Canadian families, and my own personal connections within the larger Filipino Canadian community. Families who showed interest were contacted via phone or email and sent a consent form. Adolescents were also given an assent form to complete. Those who consented to the study were contacted to arrange a time to meet in person (if possible) or via Zoom for an interview with each family member separately. Interview sessions were audio recorded. After each session, I made notes about any general observations or thoughts I had about the interview that pertained to the research questions, as well as any personal reactions to engage self-

reflexivity. I used these self-reflections to update and build upon my positionality statement throughout the project, as well as understand how my own interpretations and reactions contribute to the co-construction of *kuwento*. Participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire online. Each participant was provided a small financial compensation ($20) or equivalent for their time (e.g., bringing over food for the family to enjoy).

Each interview was transcribed verbatim to be used for analyses. I did not translate Tagalog into English since the transcript was used to form family narratives and was not a final product in itself. However, the family narratives were written in English. After each interview, participants were asked if there was anything they discussed that they would not want to be included in the family narrative, and anything they wanted excluded was removed from my transcriptions when constructing the family narratives. During this stage, two family members indicated elements of their storytelling that they did not want shared in the greater story.

Co-constructing the family narratives was an iterative process. After the initial family narratives were written, participants were contacted via email to ensure that they illustrated their lived experiences. Changes were made according to family member feedback (i.e., member checking; Motulsky, 2021) until all members were satisfied that the narratives represented their experience. During this stage, one family member indicated minor changes to increase anonymity, but overall most family members reported that the stories represented their experiences.

Data Generation

I engaged in *pakikipagkuwentuhan* with family members one-on-one rather than collectively as a family. Research aiming to construct family narratives conducted interviews with multiple members of the family at the same time, such as parent-child dyads or triads

(e.g., Campbell-Salmone & Rauscher, 2020; Trees et al., 2010). Although considered, individuals were interviewed separately due to the sensitivity of the research topic and Filipino family dynamics which may prioritize parental voices over the youth. This is consistent with the values of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* which prioritizes the welfare of participants and considers the context in which the research occurs.

As described above, *pakikipagkuwentuhan* is as a culturally based approach for gathering participant experiences through *kuwentuhan* (storytelling). To conduct *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, the first element is that it is informal and open-ended. This means that after presenting the research topic, the participant is free to decide the direction of the conversation. Rather than having a strict interview protocol, Pe-Pua (2006) recommends having a list of topics only to be referenced to remember areas that the researcher may want to touch upon. The natural evolution of the method, which is reciprocal in nature, lends itself to relevant stories told by the participant if rapport (i.e., reaching *Hindi-Ibang-Tao*) is established.

In line with Pe-Pua's recommendation, I began *pakikipagkuwentuhan* by asking an open-ended question about whether they had heard of colonial mentality, and if they had, what they knew about it. If the participant had not heard of colonial mentality before, I offered a general explanation to see if it resonated with them and generated *kuwentuhan.* The following is an example of what I may have said to participants who had not heard about colonial mentality before:

> I am interested in learning about colonial mentality, maybe you have heard of it before. Basically, it is when Filipinos don't like or even hate themselves for being Filipino, or when Filipinos don't like other Filipinos or Filipino culture. When Filipinos really dislike or hate anything to do with Filipinos, they might have a colonial mentality. Maybe you have had some of these thoughts or experiences

> before. I was interested in this topic because I remember growing up and hearing things from my own family and other Filipinos throughout my life that told me that I shouldn't be proud of being Filipino or that I should not get along with other Filipinos. I wondered if other people have the same or different experience as me. Maybe we can talk about how our lives happened to make us have colonial mentality sometimes. I want to know your story about how you might have come to have colonial mentality at some point in your life.

In line with *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* principles, I chose to be transparent about what I was studying and education about colonial mentality to reduce the power dynamics between researcher and participant. I was also initially reserved and open-ended so that participants could direct the conversation. Almost always, participants who were unaware of colonial mentality were able to generate *kuwentuhan* when I introduced a personal example regarding the physical characteristics of colonial mentality. All youth were unaware of the term colonial mentality, whereas almost all parents had heard of it before.

Active listening and curiosity are imperative to narrative inquiry (Kramp, 2004), or, as situated within *pakikipagkuwentuhan,* it is important to use *pakiramdam* to get a sense of how to facilitate participants' *kuwento* (Orteza, 1997). Sometimes this will include opening up and sharing my own stories, and other times I will follow up their stories with paraphrases, reflections, and probes when appropriate. Each probe, question, reflection, or paraphrase I make is collaborative, moving deeper into their experience. Thus, the interview results in a co-construction of the narrative. The role of the researcher during the interview is one of authentic listener, abandoning the researcher position. This poses the possibility of shifting the narrative into my own biases or expectations, which I believe I managed through self-reflexivity and assuming the role of listener who spoke only to facilitate the participant's own *kuwento*.

Immediately after the interview, I made notes about my impression of the interview, including the general sense of the interview, what it was like emotionally before, during, and after the interview, behavioural and environmental observations, and my own narratives that came up as a result of the *pakikpagkuwentuhan* process (see Fraser, 2004).

Positionality

Given the co-construction of *kuwento* and how my own interpretations are instrumental to the research project, I offer the following positionality statement to be transparent in the identities I occupy and contexts I live within that bias my understanding of the research project. As I reflected more deeply throughout this research, I used my reflections throughout the *pakikipagkuwentuhan* and the analytical process to update my positionality.

I identify as a 1.5-generation Filipino Canadian queer man, with a faded history of Christian religious involvement. I can understand Tagalog almost fluently but use Taglish to speak to my relatives in the Philippines. My strong religious upbringing in a predominantly Filipino church was essential to shaping my Filipino Canadian identity as it was the site of my enculturation. Specifically, religion and growing up in a Filipino church taught me what it meant to be Filipino, which provided messages of both pride and inferiority, that only later became apparent to me when beginning graduate school and pursuing a thesis on Filipino Canadian religious identity. Here I had the time and space to learn about the colonial roots of Filipino religion, which led to an interest in understanding how colonialism broadly influenced the contemporary experiences of the Filipino diaspora. Through more exploration and self-reflection, I recognized how the oppression of my community could be traced back to the historical events of colonialism and became passionate about pursuing knowledge related to the liberation of Filipinos and the dismantling of colonial institutions.

Co-constructing Family Narratives

Across several articles I have read on narrative analysis, most agree that there is no one correct way to approach analysing narrative data, as it depends on the research question, sample, audience, and data collected (Butina, 2015; Riessman, 2008). I reviewed several ways narrative data have been analysed that would make sense for the dissertation's research questions, the indirect interview method used, and the relational ethics involved in honouring the voices and experiences of participants.

The research question aimed to understand the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality through the co-construction of family narratives. Co-construction of these narratives began during *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, where the interaction between the participant and researcher influenced data generation, and narrative co-construction continued during the creation of family narratives. As I reviewed the individual interviews, my interpretation of the data became an additional layer of co-construction, as the content they shared was once again filtered through my own perspectives and contexts.

My analysis of each individual interview was informed by Fraser's (2004) guide to narrative analysis. Fraser articulated that "stories are used to construct our lived realities" (p. 196), which is influenced by the social processes consistent with social constructionism such as family systems, institutions, policies, culture, and history. They highlight that narrative research can "examine the nexus between knowledge/power and individual/society" (p. 184). Overall, Fraser's perspective emphasizes how the interrelatedness of contexts, from the intrapsychic to societal, co-constructs narratives, lending itself to the study of colonial mentality across generations. Fraser's narrative analysis occurs in phases:

(1) hearing the stories, experience each other's emotions;

(2) transcribing the material;

(3) interpreting individual transcripts;

(4) scanning across different domains of experience;

(5) linking the personal with the political;

(6) looking for commonalities and differences among participants; and

(7) writing academic narratives about personal stories.

All participants told many stories within the *pakikipagkuwentuhan* process that enabled me to divide transcriptions into narrative blocks. A narrative block refers to a section of the transcript that reflected a particular lived experience or memory (see Larsen, 2021). For example, a parent may tell me about a memory in childhood, then their experiences in college, then another memory in adolescence. I analysed each narrative block drawing from Fraser's narrative analysis, which exposed the layers of social construction for the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. For instance, in the fourth phase, Fraser recommends to "scan" stories for different domains of experience, including *intrapersonal aspects*, such as a parent's internalized beliefs about their skin colour or internal dialogues about feeling ashamed about their Filipino identity; *interpersonal aspects*, such as family members encouraging them to speak English over Filipino or being praised for lighter skin; *cultural aspects*, such as media advertising skin whitening on The Filipino Channel (TFC) or cultural myths about how to whiten one's skin; and *structural aspects*, such as the influence of systems and policies, as well as "modes of social organization" (p. 192) like class, gender, race, ethnicity. By analyzing levels of influence, interrelated layers of meaning "unearth insights about how people interact with different dimensions of their environment" (p. 191).

I then grouped together narrative blocks that discussed similar and related content as an additional way to begin to construct meaning, grouping blocks both within and between individual interviews from the same family. For example, experiences with skin colour, experiences with media and social media, and religious contexts were common groups I formed containing excerpts from each family member. Not only did this reveal similarities

and differences in how family members experienced a particular topic, but it also revealed how individual members' experiences related to one another over time – emerging from it elements of a family narrative.

I constructed an initial family narrative after analyzing groups of narrative blocks within a family. Features of a family narrative include meaning, relatedness, identity, and temporality (Karpa, 2021), which informed my initial construction. Often, participants during *pakikipagkuwentuhan* included how they interpreted each memory or experience, and I wrote the family narratives reflecting their interpretation as closely as possible. I engaged in narrative smoothing to make links between individual narrative elements both within and between members of the same family. For example, parents independently discussed the importance of education during *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, and I put their perspectives closely together within the overall family narrative to construct meaning and relatedness. Additionally, family members often had different perspectives between each other, and they often changed their perspectives over time. I aimed to reflect these conflicts and changes over time.

I was intentional about choosing whether to translate words from English to a heritage language (e.g., Tagalog, Filipino, Ilocano) and vice versa. In the narratives, I often wrote one to two words in Tagalog (or whatever their heritage language was) if they stood out to me as meaningful in the context of the research question and Filipino culture. Most of the time, participants would use Taglish (a blend of Tagalog and English), and particular words or short phrases were said to me in Tagalog, illustrating that they are highlighting a cultural concept which felt important to relay in its original form. Temple and Young (2004) discussed translation dilemmas and qualitative research and highlight that "the researcher can use the experience of translating to discuss points in the text where she has had to stop and think about meaning" (p. 168). For example, words such as *pikon*, *payong*, *maitim* reflect

culturally relevant experiences related to colonial mentality. Other times, family members would have said the sentence or phrase to me in English during *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, but in the context of their memory that they were recalling, they would have been speaking or thinking in their heritage language. I chose segments to translate into their heritage language, mainly Tagalog, when I or the participant perceived that it carried a lot of meaning. In this way, the co-construction of this process emerges once again, as I or we (the participant and I) draw attention to specific phrases through translation. When parents moved to Canada, I kept these longer phrases in English to demonstrate a shift in their language use unless in their *kuwentuhan* they specifically told me they spoke in their heritage language. Overall, the choice for translations were based on meaning and context. These translations were double checked by a bilingual Filipino-English speaker.

After each family narrative was written, the family was provided with their narrative to seek feedback about what resonated with them and what they would change. Each family member was contacted through email to seek their feedback. While all participants approved of the narratives, only one participant provided feedback about a minor change, which was incorporated. Participants did not provide much information about their overall reactions to their family narrative. Importantly, through "the process of pulling together threads of others' stories, we will be telling stories of our own" (Fraser, 2004 p. 195). I emphasize the importance of this feedback stage to engage in another layer of co-construction, yet I acknowledge that, despite all attempts to co-construct the narratives grounded in relational ethics and principles of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, the final narrative remains influenced by the power dynamic between myself and the families. Nonetheless, the narratives were a co-construction shaped by both their contributions and my perspective as a researcher, reflecting the social construction of the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality.

The process of constructing the family narratives was deeply analytical, and I present the narratives as outcomes in and of themselves. I returned to the narrative blocks and began to explore similarities and differences between families. What emerged were narrative themes that reflected the multiple layers of influence on the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality, which I engage with in the Discussion section.

Trustworthiness, Verisimilitude, and Utility

Trustworthiness assesses whether qualitative research was conducted in a way that would encourage the representativeness of the participants' experiences. Trustworthiness "becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made those practices visible and, therefore, auditable" (Sandelowski, 1993, p. 2 as cited in Rolfe, 2006). Several methods have been considered as ways to increase the trustworthiness of a study (Shenton, 2004). Loh (2013) reviewed several qualitative research guides to establishing trustworthiness and suggested that most qualitative research experts using constructivist paradigms (e.g., narrative) have reached a consensus on which trustworthiness techniques to use. Of this list, the dissertation used prolonged engagement (i.e., spending time in the phenomenon and sample of study) which was established through my positionality as a Filipino Canadian and life experience. Triangulation (i.e., using multiple methods to corroborate interpretations) was met by using both family narratives and holistic themes. Member checking (i.e., follow up with participants about the results) was conducted by seeking their feedback on what they wanted shared and the narratives that were co-constructed. Thick description (i.e., contextual details of participant's response) was a natural part of narrative analysis, and *pakikipagkuwentuhan* elicits contextual details. Finally, a form of reflexive journaling (i.e., personal reflection of positionality to the research process) was done to examine my own personal narratives, thoughts, emotions, biases, uncertainties, and reactions throughout the research process.

In addition, for qualitative studies to be trustworthy, Loh (2013) argued that narrative studies in particular required verisimilitude and utility. The verisimilitude of a qualitative study evaluates whether a study is "seeming to be true or real" or otherwise "it must have believability" (p. 9). Utility refers to the relevance and usefulness of the study. Eisner (2017) provides three ways a study may demonstrate utility: comprehension (i.e., does it help understand the phenomenon?), anticipation (i.e., does the study build beyond what was already known to participants?), and guide/map (i.e., does the study create opportunities for deeper understanding of the phenomenon?). Loh (2013) recommends that in order to establish verisimilitude and utility, the research study should be sure to include member checking and peer validation. As stated previously, member checking was done by sharing the stories to each family member for feedback and making changes accordingly. Peer validation involved consultation with other scholars in the field, which includes my expert dissertation committee. Loh (2013) also recommended audience validation, which involves seeking the perspectives of those whom it would impact the most, which may also include myself and the family members. The findings of the dissertation will also be mobilized among the Filipino Canadian community in the future, which may include publications and presenting the findings to Filipino-based organizations and communities.

Results

Three families that were comprised of two parents and two children participated in the study. Each participant engaged in the *pakikipagkuwentuhan*[2] process independently from their family members. The individual family members' stories were then integrated together to create a family narrative that illustrates the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities. All participants lived in metropolitan cities in Canada that had over 5% of the population as Filipino. The family narratives were read by each participant and were given the opportunity to provide feedback.

Family A Narrative

Tensions in Social Mobility: Which Way Is Up?

See Table 1 for a demographic summary of Family A, consisting of a mother (Lani), father (Danilo), a young adult child (Liezel), and an adolescent child (Daniela).

Table 1

Participant Demographics for Family A

	Mother	Father	Eldest Child	Youngest Child
Pseudonym	Lani	Danilo	Liezel	Daniela
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female
Age	48	51	19	16
Birth Country	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines
Year of Immigration	2009	2008	2009	2009
Identified Ethnic Identity	Filipino	Filipino	Filipino Canadian	Filipino Canadian
Languages Spoken	Tagalog, English	Tagalog, English	English	English
Religion	Church of Christ	Church of Christ	Church of Christ	Church of Christ

[2] Storytelling data generation method of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology)

Highest Education	Bachelor's degree	Some college	High school diploma	Grade 9
Occupation	Medical office assistant	Roller maintenance technician	Cashier	Student

Establishing the Nature of Things

Lani was born in 1975 in a busy city in the Philippines and lived with her mother, father, and older brother and sister. Although her family wasn't rich, she was born fair skinned, something she received a lot of praise for. However, she was constantly teased by her siblings, parents, and other adults in her life for being *pango*,[3] especially in comparison to her siblings whose noses were *matangos*.[4]

"*Bakit hindi ka kamukha ng mga kapatid mo? Ikaw lang ang may ganyang ilong*," ["Why don't you look like your siblings? You're the only one with that nose,"] they teased. She laughed along. She knew her nose wasn't that bad, and at least she wasn't *maitim*.[5]

When she went to school, however, the teasing continued. They called her *pandak*,[6] which was made obvious whenever the class needed to form a lineup, and it was always organized by height. Each day she stood in front of line, wishing she was a bit taller than her classmates, wishing her nose was *matangos* too. She felt insecure about things she couldn't change, but she still tried with *sipit*.[7]

Despite her less fortunate upbringing, her parents managed to save up enough money to send her to college. The money covered tuition and a small budget for food, and even then, she would go hungry at times if they couldn't send her money. She befriended a classmate

[3] flat-nosed
[4] sharp
[5] dark-skinned
[6] short
[7] clothespins

who wore branded shoes, shirts, bags – everything! Her classmate had an aunt working abroad. She felt *inggit*,[8] of course, she was only human. Once she graduated with her Bachelor of Tourism, she could apply for a job at a hotel and begin to save money. She didn't expect to have everything that her friend had, but maybe a glimpse of what it's like to have that kind of life.

Danilo was born in 1974 in a busy city in the Philippines and lived with his parents and siblings. He didn't care much about how he looked until about age 9 when he had a crush on a girl and wanted to impress her. He saw some of his classmates with cool clothes and shoes, and he began noticing that even his cousins had nicer things than him. *Bakit wala ako niyan? Bakit hindi ako maibili ng mga magulang ko niyan?* [Why don't I have that? Why can't my parents buy me that?] He realized that they all had parents and relatives who worked abroad. Danilo disliked the feeling of *inggit* within him when he compared himself to his peers.

Each month, Danilo went to his cousins' house and waited on the sidelines as his cousins opened the boxes of *pasalubong*[9] containing gifts from their grandmother who lived in the US. They lived the good life. Other people gathered in awe and accepted giveaway gifts such as a bar of soap and a chocolate bar. *Uuwi na lang ako. Mukha lang akong kawawa dito.* [I'm just going to go home. I just look poor here.] Life wasn't fair. He walked home and told himself that his day will come when he would have all these things and more. He will give his kids whatever they want, and they won't ever have to feel the way that he did. He committed to doing whatever it took to fulfil his dreams for himself and future children. *Magkakaron din ako niyan.* [I can have that too].

[8] jealous
[9] gifts and souvenirs commonly given from relatives living abroad

Relationships at the Hotel

Once Lani graduated, she began to prepare herself for the workforce. She was in her early 20s and was looking for a job as a Guest Relations Officer at a hotel front desk. The women who worked in this position were gorgeous, confident, and hospitable. These were the qualifications to work at a hotel in a big city that was visited by a high frequency of international guests. She used products such as whitening creams and papaya soap for her skin and *sipit* for her nose.

Her plan worked. She was quickly hired and saw herself as the representative of all Filipinos for all guests she served, both non-Filipino tourists and *balikbayan*[10] alike. She felt pressured to maintain guests' expectations of her appearance, personality, and behaviour. Most guests were nice, although generally the non-Filipino tourists were nicer to her than the *balikbayans*.

There was one instance when a *balikbayan* man threatened to sue her over a small mistake. "I'm going to sue you," he says in perfect English.

"Sorry, sorry, sorry sir!" Lani said. Oh my god, he's going to sue me, he's going to sue me. I don't have money to pay for a lawyer. At the time, she didn't understand that he probably didn't either.

"Okay, I'll forgive you just this once." That was one of her worst experiences with *balikbayan* while working at a hotel. They could do anything. They thought they were superior because they worked abroad and had lots of money, and knew she was ignorant to the life in the US. *Ang iniisip nila ay hindi na nila ako katulad*. [They think I'm not like them anymore.] Despite several negative experiences, Lani remembered that not all *balikbayan* looked down on her. Not all of them were like that.

[10] a Filipino returning to Philippines

Danilo and Lani at the Hotel. Danilo and Lani met when they were both employees at the hotel. He had moved there to pursue opportunities for better income. They both shared aspirations for a family and a prosperous life, perhaps even moving abroad if they were lucky enough to get the chance. In the meantime, they continued to work and began a small business together that earned them a bit of extra income. The couple were approached by a few friends to learn how to start their own business. Generous and polite, they agreed to show them how to do it.

Their friends attempted to take Danilo and Lani's customers many times. At first, the couple decided to give them a few of their customers. However, their friends were angry at them for not giving up all their customers. Danilo felt betrayed. *Tinulungan kita mula sa puso ko pero gusto mong kunin ang lahat sa akin?* [I helped you from my heart and you want to take it all from me?] Some Filipinos are like that, they have a crab mentality.[11]

***Balikbayan* at the Hotel.** Danilo enjoyed talking to most guests, and one *balikbayan* guest he had a friendly chat with handed him a card before leaving. "Apply here. This is legit. I'm flying back to Canada," he said.

All they knew about him was that he was from the *province*.[12] He didn't even know them, but this generous *balikbayan* extended his hand and changed their lives. Not all of them were like that. Danilo applied soon after and was accepted on a work visa to Canada. At 36 years old, he moved abroad, and his wife and two daughters emigrated two years after.

Navigating Our Worth

Both parents took advantage of the financial opportunities in Canada. Although they worked a lot, it was the sacrifice they made to provide for their family and fulfil some of their own dreams. You can buy anything here if you just work hard enough. While Lani filled her

[11] the debated belief that no one else should succeed but themselves, pulling each other down to the point where no one succeeds at all (see Lasquety-Reyes, 2016).
[12] countryside

home with shoes, purses, and designer clothes, Danilo looked at the cars and houses. Every few years, they were able to buy nicer cars and move to a bigger house while simultaneously looking for their next upgrade. Lani gestured to the branded clothing and accessories in her basement living room, “I don’t even have room for them!” she joked. She bought many of them on sale, and she also realized it was rare for anyone to afford a lawyer.

For Danilo, life was certainly better in Canada if you were *masipag.*[13] He was not the type to ask for money. He worked hard and wanted to show his boss that he was worth hiring. He was worth helping. Danilo always worked hard and never said no. He didn’t want to disappoint his bosses or the person who had helped him apply to Canada.

Danilo offered to help a *kababayan*[14] get a job with his employer. After awhile, his *kababayan*, now co-worker, would ignore Danilo or be boastful at work. I helped you and now this is how you treat me?

Lani had worked in her company for several years when a *kababayan* was hired. Lani taught her everything about the job, and she continued to keep her head down and work. Lani was *masipag* too. After awhile, she noticed her co-worker talking lots to their boss, bringing him food, and doing little favours for him. Lani felt like her boss favoured her co-worker now, and she felt resentful towards her. I taught you everything and now you think you’re better than me?

That’s how it went. Although the couple was open to helping other Filipinos in Canada, not all Filipinos were as generous. Lani felt that some Filipinos who have been in Canada longer than her looked down on her. They make more money and have more properties after all. Instead of helping you, they put you down. Do they not remember what it

[13] hardworking
[14] fellow Filipino

was like to be us? Despite his usual friendly personality, Danilo sometimes avoided talking to other Filipinos when he ran into them at the mall or grocery stores.

Advice for Daniela and Liezel. When Daniela was in her early teens, she told her mom that her Filipino friend came over and told her that their house was too small for them to hang out in.

"Why?! There's only four of us. You don't need that much space," Lani knew not to blame her daughter's friend but rather their parents. The friend's parents made a lot of money, so they probably influenced them to think that way. Lani felt bad for her daughter, and so she repeated what she always told her kids. "You need to work hard, finish your studies, go to college or university, so that nobody can put you down. Protect yourself. Rise above just to tell them, right? Even though you have a small house, you can still go to school, right? Then they can't disrespect you."

Their father's message was similar. "If they can do it, so can you."

While Daniela sought advice from her parents about what she should take in college, Liezel kept silent, as usual. Lani often asked Liezel about her plans and goals. "I'm working on it, mom," she'd reply. Lani knew that her eldest was thinking about her future. Liezel even got a job after her mother asked her to, but she didn't tell anyone in her family once she started working.

Tensions in Personal, Cultural, and Family Identity

Daniela was often on TikTok watching Filipino content creators around the world take pride in their culture. Although there were comparisons to the popular aesthetic of East Asian cultures, she still enjoyed the representation of Filipinos online that was largely absent from when she was younger.

At school she was surrounded by Filipino friends who were proud of their heritage, but she acknowledged a distance between herself and those who were more connected to their

Filipino culture. Whenever she attempted to speak Tagalog, they would make fun of her. "You're so whitewashed." They think they're better than me for being more cultured in Filipino things.

Two Different Daughters. "Oh, you're so Canadian now!" Daniela's cousins from the Philippines would say, recognizing her perfect accent-free English and Western mannerisms. Daniela was uncertain how to feel. She was also confused to hear her cousins constantly point to the things she owned such as her cellphone, laptop, or clothes.

"I wish I was there," they'd tell her. Although Daniela recognized that she had things that they didn't, and perhaps education was better in Canada, this was just her average life. Was it really better here?

For years she overheard her parents comment about other people's houses and financial status, and they'd even make comments about other people's skin tone and appearance. Daniela wondered if she was supposed to care about these things. People in Canada don't really judge you as much based on the colour of your skin or how much money you make, but she recognized this was mainly a part of Filipino culture. Sometimes her mother would comment on Daniela's skin colour, especially when she would be out in the sun. Although she wanted to be more cultured, she wondered if she should maybe distance herself instead. I don't know what to do.

Liezel, the younger sister, was silently forging her own path. Whenever her mother told her how she should look, she'd shrug it off. She wasn't interested. She saw her father socialize openly with other Filipinos, and so she approached other Filipinos always expecting the possibility of friendship. When imposed with expectations of how she should be or what she should do, she took a step back to reflect in solitude. She had her own plans and goals for herself. Liezel recently accepted her admission to film school in the fall and planned to live at home with her parents for awhile longer.

Parents' Priorities. "I try to give them everything they want, even if I'm broke." However, Danilo came to realize that he could not provide them with everything, and he couldn't protect them from making their own mistakes. He tried to be strict about their dating life, education, and maintaining religious values. "It only takes one mistake to fuck up your life," he'd threaten. Well, at least they were raised in the church, so they will always have God to guide them.

Lani was at church when a friend questioned her choice to become a medical office assistant. "You know you can make more money doing what I do." Lani knew her friend made more money than her, especially if she worked overtime.

"I don't want to," she replied. She didn't want to work overtime anymore. With the money she was able to make, instead of buying a luxury purse, she would rather spend it on vacation with her family. *Lumilipas ang panahon.* [Time flies.] One day her daughters would be out of the house living their own life, spending less and less time with their parents.

Family B Narrative

Challenging Colonial Mentality in Canada: Attempts at a New Normal

See Table 2 for a demographic summary of Family B, consisting of a mother (Bea), father (Boy), and two teen boys (Jericho and Johnny).

Table 2

Participant Demographics for Family B

	Mother	Father	Eldest Child	Youngest Child
Pseudonym	Bea	Boy	Jericho	Johnny
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male
Age	50	53	16	13
Birth Country	Philippines	Philippines	Canada	Canada
Year of Immigration	2003	1985	n/a	n/a

Identified Ethnic Identity	Filipina	Asian Filipino	Filipino	Filipino Canadian
Languages Spoken	Tagalog, English	Ilocano, Tagalog, English	English	English
Religion	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian
Highest Education	Bachelor's degree	High school diploma	Grade 11	Grade 7
Occupation	Licensed practical nurse	CNC programmer	Student	Student

Normal Behaviour

Bea grew up near Olangapo with her three brothers and one sister. Her mother had a job in sales after her father passed away. There was an established US naval base that remained after the war, so she grew up with seeing many *puti*[15] around her. "Hi Joe, hi!" exclaimed the Filipinos. The *tanod*[16] were celebrated. They must be rich since they gave her candy and chocolates, so she was especially friendly to them. Filipinos did not treat her as kindly, catering instead to the white people on the peninsula. She didn't care too much. This was normal and natural. It's in our blood.

When she was about five years old, the song *Tayo'y Mga Pinoy* [We Are Filipino] was famous. Whenever the song played, Bea would leave the room. *"Bea, patingin ko ang ilong mo!"* ["Bea, let me see your nose!"] her *tito*[17] would tease. *"Huwag kang mahihiya kung ang ilong mo ay pango"* [don't be ashamed if your nose is flat] were the song lyrics she avoided. She already knew her nose was *pango,* and she had to use a *sipit* to make it sharper.

In grade 4, Bea moved to the farmlands near a larger city. Her neighbours were all *maitim* compared to her. Everyone had a crush on her and looked at her with awe. Even

[15] White people
[16] Literally "bodyguard," slang for US military men
[17] uncle

though Bea's family called her *negrita*[18] because she was tanner than her four siblings, here her complexion was relatively lighter than most. She didn't have to have the whitest skin as long as there were people darker than her. *Kung maitim ka, pangit ka* [If you're dark, you're ugly]. Eventually she got as dark as the farmers. She didn't stand out as *maputi*[19] anymore, she was one of them.

Boy was born in 1970 with three brothers and two sisters in a small municipality in the northern region of the Philippines. Boy's parents however worked in the government in different departments, but in the *probinsiya*[20] most people worked in agriculture as farmers and labourers. His mother's success was not well received by his *tita*[21]. *Ang mga tao ay laging makasarili* [People are always self-centered.]

When he visited extended family in Manila, his cousin introduced Boy as being from the province. "*Maitim siya, taga probinsiya siya,*" ["He's dark, he's from the province"] his cousin would say just to put him down. Boy felt like his cousin was ashamed of him. Is this the way we are?

They had opposite experiences when visiting each other's home. When his city-dwelling cousin visited him in the province, everyone was in awe and treated his cousin as if he was so different from them. Boy compared himself to his cousin's lighter skin, the clothes he wore, and the way he carried himself that made it clear he was from the city. It hurt for a moment, but that's just the way people are.

Different Upbringings

When Boy's mother remarried, his stepdad sponsored them to move to a city in Canada when he was 15. There was a new culture, place, weather, friends, family, and language, and

[18] Common nickname for darker skinned Filipino females
[19] Have light skin
[20] Literally "province," refers to rural areas of the Philippines
[21] aunt

adjustment wasn't easy. *Payongs*[22] were only used for rain. That's the way it is here, so he adjusted. He learned English and got rid of his accent, and he befriended a diverse group of people, including Filipino Canadian teens who also spoke English. No one could tell he was from the province now; it didn't even matter that he was dark. You don't put people down in Canada, that's not who we are. Keep that in the Philippines.

Bea spent her adolescence and early adulthood working part time and going to school. In her teens, she learned about colonial mentality at school. *Kaya ang mga Pilipino ay ganyan* [That's why Filipinos are like that]. Colonial mentality was everywhere, it was normal. She carried on with her daily life and never gave colonial mentality another thought, focusing instead on her studies and trying to earn a living. She attained a Bachelor of Arts in psychology, then worked in different industries such as healthcare, shipping, and paper milling.

The Beginning of Bea and Boy's Relationship. When Bea was single, she bleached her skin because she wanted her complexion to be white, white, white! She thought she was more beautiful with lighter skin, and perhaps it could even help her find a husband.

She was 28 years old by the time she met Boy at her workplace when he was visiting the Philippines. He was a foreign Filipino man who spoke English. At the time, she believed that all foreigners must be rich like the white men from her childhood. "I thought he was rich!" she joked.

Boy came to visit Bea one day while she was in the washroom bleaching her skin. She overheard her nephew talking to Boy. "*Oh kuya Boy, nasa washroom lang si ate Bea nagpapaputi*" ["Oh Boy, she's in the washroom bleaching her skin]! She was so embarrassed. She didn't want to see Boy anymore.

[22] umbrellas

Boy laughed, “you bleach your skin?” He also told her that *payongs* were only for the rain. That was the last time Bea bleached her skin.

Boy’s Hotel Experience in the Philippines

After Boy and Bea got married, they honeymooned in a five-star hotel in the Philippines. People were lined up for the buffet, and the couple was behind a white man.

“What can I get you, sir?” said the Filipino staff. The man asked for a medium rare steak and thanked the worker. “You’re welcome, sir! Come back again!”

Boy greeted the service worker. “*Well done para sa akin*” [Well done for me]. The worker dropped his smile and gave Boy his food. Boy anticipated the same hospitable exchange he just witnessed between the Filipino worker and the white guest. “*Salamat!*” [Thank you!] exclaimed Boy, attempting to encourage a friendly interaction. Nothing.

Anger surged through him. Boy thought that he and the worker were the same — Filipino, *mga kababayan*[23] — but he was seen as inferior and treated accordingly. He’d experienced similar situations before. He knew exactly what he had to say and how he had to say it. The worker must have assumed he was from the province from his dark skin. He switched to English. “Is this how you treat your own fellow Filipinos? Do you know where I’m from?”

Boy’s anger turned into guilt. Even after spending over half of his life in Canada, he became one of them, a Filipino who puts down another Filipino. He knew better than to enact crab mentality. But how else was he supposed to react to a low blow like that? Maybe he needs to be less friendly, maybe he expected too much. This is how it’s always been and how it will always be.

[23] Literally “neighbour,” commonly used to refer to another Filipino when highlighting their shared Filipino identity

Bea remained unbothered. She continued to be indifferent towards Filipinos. Would caring about what Filipinos think do anything to help her? They were all snobs anyway. She never returned to the Philippines after their honeymoon.

Bea's Work History in Canada

Despite many years of work experience and a degree from the Philippines, Bea's first jobs in Canada were being a filing clerk in a medical office and housekeeper and food clerk at a hospital. These were the jobs she could get at the time to start earning money, unlike the other Canadian staff who had higher positions that they studied for.

In the medical office, the other staff rarely talked to her, and she felt awkward, nervous, and isolated. In the Philippines, they made fun of you if you couldn't speak English properly, so she was hesitant to even try. Maybe they looked down on her for her low position or her inability to speak English as well as them. *Ito lang ang trabaho ko dahil hindi ako marunong mag-english* [This is my job because I can't speak English]. While sorting charts, she began to cry.

She wasn't like her husband who moved here at a younger age. Boy could also speak Ilokano in addition to Tagalog, which made it easier for him to learn another language like English. She pitied herself, but what could she do now?

Bea went back to school to become a licensed practical nurse (LPN). The language barrier continued to be challenging, especially in an academic setting. However, she was grateful for the financial opportunities the country offered. Being in Canada didn't mean she was rich, but it was better than being in the Philippines. *May bahay naman ako* [I do have a house].

Complex Filipino Friendships

Johnny, their son, didn't go to school with many Filipinos. In elementary, he first attended a school with predominantly Chinese students. They had a dragon for a mascot and the school hosted a Chinese carnival.

One day a new boy, Sam, from the Philippines enrolled in Johnny's grade 3 class. Bea encouraged her son to talk to him because she knew what it was like to be in a new country. Johnny was a bit shy and preferred to be alone. But Sam wasn't shy and befriended everyone, including Johnny. He was Johnny's first Filipino friend, and he saw Sam as someone he could relate to rather than someone that was different than him.

Eventually, Sam moved away and Johnny went to a different school. This time his classmates were predominantly Arab, and the school was named after a prominent Muslim figure in the city. Although there were a few Filipino students, none of them wanted to talk to him. He told himself he didn't care. "I don't really like talking to people."

"Ew, FOBs," said one of Jericho's Filipino peers. Jericho, the oldest son, might have laughed, he was generally agreeable and it was a running joke to make fun of being Filipino. He thought it was weird. He wasn't sure why there was a wall between them and new immigrants, regardless of whether they were from the Philippines or other countries. Jericho sympathized with them. It must be hard learning English, and it was so pivotal for getting an education and making friends.

Despite his compassion, it was still hard to connect with newly immigrated Filipinos. Similar to his Filipino Canadian peers, he could understand Tagalog but could barely speak. Our parents didn't take the time to teach us because they were too busy, or maybe there was some other reason.

"You can't speak Tagalog? Really?! You're so whitewashed!" said his Filipino peers that moved to Canada at a later age. "You didn't grow up with this? You don't know about

this?" they would say, cementing a foundation for their cultural differences. He didn't know about certain foods, TV shows, songs, or other media that they grew up with.

"Are you really Filipino?" The wall was built by both sides. He didn't know where he'd rather be or where he was allowed to be. It seemed impossible to be on both sides. Between being too Filipino and not being Filipino enough, Jericho was lost. I want to identify as Filipino, but what kind of Filipino?

After school, Jericho scrolled through social media where he often learned about his Filipino culture. Social media allowed him to experience what it might have been like to grow up in the Philippines, and people from the Philippines could get a glimpse of what it was like to live in Canada. Occasionally, online content or comments talked negatively of life in the Philippines or bullied new immigrants. Conversely, Filipinos living in the Philippines would exclude those who grew up outside of the Philippines from Filipino culture and identity. Social media was a double-edged sword. People were not nice to people who belonged to a different group.

What Should I Look Like?

By the time Bea had her kids, it was years since the last time she bleached her skin or used an umbrella for anything other than rain. Your skin colour doesn't matter here, and actually people like being tan here. Plus, she was older and married. She didn't need to uphold a standard of beauty to attract other men. She was settled in Canada with her job, house, and family who attended church regularly.

My Family's Skin. "Jericho has mommy's skin, and Johnny has daddy's skin," said Bea to her kids.

"Are you sure you didn't just bleach Jericho?" joked Boy. Johnny didn't understand the joke. Why would anyone bleach their skin? His mom married a dark-skinned man, and he looked like his dad. It's just genetics.

"Your *tita* is so white, she must be part Japanese!" said his *tito*. Why all this fuss about skin colour? And Filipinos can be light skinned too. There might be something he's missing, but he didn't care about the colour of anyone's skin or speculating why someone is lighter or darker. He didn't care about his nose either, whatever that meant.

His brother, Jericho received a different message. In the summer, he was always told that he was getting so dark so he stayed in the shade. I guess I'm supposed to try and keep my lighter skin. In the winter, Jericho loved hockey and played often, it was the national sport of Canada after all. At hockey practice, he was one of the few kids who weren't white. He was glad to be lighter skinned, but his nose wasn't like theirs. He wasn't quite sure why, but they just looked better. It was really hard to feel included for a while. In moments like this, he wished he was white.

Growing Boys. As Jericho entered junior high, everyone around him grew so fast. Wow, I'm short. It wasn't only his white classmates that grew taller, even his Asian peers were tall. Is it really just me? Is it really just Filipinos who are short?

Johnny barely thought about what it meant to be Filipino. Filipinos confused their F's with P's, liked Jollibee, worked in healthcare, and were religious. He didn't care to be different.

When it was Johnny's turn to enter junior high, he watched as he went from being taller to shorter than the rest of his peers. Oh damn, they're tall. His classmate was a 4'11" Filipino girl dating a 5'11" white boy. He conducted some research online: "What is the average height of Filipino men?" Oh no. Latvian women are taller than Filipino men.

Although his peers would tease him for being short, they never teased him for being Filipino. At least not directly. The shortest guy in their class wasn't Filipino, and they never teased him about his height. Is there something about being a short Filipino that's especially bad?

Church Lessons

"Wow, this is a different race." Jericho realized that the religion he's a part of was predominantly Filipino even when the church was in Canada. There was a difference between religious teachings, which he was committed to, and Filipino culture. The church without religion was Filipino culture.

Don't gossip, don't enact a crab mentality, don't be boastful, and don't hang out with non-members too often unless it is to invite them to bible studies. These were key lessons that were preached by the church minister.

Jericho asked his non-Filipino friends if they faced similar problems in their communities. Nope. Crab mentality, gossiping, and toxicity were uniquely Filipino. How are the people here claiming to be religious if they all act like this? Why would he invite someone to bible study only to endure these aspects of Filipino culture? He caught himself assuming the worst about other religious members. He held steadfast to his religious commitment. "Your faith is between you and God. That's what I believe."

He witnessed his father argue with another church member over some small misunderstanding. It was none of Jericho's business, but he couldn't help but wonder if the culture of the church enabled things to be blown out of proportion. Being religious was easy; being surrounded by Filipinos at church had its own challenges.

Boy, the dad, missed his friends from 20 years ago. He lost touch with them since joining the church with his wife. His old friends never treated him the way the Filipinos at church did. Many of the brethren didn't grow up in Canada, so they brought colonial mentality from the root.

There were only a few people he trusted. Boy kept his circle at church small, plus he saw himself as a hard guy to hang out with. "Look at me. It looks like I'm pissed off all the

time.” People probably judged him for his unapproachable appearance, but they could judge him. “You don’t know who I am.”

He and his family didn’t care about others’ opinions. You’re here for the few people you can trust, but God first and foremost. His wife Bea was not new to the social dynamics of the church either. It was normal to her, and it was easy to ignore.

Their other son Johnny was usually alone amidst a congregation of Filipino families. “I finally realized that I didn’t have any friends in the church when I realized they were all *kuya’s*[24] friends.” He would overhear them gossip about other people. He reminded himself that he didn’t care, but at times he just didn’t want to get in the way or be the next person they gossiped about. Can’t play basketball with them because I might suck.

“Be humble,” the minister preached during a children’s worship service. The lesson was about how brethren shouldn’t pull people down, but don’t act superior either. Crab mentality was getting worse at church. He overheard someone gossip about another member because he was too good at basketball. While Johnny wasn’t really connected to any Filipinos, he wasn’t connected to many people in general. If Filipinos gossiped or enacted crab mentality, then other people could too. He refused to have a birthday party that year.

History Lessons

Boy reflected on colonial history. “I thought about it. I think about all the places that British colonized. The one’s that were colonized have a corrupt government. European countries all have good governments.” He thought about the origin of crab mentality. “Maybe when we were colonized by Spain, we wanted to sell out our own Filipinos. I think that’s why we always belittle each other and put each other down so that, you know, our master would not punish us. That’s how we got ahead back then. Something like that. Like ‘you’re a good boy now.’ Then that just carried on through generations.”

[24] Title for older brother

"I've done it a few times. I think you just pick it up. It's Filipino *tsismis*.[25] You hear a story from somebody else, know that it's twisted, so you do it the way they do it, right? But then you feel bad after. At least I do."

Just Like My Dad. "I'm a World War II geek just like my dad." Jericho, their son, recalled aspects of Filipino history which he learned from social studies class, his dad, and his own interests. Learning about Filipino history helped him feel more pride for his culture. "I definitely look for the Filipino stuff first because it's a world war, and I want to know what my country is up to."

"When America liberated the Philippines, I guess you could say the people looked up to America, right? And Americans just happen to be white people. And then Americans became the ideal." He saw aspects of American influence in his parents. "They're not from here. They're not from here at all. Their values are different than mine because of the way that they grew up… you could say that maybe they're self-projecting because of that influence." Being under their roof, Jericho acknowledged that he was influenced by his parents' values, which were really American values. "American became our culture." Perhaps if colonization didn't happen, Filipinos would be less racist to others and themselves.

"People always immigrate outside of the Philippines." Jericho acknowledged his parents as an example. "It's always the dream to pursue a higher education and make more money." That's why they moved here. It's weird though, Filipinos always want to go back home. His parents talk about returning after retirement. He wants to visit too. It will be his first time. The younger brother Johnny listened to his older brother and dad talk about the war and Filipino history. He learned some of this in school. He didn't give it much more thought.

[25] gossip

Representation in Media

Across the world, Filipino parties sat in anticipation for the Pacquiao vs. Mayweather boxing match. Jericho was about 10 years old at the time, and he was caught in the excitement with everyone else. Although he wasn't necessarily a huge fan of boxing at the time, this was the first time someone that represented his culture was receiving global recognition. "Let's go, Manny!" he cheered proudly.

Jericho experienced other notable Filipino representation that was celebrated by his Filipino community. Beauty pageants, especially Miss Universe, were another source of Filipino pride. It was all over social media and a topic among his social circles. Suddenly he was invested. "That's us, that's us!" Jericho listed other Filipinos on the rise in sports. Finally, there was representation and recognition of Filipino talent.

His nose, skin, and height were just Filipino stereotypes. There were people out there who are Filipino and look completely different. "Now I'm proud to be Filipino, I really am." He looks forward to teaching his own kids one day to be proud of their culture.

Tensions in Filipino Canadian Values

Their mom Bea tries to instill her values in her kids, but sometimes she's told by her family that it doesn't fit with being in Canada. "You're not supposed to be doing that," Boy would explain to her. Her kids would say, "why were you thinking about that?" or "it's not really good to do that." She was just curious if someone was Muslim. Sometimes Boy was on their side. Okay, fine, three against one. They must be right since they're Canadian and she's still learning. She wanted her kids to do well in Canada, so she was open to learning new values that differed from how she was raised in the Philippines.

At times, she wondered if she could really stop colonial mentality even if she didn't teach it to her own children. The root runs so deep. It's been so normal to her that she may not even recognize when she demonstrates colonial mentality to them. At work, she still

experiences colonial mentality too. It was everywhere. She is trying to overcome it. Just because she couldn't speak proper English, it didn't mean she was *bobo*[26].

However, there was only so much she could do. She's older now, and her kids are developing their own Canadian identity that didn't always fit with her own values, whether it be based in colonial mentality or not. Okay, whatever! She just hoped they stay close to God.

One day her husband Boy went to 7-11 and there was a Filipino woman working at the counter. He spoke to her in Tagalog. He received a rude response in English with the worst accent. So he switched to English too.

Boy said, "you know I've been here since 1985? I hate your shit!" He could see the realization in her eyes. "*Kapag kapwa Pilipino, ganyan. Iwan mo yan sa Pilipinas"* ["When it's a Filipino, it's like that. Leave that in the Philippines"], he continued. He stopped himself from saying she just got off the boat. He began to feel bad. "I've been here for 30 years, so stop doing that." That was bad, yeah, but it wasn't as bad as what other people do. You would've done the same, we're just human.

He hoped that he didn't pass on this behaviour to his kids. He did his best to not show or tell them anything like that, and he always corrected them if he saw any instance of treating people poorly based on where they're from. At least his kids were raised in Canada. They studied here, spoke fluent English, and were friends with other Filipinos who were raised in Canada. He didn't want to a raise *coconuts,*[27] yet he didn't want his kids to learn from newly arrived Filipinos who brought colonial mentality from the root. Slowly, he sees colonial mentality fading with the younger generations.

Family C Narrative

Brethren First, Filipino Second: Tensions in Religious Morals and Filipino Culture

[26] stupid
[27] Slang term referring to being culturally white while looking Filipino

See Table 3 for a demographic summary of Family C, consisting of a mother (Jade), father (Cesar), a young adult child (Kristine), and an adolescent child (Francis).

Table 3

Participant Demographics for Family C

	Mother	Father	Eldest Child	Youngest Child
Pseudonym	Jade	Cesar	Kristine	Francis
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Age	49	53	19	16
Birth Country	Philippines	Philippines	Canada	Canada
Year of Immigration	1995	2003	n/a	n/a
Identified Ethnic Identity	Filipino	Filipino	Canadian/ Filipino	Filipino Canadian
Languages Spoken	Kapangpangan, Tagalog, English	Tagalog, English	English	English
Religion	Church of Christ	Church of Christ	Church of Christ	Church of Christ
Highest Education	Post-secondary diploma	Bachelor's degree	Some university	Grade 10
Occupation	Pharmacy assistant	Intern architect	Student	Student

Jade's Transient Childhood within Religious Stability

Jade was born in a large city in the Philippines and lived with her mother, father, and two brothers. She was born darker skinned, and so after she would go swimming on sunny days she would become really, really dark. She was tomboyish as a child, and she didn't care much about what she looked like.

Her mother was different. She took care of herself and cared about having lighter skin and would massage her nose. She would bring an umbrella out on sunny days to prevent herself from becoming tan. The celebrities on TV were also very pale and looked a certain

way. As a child, Jade wondered if she should start caring about what she looked like too, but not enough to stop being under the sun.

Jade's father was a church minister, which meant her family was accustomed to moving often. Jade went to several different schools, but two things never changed: being surrounded by brethren and being on the honour roll. Both being the minister's daughter and the new student at school put her in the spotlight, but her experiences with brethren were completely different than school peers.

At church, she had a good reputation and was taught to maintain positive relationships with all the members. Most of the time, it was easy to get along with brethren. Filipinos were funny and they teased others a lot. Ministers joked about some of the brethren too. *"Gusto mo si ano"* ["You like that person"] they would joke. The jokes and teasing between brethren happened all the time, sometimes behind people's back and sometimes to their face. *"Ang itim na man niya"* ["They're so dark"] or *"hindi siya pwedeng maging artista"* ["they'd never be celebrities"] they'd joke. You just went along with it and laughed.

It was harder to make friends whenever she would start at a new school. *"Sino ka ba? Akala mong sino ka"* [Who do you think you are]? was the attitude she received from most other students. To them, she came out of nowhere and got the highest marks in class. It's not like she was rubbing it in their faces, she was just living here. Jade was 10 years old when she experienced so much jealousy from other students. She was jealous of them too. They were prettier, more popular, and had better clothes. These things started to matter. It was hard not to compare, and they were doing it to her too. Everyone had their insecurities.

When she was in her preteens, Jade moved to Australia with her family. She learned English there, and then moved to Hong Kong in her later teens. Again, being connected with brethren was the main source of constancy, and she continued to be surrounded by friendly and funny Filipinos wherever she would go.

However, when she returned to the Philippines to visit, things were different. *"Mga inglesero"* [English speakers], people would say about her. She was treated better just because she spoke English. A sense of superiority was placed on her, although she was a bit confused. It felt like she was good at something, even though speaking English came from living in Australia and not something she necessarily earned. Plus, everyone in the Philippines could speak English. The young kid that worked street food could speak English, albeit a bit broken. Her perfect English was special to them, like the foreigners they hear of online.

Trying to Accept Who I Am

Cesar was born in the province in the Philippines, and then adopted by a family who brought him to a large city when he was only two weeks old. It was hard being adopted. His adoptive parents would try and shelter him from people's questioning, but every now and then he would overhear other moms asking, "is that the son of… he's so big now." When he went to school, the kids would make fun of him for being adopted. By elementary, he cared a lot about what other people thought of him. It was hard for him to accept his situation.

People were mean about other things too. As far back as he could remember, people always judged you if your skin was too dark. *"Siguro nagtatrabaho siya sa construction"* ["Maybe he's working in construction"], "*hindi siya nagtatrabaho sa opisina"* ["He doesn't work in an office"], or he's not a white-collar worker were all phrases that meant you didn't finish college and you were poor. Dark skin meant you must have had a job where you couldn't carry an umbrella to avoid the sun. His family wasn't too poor compared to others in the Philippines, but they were just able to survive. Cesar avoided sunlight exposure too to avoid becoming dark.

"Pango ka" ["You're flat-nosed"] was a common thing kids said to make fun of others. *"Mukha kang Filipino"* [You look Filipino] was closely associated with being *pango*

too. It got to the point where it was hard to accept what he was born with and the life he was born into. He was still trying to find his identity, and a lot of who he was got made fun of.

By the time Cesar reached university, he got used to the jokes people would make. Racism in the Philippines was so common that it didn't even register as racist. Something shifted within him, and it became easier to accept whatever situation he found himself in. Perhaps he knew how to handle people's comments better or that he realized some people were just like that. *"Bahala na"* ["Whatever"].

During his studies, he learned about *baybayin*[28] in Filipino history. Other East Asian countries such as China and Japan were able to preserve their language and scripts. Why aren't we using ours?

Trying Not to be Like Other Filipinos in Canada

When Jade's father got transferred to Canada, Jade and Cesar moved with them. The couple was married by this time. Cesar had just graduated with a bachelor's in architecture in the Philippines, and he knew that moving to Canada meant that his degree wouldn't be recognized.

"There's no hope for the Philippines, might as well work in the other countries. Even if I work in a very low position, at least I have hope there." He knew of professionals who were lawyers, engineers, or doctors move to Canada just to work in food chains or factories. It's the sacrifice they made for their families because of the economic status of the Philippines. He didn't judge their choices. It was enough and they were happy. But did Canadians judge Filipinos based on their jobs? Filipinos took the work that Canadians didn't want to do, such as caregiving, cleaning, and food service. When thinking about the stereotypical jobs Filipino immigrants took on, Cesar admitted that he felt ashamed about

[28] Precolonial writing system

being Filipino. Cesar didn't want that for himself. He knew he could work hard, and whatever he did, God would support him.

When he arrived in Canada, Cesar applied to lower-level jobs that were related to his field, mostly drafting firms. "Wow, you have a higher education than I do," most employers would say, as most drafting firms have only completed a tech course. After several applications and rejections, no one hired him. Perhaps they were intimidated by his degree, that one day he'd surpass them. Plus, he didn't have any work experience in the field. He tried to reach out to a professor he knew of in the Philippines that moved to Canada who might be able to help him. He met her while she was mopping the clinic floor. Cesar's responsibility as a father weighed on him. He worked as a janitor for his first few months in Canada. It wasn't easy. He cried.

Family Values for Humour, Brethren, and Kababayan[29]

"Holy smokes, that's so Filipino," Cesar would joke to himself when looking at someone. "Where'd you get your nose?" Cesar teased his kids. In his family, he was known to make jokes about people's appearances and would give them nicknames. Jade would join in sometimes, and then eventually the kids would too. The family joked together about how one of their cousins was dark and the other was light. It was usually just within their family, and it was all in good fun.

Jade's experience with Filipinos moving across the world showed her that they were a joyful culture. They liked to laugh, and it was normal that it was at another person's expense. There were some Filipinos who were easily *pikon*[30] and didn't laugh, taking offense to the joke and holding a grudge. They're sore losers! Why not choose to ride along with the joke? Admittedly, she could be *pikon* too sometimes, but she learned that to get along with others,

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29 fellow Filipino
30 oversensitive, touchy

especially brethren, it was just easier to learn to laugh. Regardless of how she felt, it wasn't right to leave her relationships with brethren unrepaired. As a minister's daughter, her family was well known and generally well liked.

Their children, Kristine and Francis were both raised with a sense of *kababayan*.[31] Filipinos shared similar experiences, such as being a minority and come from similar cultures. Even in Tim Horton's, the Filipino workers would make your coffee very quickly. Kristine approached her interactions with other Filipinos positively, since they were *kababayan* and sometimes they were also brethren.

"Do you have a boyfriend? Why are you so fat now?" Kristine got these questions a lot from her *titas* and other Filipino adults, mostly brethren. She would give an answer just to satisfy them and get them off her back. She kept the conversation easygoing despite how she felt.

By the time they were in teens, both Kristine and Francis were aware of how gossip was common among Filipinos, and they saw many examples occur around them when at church. Kristine felt like she couldn't trust just anyone. If they gossiped to her about her friends, what's stopping them from gossiping about her to other people? It wasn't the way brethren and *kababayan* should treat each other, yet it was so ingrained in the culture.

For Francis, he noticed his Filipino friends both at school and church drifting apart after some time. At first it would start with gossip about one person in their group, and then slowly they became more and more distant.

Should I Look Filipino?

Several parents, including Jade's mother, used to tell Cesar and Jade to massage their baby's nose to make it pointy and not flat. It was a defect to other parents, so they did massage Kristine's nose a bit when she was little. Years later, one of Jade's friends

[31] in this context, a sense of shared identity and togetherness with other Filipinos

complimented her nose, “I really like your nose. It has the bridge.” Kristine was a bit confused, she just looked like her parents.

Kristine didn’t hear anything directly about what she should look like, but as she grew older and became curious about her mother’s products, she noticed some skin whitening products such as soaps and lotions.

In Asian supermarkets, Kristine saw the shelves of products dedicated to skin whitening. She wasn’t too surprised as by her teens she was consuming a lot of Korean media. Lighter skin symbolized wealth. Cosmetic procedures such as skin whitening and rhinoplasty to get a bridged nose were popular in South Korea. On social media, people wanted to look like their favourite Korean influencers and celebrities, who would sometimes endorse skin whitening products online. Her friends and her talk about how Filipinos stereotypically have a flat nose. Maybe people would like her better if she tried to look like the celebrities she saw on Korean media.

When Francis, her brother was growing up, he watched a lot of Filipino media because GMA[32] was always on at his grandmother’s house. He felt connected to his Filipino culture through watching Filipino programs. There was one point he wanted to look like one of the male celebrities, so he copied his style.

Around junior high, Francis visited his grandmother’s house less, and he consumed lots of Japanese and Korean media with his friends. The celebrities were known for their perfect face and light skin. The Filipino beauty standard was whatever they saw in media, which was usually Korean and Japanese trends. His peers started to dress and apply makeup to look more Korean, straying away from emulating Filipino styles and even changing their features where they can. He didn’t participate in trying to follow the trends.

[32] Global Media Arts, a commonly known Filipino TV channel

Not Filipino. "Where are you from? Oh, I thought you were Chinese." On Kristine's social media feed, East Asians such as Koreans, Japanese, and Chinese were differentiated as the "clean Asians." There was a hierarchy about which Asians were more desirable. Online, Filipinos were either less desirable compared to East Asians or forgotten about completely. Filipinos are Asian too!

"Are you Chinese?" Francis received similar treatment. People didn't think he was Filipino because of his lighter skin, often assuming he was Chinese, Korean, or Japanese. He would reply that he's Filipino. "Oh, are you half?" It was hard for people to believe that he was fully Filipino. Maybe it was his height, his skin, or his eyes that made him look more East Asian. Were Filipinos not supposed to look like him?

Francis's friends in high school were Filipinos who had immigrated to Canada at an older age. They talked about how being a lighter skinned Filipino was more attractive and about pinching their nose to make it narrower. They also made jokes about their friend's darker skin. They all laughed together. Last year, they started a running joke about being Filipino as a disease. "Oh no, I got the Filipino!" Francis never thought the jokes meant anything bad.

Guilt and Gratitude Living in Canada

Like Francis, Kristine's friends in high school immigrated to Canada at a later age. They spoke Tagalog and although Kristine could understand it, she couldn't speak it as well as they could. "You should try and speak Tagalog," they'd ask her. "No, I'm going to sound so *conyo*,"[33] Kristine replied, a word she picked up on TikTok. She would look like a tryhard.[34] Kristine listened to her friends' experiences in the Philippines, realizing that she couldn't really relate to them having spent her whole life in Canada.

[33] Context dependent, can be derogatory slang for people who speak Taglish to show off or be pretentious
[34] a person who puts too much effort into something

"You're so lucky to live here," Cesar said to his kids. Kristine and Francis have heard their dad talk about this many times before. According to their dad, there were so many problems that people go through in the Philippines that his kids never had to experience. Kristine recalls her dad talking about how he had to wear the same pair of shoes for a long time, or that despite how she and her brother acted, he would always buy them what they wanted. Francis recalls his dad talking about how he had to work and go to school at the same time, or that he only had one toy and he'd never use it. Crime rates were high and the opportunities for education were low. Yes dad, we know.

Cesar knew they didn't get it because they haven't seen it. "People don't know the meaning of hardship." As part of his duties as a church officer, Cesar recalled visiting a family of two parents and their five children. They lived in what was essentially a shack with a dirt floor and just a wooden elevation for a bed. The parents were cooking one pack of instant noodles to split amongst the whole family.

"Eat your leftovers. Work hard." Cesar hoped that his kids remember to be grateful for what they had and the sacrifices their parents made for them. He wants them to stay grounded and remember where their family has come from.

What about our problems here in Canada? Kristine knew she didn't experience the same things as her parents, but her parents didn't experience the same things as her. The significance of their previous problems didn't mean hers just went away. Sometimes it felt like that's what her parents thought. For instance, OFWs[35] relayed a similar message. They hoped that their Canadian children could go to school and earn enough to bring their family members in the Philippines to Canada. They think it's that easy. It's so much pressure. She was in first year engineering.

[35] Overseas Foreign Workers, commonly used for Filipinos who are in Canada on a work visa

For Francis, his vacations in the Philippines reminded him that the quality of life was better in Canada. There were just more laws that protected people. During New Years Eve, everyone had access to fireworks that would lead to several catastrophic accidents each year. That would never happen in Canada.

After over ten years of hard work, Cesar was close to licensing as an architect in Canada. Even though he's learned that being out in the sun working in construction and trades makes a lot of money in Canada, he persisted in obtaining his original dream of working as an architect. There were many times the industry made him feel out of place for being Filipino, and he felt that he wasn't as smart as others because of his imperfect English. He told his kids how he wasn't offered the same opportunities due to discrimination. "I want to give an example to my kids as well, that their dad didn't give up."

Finding Our Pride

"Daddy, that's not nice. You shouldn't say that." Although their kids were in on the joke, the kids began correcting Cesar and Jade on their comments about other people's appearances. Francis commented that judging people based on their looks was weird because they couldn't control it. Their kids were educated in Canadian schools and were influenced by Canadian culture. Even after years of Filipino humour, they have a different understanding of what's okay to joke about.

Both parents began reflecting on their jokes. For Jade, even though she intends no malice in her jokes, perhaps there was some truth to what she says, otherwise why else would the joke exist? I should just keep it to myself.

Cesar revisited what he meant when he'd say, "that's so Filipino." Aren't I a Filipino? Isn't this what I should look like? He recognized that he wasn't always so proud of being Filipino. In Canada, since his fellow *kababayan* were also experiencing racism, they were less likely to be racist towards each other. He's working on accepting the parts of himself that

he was ashamed of and accepting that he cannot control what other people think of him or other Filipinos.

Jade never stayed long enough in one place to experience the colonial mentality. Living in different places in the Philippines, Australia, Hong Kong, and Canada meant her main connections to Filipino culture were through brethren who valued maintaining positive relationships with one another. Where you mostly see colonial mentality is with non-members. “I’m Filipino. I say it exactly.” It was just the truth. She was born in the Philippines, but she’s been influenced by cultures all over the world. “Who I am right now is all of that combined.”

Hearing the stories of racism Kristine’s dad experienced had her realize that the real world preferred white people, but it also depended on who she was surrounded by. At the peak of Asian racism during COVID-19, Kristine was grateful to be surrounded by friends who treated everyone the same. She also noticed a generational difference in how much Filipinos are proud of their culture. Although her Filipino Canadian friends had moments of discussing skin whitening and narrow noses, she noticed an overall difference in embracing how they looked compared to their parents. On social media, there was more representation and appreciation of Filipino culture from younger content creators. She watched a video on non-Filipino friends trying Filipino foods for the first time. She hopes that future generations continue to be more and more proud of their Filipino culture. “When I raise my kids, I don’t have to tell them to use papaya soap on their face.” If younger generations are challenging their parents’ beliefs, it may not take long to see a shift in Filipino culture.

Francis was taught basic Filipino manners such as *mano po*[36] and saying *opo*[37], but that was it. He didn’t feel as connected to Filipino culture, especially since he stopped

[36] Literally “your hand please,” a gesture within Filipino culture where a younger person gently places the back of an elder’s hand on their forehead to show respect
[37] Formal and respectful way of saying “yes”

watching Filipino media. To him, being Filipino was neutral, neither good nor bad. Other Asian countries seemed to have more pride in their ethnic identity, and they had so much to show and celebrate. Some celebrate Lunar New Year or Diwali, and some Asian cultures have famous exports like anime and pop music.

"What ties me with Filipino culture is the church, but even there, it isn't like we're celebrating a Filipino holiday. It's just a church celebration." When Filipino celebrations are religious celebrations, his Filipino identity gets lost. He didn't know how to celebrate being Filipino.

Discussion

The aim of the dissertation was to create narratives of Filipino Canadian families that demonstrated the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. Three family narratives were constructed in line with this goal. While developing these narratives of colonial mentality transmission, I also heard how families minimized, prevented, and unlearned colonial mentality. This suggests that family members could not tell the story of how they learned and internalized colonial mentality without telling me about their resistance and survivance. Transmission and resistance were parallel narratives over time. Therefore, I discuss prominent narrative themes that suggest how colonial mentality is transmitted intergenerationally, as well as how it has been resisted intergenerationally. Narratives with families that included adolescents provided a rich understanding of colonial mentality as a psychological construct. I discuss additional ways of understanding colonial mentality that further theorize how it manifests and operates based on these narratives. Finally, I explore ways that colonial mentality may be addressed within families, followed by limitations and future directions.

The Intergenerational Transmission of Colonial Mentality

Within and across family narratives, I identified narrative themes that are presented as overarching messages that may have influenced the internalization and transmission of colonial mentality across generations. These messages are not entirely distinct from one another but rather overlap and are interrelated. I discuss each of these messages and how they have been maintained and transmitted over time. See Table 4 for an overview of narrative themes regarding the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality.

Table 4

Narrative Themes for the Intergenerational Transmission of Colonial Mentality

Theme	Description
Don't Look Filipino	Physical features associated with Filipino identity are inferior, and changing their features in favor of colonial beauty standards is necessary to survive.
I'm/We're Not Enough	Filipinos are inadequate and must change themselves, abandon Filipino culture and identity, and go above and beyond to gain acceptance, success, and self-worth.
We Are Not the Same	Filipinos engage in intra-ethnic comparisons that replicate colonial dynamics of inferiority and superiority.
It's Better in Canada	The opportunities in Canada create feelings of indebtedness that position Filipinos to demonstrate that they are deserving to be in Canada.
That's Just the Way We Are	Within-group discrimination is addressed by normalizing, expecting, and preparing for negative relationships with other Filipinos.

(1) Don't Look Filipino

One of the most common experiences described across family members was receiving the message that they should not look like themselves or physical features associated with being a stereotypical Filipino. Although Filipinos are diverse in appearance, there remains a preference for stereotypically Western phenotypes, which have impacted the way they experienced their lives. Being *maitim* (darker skinned), *pango* (flat nosed), or *pandak* (short) were features that were made fun of, rejected, or attempted to be modified which communicated the message that these were features to be ashamed of and that these features were Filipino.

Filipinos Are Short. The family narratives have shown that height may be relevant to consider as part of what contributes to internalized inferiority among Filipino populations. While Lani expressed a memory of being bullied in elementary school for being shorter than her peers, the three adolescent boys across families described how height had othered them. Johnny and Jericho were shorter than their non-Filipino peers, whereas Francis, although a desirable trait to be taller in his social contexts, was questioned about his Filipino identity.

While skin colour and nose shapes have already been studied as part of colonial mentality and reflected within the Colonial Mentality Scale (David & Okazaki, 2006b), height is rarely recognized. Fontanilla (2022) found that adolescent Filipinos aged 13 to 17 in Canada reported that being short was a relevant aspect of their Filipino ethnic identity. Height may be particularly relevant during adolescence and even more relevant for adolescent boys such as Johnny, Jericho, and Francis where being taller is associated with masculinity and physical attraction (Batres et al., 2015; Roberts & Herman, 2022). Furthermore, in diverse spaces such as Canadian classrooms, there are more opportunities for Filipino adolescents to internalize height differences as due to their Filipino identity. As Johnny and Jericho watched their non-Filipino peers outgrow them, Francis attributed his taller stature as to part of why his peers did not always believe he was not of mixed ethnic background. Therefore, there are gendered, developmental, and social reasons as to why being shorter was internalized as Filipino inferiority.

Lasco (2018, 2020) argued how the American colonial period in the Philippines problematized the average Filipino height. As Americans were generally taller, height was used as a measure of health, imposing that shorter Filipino children were unhealthy and "stunted." Lasco further argued that the narrative that short was unhealthy helped justify their mission to "civilize" the Filipinos and continue their colonial project. Additionally, certain civil and military positions also had height requirements, where taller individuals received

more opportunities and thus higher salaries. Height was then also associated with money, power, and status. This may explain why even Lani experienced bullying for her height as a female and in the absence of comparing her height to other non-Filipino groups. Being called *pandak* existed long before Johnny and Jericho felt inferior for being shorter, suggesting a transmission across generations through higher-level colonial policies and systems.

More Opportunities from Approximating Colonial Beauty Standards. The family narratives demonstrated the strong relation between colonial beauty standards and socioeconomic status that impacted how they navigated their careers and social relationships. After the mothers in the study received messages from family members, media, and peers about what they should look like during their youth, the timing of when they engaged in skin whitening and nose clipping suggested that it functioned as a way of securing their financial future. For Lani, she committed to using skin whitening methods and *sipits* (nose clippings) to prepare herself for entering the job market at an international hotel, which secured her the job. This was also the steppingstone to later receiving help from a *balikbayan* (a Filipino visiting the Philippines) who helped them immigrate to Canada. For Bea, skin whitening was especially relevant when she was dating, and later acknowledged that she no longer required the attention of other men now that she was married and settled in Canada with her house. For both women, their efforts to approximate colonial beauty standards were part of escaping their low socioeconomic upbringings.

Examining the intersection of gender with colonial beauty standards and socioeconomic status, Cesar and Boy's narratives showed that their skin colour led to assumptions about their class status while they were in the Philippines. Cesar learned that people judged darker skin as having a lower-paying job and lower educational attainment, and Boy was treated as inferior because darker skin meant he was from the *probinsya* (countryside) and worked on a farm. Although Cesar described avoiding the sun to maintain

his lighter skin, men did not describe doing anything directly to their bodies to alter their appearance. Instead, they attempted to alter their status. Cesar continued to pursue his university studies, and Boy asserted his Canadian status and English-speaking abilities whenever he was perceived as inferior. Even Danilo described that after he was jealous about how his cousins looked from imported shoes and clothes from *pasalubong* (gifts from abroad), he set his goal to one day have those things too. It is possible that women are often the target audience for beauty products that promote skin bleaching (Apuke, 2018) and narrow noses (Tipgomut et al., 2022), and men tend to deny their use of beauty products in general (Alves da Silva Lima, 2019). Alternatively, especially during their upbringing in the Philippines, the gendered narratives may demonstrate that Filipino girls and women are held to a higher standard of beauty than boys and men such that it is more of a prerequisite for social mobility and class compared to Filipino males. In a recent study of Filipino adults in metro Manila, both male and female participants rated portraits of lighter-skinned individuals as more attractive than darker-skinned individuals, but the difference in ratings between lighter and darker-skinned portraits was more pronounced among male participants (Policarpio et al., 2022). They discussed how this finding "explains why the pressure to use skin whitening is more intense on the female rather than on the male Filipinos" (p. 102). If men perceive lighter skin as more attractive, women may feel greater pressure to conform to these standards in order to increase their social approval, social mobility, or even opportunities such as marriage and employment where appearance plays a significant role. This gender disparity in beauty standards suggests that colonial mentality perpetuates gender inequity, with girls and women having a disproportionate expectation to conform to increase their chances for social mobility. The study emphasizes that the Filipino beauty standard is not only rooted in coloniality but is perpetuated by the poor economic conditions of many Filipinos, especially among girls and women, in the Philippines.

Appearance as Identity. Tracing the message of appearance and social mobility across generations, many of the youth (i.e., adolescent and young adult children) appeared to acknowledge the colonial beauty standards of whiter skin and nose shape, but its class implications were less direct. Kristine, Daniela, Jericho, and Francis all acknowledged some memory from their parents, peers, media, or social media that Filipinos were supposed to look a certain way. Some were reprimanded for being out in the sun or had their noses pinched when they were younger, and Kristine acknowledged that whiter skin symbolized wealth. However, the Filipino Canadian youth did not seem to navigate their understanding of colonial beauty standards as if it were linked to their social class. As Daniela thought, "people in Canada don't really judge you as much based on the colour of your skin or how much money you make." Although her generalization may not be accurate for all Canadians, her lived experience reflected less emphasis on appearance as class in social contexts.

Instead, their appearance functioned as a signifier for group affiliation. Among these youth, consumption of East Asian (e.g., Korean, Japanese) cultures through movies, TV shows, and social media demonstrated the "soft power" or influence of East Asian culture on Filipino Canadian youth. The youth and their friends aspired to look East Asian either through make up or clothing, and East Asian influencers may even promote skin whitening products. Research and other scholars explained the consumption of East Asian media among Filipinos as reflecting the similarities between the two cultures. For instance, Kwon (2007) argued that Filipinos and Koreans have similar histories of being colonized by Japan and share similar values. However, from a critical perspective, Koreans or other East Asians do not consume Filipino media nor wish to follow Filipino trends to the same extent; this relationship is unidirectional, with Filipinos looking upwards. Regardless of similar culture and histories, East Asian cultures are more preferred and dominant among Filipino communities. As Kristine articulated, Filipinos are not part of the "clean Asians" with

Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese. Furthermore, both Kristine and Francis experienced their peers wondering if they were Chinese based on their appearance, and when Francis asserted that he was Filipino, his peers still wondered if he was maybe half Chinese. Some studies have captured the preference for East Asians over other Asian communities. One study found that among Asian American adults, East Asian Americans experienced fewer microaggressions than Southeast and South Asian Americans (Oh, 2022). Furthermore, in a qualitative study, Nadal and colleagues (2011) found that Filipino Americans experienced unique microaggressions such as being excluded from the Asian American community such that they were labelled as Latino or Native American or discounting Filipinos as part of the Asian diaspora. In line with this literature, the youths' narratives suggest that being Filipino was inferior or irrelevant, perhaps influencing changes in their appearance that disaffiliate them from their Filipino identity and towards another East Asian identity.

Previous research on attractiveness and intergenerational social mobility are in line with the present study's narratives, such that more attractive individuals tend to move up in educational, occupational, and/or income attainment when compared to their parents. Gugushvili and Bulczak (2023) found that among U.S. adults, Asian adults who were rated very attractive demonstrated the highest increase in social mobility compared to other white and racialized groups. Among adults from Mexico, the lightest-skinned individuals had higher incomes and more years of education than darker-skinned individuals (Campos-Vazquez & Medina-Cortina, 2019). The narratives add to this literature by reiterating physical attractiveness among Filipino communities as a colonial legacy, and the Filipino Canadian family narrative of upward mobility is attained, in part, by conforming to colonial beauty standards.

(2) I'm/We're Not Enough

Related to the narrative to not look Filipino, another major message was that there was something lacking in them or that they were not enough. This message questioned participants' present status and created a desire or need to be more than who they were. Many family members received the message that what they had was not enough and needed more to be considered adequate. For example, Daniela's Filipino peer told her that her house was too small, and her mother responded with the importance of school "so that nobody can put you down." Even Lani herself experienced that message from one of her friends at church who told her she could be making more money doing a different career. For Cesar, his level of education was not recognized in Canada, and he worked his way from janitorial jobs to becoming an intern architect. Additionally, he initially pursued an office career to avoid being perceived as someone who did not finish their education. Previous studies have examined the immigrant achievement gap and found that generally new immigrants have higher aspirations than their second generation and native counterparts (Duong et al., 2016; Salikutluk, 2016). The narratives in the present study contextualize some immigrant aspirations as wishing to avoid the threat of being perceived as poor, which perpetuates the belief that they are not enough.

English Proficiency as Necessary to Success and Self-Worth. Filipino parents tended to experience feeling excluded or inferior due to their English abilities. Bea felt excluded from her first work experience in Canada because of her English skills, and Cesar felt that he was not as smart as his co-workers because of his imperfect English. For both Bea and Cesar, their English abilities and accents impacted their work functioning negatively. Their English was not enough, and they felt inadequate. As they attempted to adapt and succeed in Canada, they perceived and experienced proficiency in English as necessary to their success and self-worth. Even Boy worked hard to get rid of his accent when he

immigrated as a teen. Some research has supported that belief, such that immigrants who grew up within their ethnic group post-migration tended to be less proficient in their new country's language and had lower educational attainment (Danzer et al., 2022). In Canada, higher English proficiency at the beginning of immigration predicted higher incomes one to four years later (Statistics Canada, 2023b). Furthermore, a systematic review of language proficiency and mental health among immigrants found that in most studies, lower proficiency tended to co-occur with more mental health symptoms (Montemitro et al., 2021). Consistent with previous research, the narratives of some parents demonstrated that lower language proficiency may limit their occupational attainment and increase their feelings of inadequacy.

Importantly, the belief of inferiority due to poor English abilities may not necessarily originate from Canada. Bea recalled that if she spoke imperfect English in the Philippines, other Filipinos would make fun of her, so she was discouraged to even try. The significance of English in the Philippines has been argued as an instrument of American colonization by imposing English as the official language of instruction and increasing enrollment in these American-reformed schools (Tupas, 2024). American colonialists justified the use of English as a method to "take Filipinos out of the dark" (p. 286). When Filipinos inevitably failed to learn English as well as a native speaker, it was seen as inherent in their lacking genetic disposition:

> Filipinos' use of the language would always fall short of the ideal speaker of English. The racial inferiority of Filipinos was going to be 'biological' or 'physiological' in nature…For Yule (1925), for example, several physiological variables, molded by their multilingual speech, would 'hinder the Filipino in acquiring distinct enunciation' in the English language, and these would include the Filipino's 'stiffness of the jaw

> hinge, the inflexibility of his lips, and his not very agile tongue muscles' (p. 118) (Tuvas, 2022, p. 153).

Therefore, racist perceptions of lower English proficiency located the deficit as inherent to being Filipino. Additionally, as English was and continues to be the main language of instruction in the Philippines, improper English may imply that one is uneducated or unintelligent. Therefore, attitudes about English proficiency are rooted in historical policies and beliefs that are maintained through educational institutions, perceiving those who cannot speak English proficiently and without an accent as inferior.

Once parents immigrated, they continued to experience messaging that their English abilities made them inferior through the denial of their Philippines education, limited job opportunities, and how others treat them. Parents may then emphasize English language learning over their own heritage language, as evident in Jericho's experience of his parents not teaching him Tagalog because "they were too busy, or maybe there was some other reason." It is possible that they were indeed too busy, as well as not prioritizing Tagalog because they want their children to do well in school and in Canada. Previous research has shown that motivations for heritage language learning can depend on parents' experiences with their heritage language in the host country (Liang, 2018; Yilmaz, 2016). Additionally, learning a heritage language is less likely to be for practical or academic reasons (O'Rourke & Zhou, 2016), deemphasizing the importance of maintaining one's connection to Filipino culture through language.

While I focused on the relations between English proficiency and socioeconomic status, there are many ways Filipino Canadians experience the message that they are not enough. Be whiter, with a narrower nose, taller, richer, more educated, more fluent. When Lani worked the front desk at the international hotel, she represented the national imaginary of a Filipina woman – hospitable, attractive, and Westernized. The narratives demonstrated

that it is difficult to simply be and not be asked to improve towards colonial standards of what is considered better, especially within the historical and systemic contexts that entangles these standards as necessary for education, higher income, and belonging.

(3) We Are Not the Same

Closely related to the message that Filipinos were not enough, the participants also internalized that Filipinos were meaningfully different from one another, such that one is more superior than the other. All of them experienced that they were different from someone else, which led to comparisons that further entrenched group differences and justified the other's mistreatment.

I'm More Canadian. Many of the parents experienced differences based on the perceived superiority of being more Canadian or more Westernized. In the Philippines, Lani recalled being mistreated by another *balikbayan* who even threatened to sue her, knowing that she perceived him as rich and powerful, and he perceived her as poor and dependent. Even though they were both Filipino, both bought into the narrative of the West being better, which functioned to divide the two from their shared identity. This was evident in her understanding of the situation: "*Ang iniisip nila ay hindi na nila ako katulad*. [They think I'm not like them anymore.]" Similarly, when Boy was treated more poorly compared to the white man at the hotel in Philippines, he was angry and assumed it was because the hotel staff thought he was from the province due to his dark skin. He asserted his Canadian identity by asking "do you know where I'm from?" despite knowing that he should not use that to his advantage. He later did that again during his treatment at 7-11 from another Filipino, telling the worker not to mistreat other Filipinos as it was not acceptable in Canada.

I'm More Filipino. In contrast to the parents' experiences, youth described not being Canadian enough simultaneously with not being Filipino enough. On one hand, Jericho reported wanting to be white or feeling most excluded when he played hockey as a child,

echoing similar experiences of other immigrants in Canada who may experience winter sport participation as "overwhelmingly assimilative in nature" (Barrick, 2023, p. 720). On the other hand, several youth also felt excluded from their Filipino identity or perceived that they were not Filipino enough to claim it. For example, Jericho and Daniela's peers both called them "whitewashed" for not speaking Tagalog and not knowing about aspects of Filipino culture. Additionally, while Daniela was made fun of for her attempts at speaking Tagalog, Kristine was hesitant to come off as *conyo* (pretentious due to the use of Taglish). The youth also acknowledged the term "FOB," and although Jericho's peers used the term derogatorily, the stronger narrative among youth was empathy for their hardships or a wish to connect with their follow *kababayan.* Contrary to internalizing colonial mentality, most Filipino Canadian youth wished to affiliate with their Filipino identity, however, they were often perceived as not Filipino enough by more recently immigrated Filipino peers.

These experiences capture the nuanced relationships between Filipino diaspora that vary according to generations and national contexts. Intraethnic othering through labels such as "FOB" has been studied as a way of demonstrating that they have assimilated to the dominant group, that they are not like the less acculturated Asians who are subject to racist stereotypes. Among Koreans and Vietnamese Americans, Pyke and Dang (2003) articulated:

> Because coethnics of different acculturative status share physical features that mark them as members of the same racial/ethnic group, a primary mechanism for signifying their acculturative location is through the maintenance of a social geography of acculturation. Whereas ethnic distinctions are largely presumed to be racial in origin, the erection of intraethnic boundaries reconstructs ethnic distinctions along acculturative rather than racial lines. This is a task that meets constant challenge from the dominant racial ideology which ascribes internal ethnic homogeneity to Asian ethnics and does not easily acknowledge those who have assimilated… Assimilated

> and bicultural Asian Americans are required to invest great effort in constructing an identity that defies the racialized categories and derogatory assumptions of the mainstream that cast them as foreigners (p. 164).

Extending their finding to Filipinos in Canada, within-group discrimination that is part of colonial mentality may be to survive the racist narratives that they are not like the other Filipinos. As Cesar experienced, he is educated and has an office job that sets him apart from other Filipino Canadians who work the jobs that Canadians do not want. However, experiences of other parents demonstrated that intraethnic othering among Filipinos can serve different purposes. For example, Boy acculturated to the Canadian norm of not judging people based off their skin colour. When this was not his experience with other Filipinos, asserting his Canadian identity secured his self-worth that he is not like them. His assertion of acculturation to Canada demonstrated that he would not treat people the way he was treated, but in doing so positioned himself as better than them. He even did this at the hotel in the Philippines, similar to how the *balikbayan* guest asserted his foreigner status to Lani to exert his power, where there was no dominant racist narrative that all Filipinos were the same. Rather, Filipinos appear to enact intraethnic othering to avoid feelings related to inferiority. Although similar to not wanting to be affiliated with the perceived Canadian national narrative of Filipinos which may be pejorative, the present study shows that there is a wider transnational narrative of Filipino inferiority that influences intraethnic relationships.

Youth experiences showed generational differences in how intraethnic othering occurred. Pyke and Dang (2003) also captured the nuance among Asian American relationships who sometimes used “whitewashed” to gatekeep their ethnic identity from co-ethnic peers who they deemed “sell-outs” as an “adaptive response to the racial oppression of the larger society” (p. 168). It is possible that peers who more recently migrated may be imposing these labels to protect their own experiences of racial oppression and inferiority,

which may manifest as superiority for being more enculturated to Filipino culture. For the youth in the study, there appears to be a shift in dynamics compared to their parents, such that superiority is located in Filipino enculturation rather than Canadian acculturation. Research on ethnic identity development may explain this generational difference, such that adolescence may be an important period of ethnic identification for wellbeing (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). Alternatively, as many of the youth experienced, it is more acceptable to be Filipino and even a source of pride. As some youth described, there may be more examples of Filipinos partaking in their culture with pride and sharing their pride on social media. Thus, it may be adaptive and even newly acceptable to align with Filipino identity, however, the dynamics of inferiority and superiority depending on one's level of enculturation still exists among Filipino youth.

The consistent need to differentiate Filipinos into different groups perpetuates colonial mentality as it maintains that they are not the same and one group is better than the other. The study demonstrates a complex relationship between Filipinos, such that some of them attempt to enact *kapwa* as a value and see each other as *kababayan*, but these efforts are not always reciprocated. The narratives suggest that Filipinos may continue to operate on the assumption that they are inferior, a transnational and historical narrative which stems from a history of colonialism, which is then perpetuated through Filipinos replicating similar dynamics of superiority and inferiority in different contexts over time. As Boy expressed upon reflection of Filipino history:

> "Maybe when we were colonized by Spain, we wanted to sell out our own Filipinos. I think that's why we always belittle each other and put each other down so that, you know, our master would not punish us. That's how we got ahead back then. Something like that. Like 'you're a good boy now.' Then that just carried on through generations."

(4) It's Better in Canada

The message that life is better in Canada is both implicit and explicit across the narratives. There may be aspects of Canada that are indeed positive such as Bea being grateful for having the opportunity to go to school and buy a home, Lani and Danilo having the things they wanted for themselves and their kids, and less explicit colourism experienced by Boy. Bea even experienced this at a young age, when the rich white *tanod* (military men) were kind to her and gave her candy. However, the promise of upward mobility has many stipulations and consequences that may perpetuate colonial mentality across generations.

Intergenerational Indebtedness. Due to the economic devastations from the colonization of the Philippines, many parents look to the West as a land of opportunity (see David & Okazaki, 2006). When Lani and Danilo received the opportunity to apply to Canada, they felt indebted to not only the man who helped them immigrate, but also their employers. As Danilo experienced:

> For Danilo, life was certainly better in Canada if you were *masipag.* He was not the type to ask for money. He worked hard and wanted to show his boss that he was worth hiring. He was worth helping. Danilo always worked hard and never said no. He didn't want to disappoint his bosses or the person who had helped him apply to Canada.

For some Filipinos, the opportunity to live in Canada is such a privilege that they must constantly prove to themselves and others that they were worth it. Implied in this narrative again is the message that they are not enough, and by positioning and experiencing immigration to the West as a rare privilege, indebtedness manifests as working harder than others, allowing one's boundaries to be crossed, and perpetually looking to please their employers. Previous research on Filipino American immigrants found that the precarity and uncertainty of being able to stay in the U.S. may perpetuate the need to prove themselves,

such that “using the criteria for admittance, stay, and exit, the immigration policies present newcomers with an ideological view of citizenry, setting the standards against which the im/migrant must/should be accepted as a citizen” (Thomas-Brown & Campos, 2016, p. 127). The feeling of precarity may be similar in Canada as many Filipino Canadians arrive on a temporary work visa, with 1 in 10 work permits from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program issued to a Filipino (Statistics Canada, 2023c). In fact, almost four of five (78.6%) Filipino Canadians above the age of 15 were actively seeking or had employment, which made them the highest labour force compared to all other Canadian ethnic groups (Statistics Canada, 2023a). Additionally, a study of Filipino overseas foreign workers (OFWs) found that one of their main goals was establishing permanent migration to provide for their family back in the Philippines, and how they coped with migration stress included “working hard,” with one participant reporting “I did my job well to avoid being bullied at work” (Atos et al., 2022, p.3). The narratives demonstrate how Filipino Canadian parents may accept the difficulties and mistreatment in their new country due to feelings of indebtedness, which are reinforced by national policies of migration and familial responsibilities, within the context of a colonial history that has destroyed the economic infrastructure of the Philippines.

The intergenerational transmission of indebtedness to Canada is attempted by parents and other family members living in the Philippines. Within the same family, Daniela experienced her cousins tell her that they wished they were in Canada too, referring to the things she owned and her better education. Similarly, Francis and Kristine had their father tell them, “You’re so lucky to live here” that typically followed with stories of poverty in the Philippines. Both of Daniela’s parents and Cesar encouraged their children to work hard and get a higher education. In other words, indebtedness is communicated through making the sacrifices of their parents worthwhile. As Jericho articulated, “‘It’s always the dream to pursue a higher education and make more money.’ That’s why they moved here.” Kristine, in

first year engineering, experienced invalidation for her own challenges in Canada and pressure to succeed. For Daniela, she seemed confused as she did not experience her life as "better" due to living in Canada and did not care so much about making the most amount of money.

Previous research has shown that the relation between parent education and child educational attainment was mediated by parental pressure and educational expectations among 1.5 and second-generation Filipino Americans (Fishman, 2020). Additionally, in a study examining second-generation immigrants in higher education in Norway, they found that immigrants "feel the need to accomplish higher education to make up for their parents' sacrifices" (Orupabo et al., 2019, p. 930). Second-generation immigrants operated according to a dual-frame model where they are compared their context to their parents' context, which highlighted their privileged position and potential because of their parents' migration. They may be the first in their family with this opportunity or one of the first to reach higher levels of achievement with this level of familial, financial, and systemic support. The family narratives demonstrate how intergenerational indebtedness to Canada may manifest in younger generations as indebtedness to their parents' sacrifices. Although the youth may no longer express indebtedness directly to Canada like their parents do, they similarly live with and perhaps even accept the challenges of indebtedness to their parents, such as working hard, increased pressure, and feelings of guilt and invalidation.

(5) That's Just the Way We Are

It may be easier and even necessary to accept how Filipinos treat one another and react defensively or with indifference. All the parents expressed experiencing a negative interaction with several Filipinos over their lifetime, and how they made meaning of these interactions helped them cope with the frequency of mistreatment from their own communities. From internalizing within-group discrimination as just the way Filipinos are,

Filipinos can expect, prepare for, and perhaps even self-fulfill negative relationships with one another.

Crab Mentality and Betrayal Trauma. Colloquially, crab mentality can refer to Filipinos dragging each other down so that no one succeeds (see Lasquety-Reyes, 2016), and participants appear to use this term according to the colloquial definition.[38] Many parents expressed experiencing and enacting what they called "crab mentality" both in the Philippines and in Canada. Some examples in the narratives include Danilo and Lani sharing their customers with other Filipinos but being asked for all their customers; Danilo and Lani helping a new Filipino at work who then tried to outdo them; Jade being excluded and antagonized as a child for getting higher grades than some of her classmates; and *tsismis* or gossip from other Filipinos, especially in church contexts. It appears that their experiences of crab mentality have some aspect of betrayal from someone they deemed as a friend, brethren, or at least fellow *kababayan*. For instance, when Kristine's friend gossiped to her about someone else, she reflected on how that was not how brethren should treat each other, and her friend may just as easily say something negative about herself. Danilo summarizes this experience:

> Danilo felt betrayed. *Tinulungan kita mula sa puso ko pero gusto mong kunin ang lahat sa akin?* [I helped you from my heart and you want to take it all from me?] Some Filipinos are like that, they have a crab mentality.

Research and theory on betrayal trauma may partly explain crab mentality and the persistent betrayal Filipinos experience. Betrayal is defined in psychological literature as

[38] Lasquety-Reyes (2016) argues that crab mentality is a Western construct that stigmatizes actions that prioritize collective over individual success. They redefine crab mentality as a virtue grounded in collective flourishing, such that "flourishing means to flourish as a group or not at all" (p. 76) and expand on the positive connotations of crab mentality. Crab mentality is a response to someone's lack of *pakikisama* or the Filipino value of togetherness and group harmony. Discussing the different intentions for enacting crab mentality is beyond the scope of the present dissertation, and I use the term according to how the participants experienced it, which is only negatively.

"perceived violation by a partner of an implicit or explicit relationship-relevant norm" (Finkel et al., 2002). In other words, betrayal is experienced when norms, which are culturally and socially predetermined in each interaction, are violated. The interactions described within the narratives showed how many participants were expecting that the value of *kapwa* would define their relationships and be reciprocated throughout their interactions. Their expectation of this value is not unreasonable and can be assumed in Filipino relationships. As Lasquety-Reyes (2015) described *kapwa*, the "relationship is the given, it is taken for granted. It is the starting point, not something to be retrieved" (p. 157). Participants often described the other Filipinos that betrayed them as friends, family members, religious brethren, co-workers, *balikbayan*, and *kababayan*; Filipinos do not begin as strangers. Therefore, crab mentality and betrayal may feel even more devastating as a fundamental Filipino value is violated.

More recent betrayal literature has examined betrayal from a cultural perspective that supports these narratives. Cultural betrayal trauma theory (CBTT) argues that "cultural betrayal," or trauma perpetrated by someone from the same cultural group (e.g., another Filipino), violates norms of solidarity and trust that existed to protect the group from continued oppression (Gómez, 2018). Since it is from a person from within their own cultural group, trauma symptoms can co-occur with other outcomes such as internalized oppression (e.g., colonial mentality), deidentifying with their ethnic group, and a pressure to stay silent to protect the larger group identity. A growing area of literature has found that cultural betrayal trauma has worse outcomes than those who experienced trauma perpetrated by someone outside their community (Tang, 2024). This demonstrates the additional layers of significance from experiencing betrayal from someone in one's own community, such as what is described in crab mentality.

Historical origins of crab mentality are limited but may add to the understanding of how colonial mentality is transmitted over generations. Billote et al. (2021) retrace crab

mentality from Spanish colonialism: “It was a product of pride and envy, rising between Filipino-Filipino and Spaniards-Filipino, respectively… Although for the eyes of the Spanish colonizers, the Filipinos themselves wanted to be more dominant than their fellowmen” (p. 38). This was similar to what Boy hypothesized, such that crab mentality arose as a way for an individual to survive during Spanish colonialism. Lesquety-Reyes (2016) suggested that crab mentality was an American term, hence its English origins, that stigmatized Filipinos’ value of collective success that punished individual attempts at success. Regardless of its specific origin and positive versus negative connotations, crab mentality occurs in the context of survival. Whether its origins were precolonial or as a result of Spanish-American colonialism, contemporary Filipinos may continue to use crab mentality as a way of optimizing their chance for success. Once again, the transmission of colonial mentality, in this example, more specifically crab mentality and betrayal, stems from historical and systemic challenges that created perpetual economic precarity that positions Filipinos against one another.

Coping with Betrayal through Normalization. Another way to understand the transmission of colonial mentality is by examining how participants cope with crab mentality or betrayal. The CBTT framework suggests that “intracultural pressure” may foster a culture of silence among victims of cultural betrayal to protect the broader group identity from further oppression. For instance, if Lani were to report the challenges she faced with another Filipino employee to her boss, she would risk exposing the broader Filipino identity to scrutiny from outside the group. This silence can, in turn, lead to internalized oppression or shame. Additionally, Tang (2024) summarized that some individuals may suppress their feelings in response to betrayal because acknowledging them could threaten their relationship with the perpetrator, who may hold a position of power or be of critical importance (e.g., parents, employers). Alternatively, the emotional pain might be too intense to process, leading

to forgetting or overlooking the betrayal. Some may also cope by internalizing the betrayal as their own fault, which similarly leads to internalized shame and efforts to appease the perpetrator in an attempt to preserve the relationship. Silence can take many forms in response to cultural betrayal.

The narratives provided that silence can take the form of normalizing cultural betrayal. There were many instances where parents and youth understood within-group discrimination, otherwise termed lateral violence, as expected within Filipino culture and relationships. “That’s how it went” for when Lani’s co-worker tried to better her; judging others based on their skin colour and wealth was part of Filipino culture for Daniela; “This was normal and natural” described Bea’s experience of being treated more poorly by Filipinos compared to white people; “This is how it’s always been and how it will always be” described Boy’s experience with a Filipino employee at the hotel; “You just went along with it and laughed” when Jade witnessed other brethren make fun of other church members; and “some people were just like that” described how Cesar accepted some Filipinos’ negative comments about himself and others. Bea even suggested that cultural betrayal was internal to Filipinos by stating, “It’s in our blood.” Normalization appeared as jokes about what Filipinos look like, acceptance of how Filipinos gossip and mistreat each other, indifference to other Filipinos, and buying into or going along with the status quo of Filipino inferiority. This normalization becomes interwoven into Filipino culture and even perceived as Filipino disposition, which hides the harm from cultural betrayal in plain sight.

Early reactions to cultural betrayal provided some insight to the process of normalization of colonial mentality, which include cultural betrayal and within-group discrimination as they involve mistreatment between Filipinos. Shame, exclusion, anger, resentment, jealousy, and inferiority are difficult emotions to sit with for a prolonged period. Most parents reported a form of cultural betrayal at a young age, and some described a shift

in their thinking over time, suggesting a necessary adaptation to the persistent mistreatment from other Filipinos. For instance, Boy's early betrayal experience from his cousin who introduced him as inferior for his darker skin and being from the countryside was painful. His experience at the hotel in the Philippines had him questioning his positive expectations of other Filipinos, such that "Maybe he needs to be less friendly, maybe he expected too much." He later described hardening his appearance, stating "Look at me. It looks like I'm pissed off all the time." Appearing unapproachable matched his expectations that people would mistreat him. For Bea, she had accepted that Filipinos did not treat her as kindly since she was young and receiving candy from the white *tanod*, so she was already apathetic to the patterns of Filipino relationships. For Family C, they were socialized to laugh at others for their appearance. By putting others down, they positioned themselves as superior. Similarly, when Daniela's peer implied that their house was small, her parents told her to "rise above just to tell them" by working hard and getting an education, essentially finding ways to position herself as superior. Although the youth had a range of responses to cultural betrayal, some demonstrated evidence of normalization as well. For instance, Francis joked with his Filipinos peers about getting "the Filipino" as if it were a disease and "never thought the jokes meant anything bad." When cultural betrayal is normalized, individuals can learn to prepare for it and prevent more painful emotions; apathy, acceptance, and superiority are easier to sit with than the immediate emotions following cultural betrayal.

Importantly, the normalization of aspects of colonial mentality (e.g., cultural betrayal or within-group discrimination) may be understood as adaptive for individuals who must survive within the broader historical and systemic oppressive forces that make it difficult to challenge these norms. Bea captures a sense of hopelessness when facing colonial mentality and attempting not to pass it down to her own children:

> At times, she wondered if she could really stop colonial mentality even if she didn't teach it to her own children. The root runs so deep. It's been so normal to her that she may not even recognize when she demonstrates colonial mentality to them.

Not only is it easier emotionally to be apathetic, defensive, or superior when experiencing cultural betrayal, when colonial mentality feels inevitable, it is easier to accept the system of oppression than constantly work towards changing it. For instance, Jade described that some brethren are easily *pikon* when it comes to their sense of humour that some may find offensive. She promotes going along with the jokes rather than be overly sensitive or confrontational. Lani and Danilo suggest to their daughters to receive an education so that no one can look down on them, promoting the idea that, from the lens of colonial mentality, to just be better with a good education and nice houses rather than challenge the system of oppression. Several parents have lived and survived by following the colonial practices embedded into Filipino society rather than attempting to dismantle it.

This is supported by previous scholars who have argued that internalized racial oppression may better be termed "appropriated racial oppression" to capture "an exploration of to what extent an individual believes the broader dynamics are deserved, natural, or inevitable" (Banks & Stephens, 2018, p. 97). In other words, the oppressed group learns to adapt to systemic oppression by learning to use the "tools" of the oppressor for their own survival. In the case of colonial mentality, these tools may be crab mentality, skin whitening, or the English language as each of these may increase their chances of survival within the historical and oppressive system. Cultural betrayal may also be a tool of the oppressor as it promotes division between Filipinos, prioritizing individual survival over collective resistance. While some scholars contest that the move towards using "appropriated" racial oppression may be unnecessary (David et al., 2019), there is consensus among scholars that oppressed individuals are not to be blamed for their own oppression and highlight the

historical and systemic factors that these individuals must live within using whatever tools necessary.

The narrative themes are consistent with the literature on the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Sotero's (2006) model of historical trauma argued that methods of subjugation become less overt over generations and instead be hidden within people's attitudes or overarching institutions. As I demonstrated, the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality within Filipino Canadian families is dependent upon these covert mechanisms of transmission. The covert mechanisms can be perpetuated by individuals, such as someone's sense of humour or teasing. Mechanisms can also be institutionalized, such as through the precarity of being a temporary foreign worker and accepting mistreatment and working harder than others in order to maintain financial security. It can also be societal, such as conforming to societal (i.e., colonial) standards of beauty to secure a better job. These covert transmission mechanisms for colonial mentality are consistent with the literature that describes internalized racism as insidious and therefore difficult to be aware of and interrupt continued transmission over generations (David et al., 2019).

The Intergenerational Resistance of Colonial Mentality

Narratives demonstrating the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality were incomplete without the simultaneous and constant ways that Filipino Canadians also resisted the transmission of colonial mentality. I identified several narrative themes that showed their resistance, which I present as overarching messages, and discuss how these messages were maintained and transmitted intergenerationally. Similar to the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality, these messages do not stand alone and are necessarily intertwined with one another. Together, they demonstrate how resistance can be expressed in many ways and the complexity of Filipino Canadian identity and pride across

generations. See Table 5 for an overview of narrative themes regarding the intergenerational resistance of colonial mentality.

Table 5

Narrative Themes for the Intergenerational Resistance of Colonial Mentality

Theme	Description
That's How We/They Were Raised	Parents and youth understand the contexts that shaped their own and each other's beliefs, fostering empathy, compassion, and opportunities for change.
We're in This Together	Filipinos recognize that they are connected through shared identities, communities, experiences, and histories, promoting positive interactions and support.
I am Filipino Canadian	Filipino Canadian identity is formed through acculturation and enculturation processes that reclaim aspects of their identity that was deemed inferior.
We're More than Our Stereotypes	Colonial mentality is resisted by Filipinos challenging and redefining stereotypes about Filipinos.
It's Not About Survival Anymore	Filipino family members are able to shift their priorities from survival and upward mobility to personal ambitions and family relationships.

(1) That's How We/They Were Raised

Family members identified the contexts that their other family members were raised in that may have influenced their belief systems. Some youth reflected on their parents' upbringing in the Philippines in comparison to their own upbringing in Canada. For instance, Jericho reflected on his parents' values:

> "They're not from here. They're not from here at all. Their values are different than mine because of the way that they grew up… you could say that maybe they're self-projecting because of that influence." Being under their roof, Jericho acknowledged that he was influenced by his parents' values, which were really American values.

Jericho identified that his parents' beliefs were different than his because they were brought up in the Philippines, and his description of "self-projecting" suggests how they attempt to navigate his world in Canada from their own perspective. Jericho brings his understanding of his parents further by not only contextualizing their beliefs as from the Philippines but also the historical context of American colonization in the Philippines. Contextualizing colonial mentality may promote compassion for how his parents may have communicated inferiorizing beliefs, reinterpreting their communication as his parents' attempt to help him survive the way that they have, and perhaps even how his parents' parents survived.

Parents also identified the contexts that their children were raised in that challenged their own beliefs about colonial mentality. When Jericho's mother Bea wondered whether someone was Muslim, her children would question why she was even identifying that person's ethnicity or religion. She accepted that she was still learning Canadian values and that her kids knew how to be successful in Canada since they were raised here. Similarly, for Cesar and Jade, when their kids challenged the family's sense of humour, they identified that "their kids were educated in Canadian schools and were influenced by Canadian culture… they have a different understanding of what's okay to joke about." Parents identified their children being raised in Canada as a strength and source of knowledge that they could learn from, suggesting an understanding that youth have a way of navigating Canadian culture that is different from how they were raised.

The narratives reveal effort between parents and youth to understand the contexts that shaped each other's beliefs, fostering empathy and compassion. For Filipino Canadian youth, this understanding includes recognizing that their parents' colonial mentality beliefs are not intrinsic moral failings but rather survival strategies shaped by their upbringing in a different cultural and historical context. Recent research found that young adults from immigrant families often reinterpret their parents' protective behaviors as acts of care, leading to a

greater appreciation of their parents' sacrifices (Nesteruk, 2022). Similarly, Hmong American young adults have acknowledged that acculturation stressors, such as language barriers and cultural differences, complicate communication with their parents (Juang & Meschke, 2017). By contextualizing their parents' experiences, Filipino Canadian youth externalize colonial mentality by implying some understanding of the larger societal pressures their parents faced.

Filipino Canadian youth are not only contextualizing their parents' beliefs but are actively challenging them, including beliefs related to colonial mentality. This challenge fosters a shift in both generations, where parents become more open to new values that promote adaptation in Canada. For instance, Bea recognized that her Filipino Canadian children might understand Canadian values better than she does, stating, "They must be right since they're Canadian, and she's still learning. She wanted her kids to do well in Canada, so she was open to learning new values that differed from how she was raised in the Philippines." She attempted to learn new values from her children, illustrating how resistance to colonial mentality is passed from youth to parents, thereby promoting intergenerational change. This resistance is not just confined to the present generation; it sets the stage for future generations to reject colonial mentality as well. As Kristine articulated, "'When I raise my kids, I don't have to tell them to use papaya soap on their face.' If younger generations are challenging their parents' beliefs, it may not take long to see a shift in Filipino culture." She described a broader cultural shift that could emerge as younger generations continue to challenge and transform these beliefs.

Awareness Without Action. Although they were raised with colonial mentality and were aware of certain colonial mentality beliefs (e.g., preference for white skin, Filipinos mistreating and judging one another, crab mentality), the participants demonstrated that awareness of these beliefs did not necessarily lead to enacting them. Instead, many resisted these beliefs by ignoring societal judgments or expectations, reflecting before responding to

imposed beliefs, choosing not to engage in behaviors associated with colonial mentality even when tempted, and challenging family or community norms based on stereotypes. For instance, Lani chose not to pursue a higher-paying job despite being judged by her friend for her career choices. Although Jericho laughed along when his peers called other students FOBs, he refrained from adding to the joke and instead felt empathy for those being targeted. Additionally, although Jade recognized from her mother's behavior and media representations that being dark-skinned was considered undesirable, she chose not to change her behavior and continued to enjoy swimming in the ocean. These examples illustrate that Filipinos, whether implicitly or explicitly aware of colonial mentality beliefs, do not necessarily buy into them, demonstrating an active resistance. From a common Western psychological perspective, there seems to be both cognitive and behavioral dimensions to colonial mentality, with resistance being more easily observed in the behavioral dimension.

Scholars have previously emphasized the importance of increasing the awareness of colonial mentality among Filipino individuals. The emphasis on awareness may be especially important given the automaticity of colonial mentality (David & Okazaki, 2010), and bringing unconscious biases to awareness may be one form of intervention (Atewologun et al., 2018). While strategies to target colonial mentality are only beginning to be studied (see David et al., 2022), a qualitative study examining how Filipino American adults experienced "decolonization of the mind" included increased self-awareness about how colonial mentality manifested in their lives (Decena, 2014). For example, some reported examining when they felt triggered, attractive, or shy and how that related to colonial mentality. Others reported learning about and understanding the colonial history of the Philippines and their families, contextualizing Filipino behaviour and their own family's behaviour. The narratives of the present study add to the growing body of literature that awareness, which may be thought of as a cognitive dimension of colonial mentality, is a form of resistance. The narratives also

suggest that resistance and intervention may occur through behaviour, extending the literature on how colonial mentality may be addressed at the individual level. Filipinos who can recognize their cognitive beliefs and how they were raised as separate from their behaviour may interrupt the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. This is reflected in Boy's awareness that his kids may learn from his actions:

> He hoped that he didn't pass on this behaviour to his kids. He did his best to not show or tell them anything like that, and he always corrected them if he saw any instance of treating people poorly based on where they're from.

(2) We're in This Together

The narratives demonstrated that intergenerational resistance against colonial mentality occurred through recognizing the ways Filipinos were connected through shared identities, communities, experiences, and histories. Parents and youth described how sharing a Filipino identity with someone they have never met before was enough to form the basis of a positive interaction. For instance, Liezel and Kristine both saw other Filipinos as potential connections and expected positive interactions rather than competition or expecting mistreatment. Liezel's experience reflected an intergenerational pattern, such that "she saw her father socialize openly with other Filipinos, and so she approached other Filipinos always expecting the possibility of friendship." In direct contrast to the previous message of "that's just the way we are," which brought out defensive and apathetic reactions when interacting with other Filipinos, there also exists an assumption among Filipinos that they will be received positively.

As previously stated, Filipinos do not begin as strangers, but instead are referred to as *kababayan, balikbayan,* and brethren in religious contexts. The language the participants used to refer to another Filipino continues to assume a preestablished connection with another Filipino on the sole basis of being Filipino. Their shared identity carried a common

understanding and experience that the participants recognized. For instance, in Canada, Cesar recognized that "his fellow *kababayan* were also experiencing racism, [so] they were less likely to be racist towards each other." While Cesar in this quote described racism, he also previously recognized the sacrifices that other Filipinos made in their careers, which he also did. He and Jade passed on these values to their children, such that "Kristine and Francis were both raised with a sense of *kababayan*. Filipinos shared similar experiences, such as being a minority and coming from similar cultures." The family narrative demonstrates that the mutual recognition of Filipino identity acknowledges each other's shared history and survivance that is the initial point of connection of their relationships. In other words, Filipino Canadian families continue to value *kapwa*, the shared self, that actively resists colonial mentality.

Perhaps it is through shared understanding or *kapwa* that enables Filipinos to help one another despite their own set of limited resources. Although there were instances of crab mentality among Filipinos, Family A's narrative also described instances of support. For instance, Lani and Danilo described their immigration story:

> Danilo enjoyed talking to most guests, and one *balikbayan* guest he had a friendly chat with handed him a card before leaving. "Apply here. This is legit. I'm flying back to Canada," he said. All they knew about him was that he was from the province. He didn't even know them, but this generous balikbayan extended his hand and changed their lives.

The parents emphasized how the *balikbayan* had no previous relationship with them. Throughout their family narrative, these parents experienced several negative experiences after helping another Filipino in Philippines and in Canada. However, this did not deter them from continuing to help where they could. A message that resonated between both of these parents was "not all of them were like that," referring to *balikbayan* who mistreated them.

Although they experienced crab mentality, they stayed true to their values of *kapwa* and maintained flexible in their beliefs that not all Filipinos would enact crab mentality. Previous research on psychological flexibility from an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) model showed that higher levels of colonial mentality were associated with lower levels of psychological flexibility (Estrellado et al., 2022). While research on interventions for colonial mentality is early, the narratives add how commitment to *kapwa* as a value and being flexible in their beliefs about other Filipinos are forms of resistance. Under the ACT model, *kapwa* is similar to the concept of common humanity, which is one area of intervention in which people practice relating to others through how they share common human experiences as a way of promoting psychological flexibility (Yadavaia et al., 2014).

Based on the family narratives, enacting *kapwa* is a form of resistance as it recognizes the meaning of sharing the Filipino identity. When Filipinos recognize one another, they acknowledge the shared histories and continued systemic oppression. This foundation then to support one another, forming communities of resistance formed on the basis of *kapwa.* Parents who model *kapwa* as a value to their children may then promote intergenerational resistance of colonial mentality.

(3) I am Filipino Canadian

Family members made meaning of their emerging Filipino Canadian identity through acculturation and enculturation, which reclaimed aspects of themselves deemed inferior under colonial mentality and promoted pride in Filipino identity and culture. What emerged were various forms of Filipino Canadian identity in continuous reconstruction as they continue to learn what it means to be Filipino Canadian and how to resist colonial mentality over time.

Youth reported several sources of enculturation, including social media, television shows, peers, and family members, and their response to enculturation reflected an individual

shift towards reclamation and pride. For example, Daniela noticed an increase in Filipino representation on social media compared to when she was younger; Jericho increased his interest in topics where Filipinos were excelling, such as beauty pageants and boxing; and Kristine "noticed a generational difference in how much Filipinos are proud of their culture." While research suggests that ethnic identity is a salient part of adolescent development (Fontanilla, 2022; Phinney, 2013; Wakefield & Hudley, 2007), this interest is embedded within larger societal shifts that, according to the youth narratives, have become more accepting and representative of their heritage culture compared to when they were younger. The youth also described witnessing many of their peers, Filipino and otherwise, embrace their heritage culture. At times, however, Filipino identity and pride may be less obvious, especially when youth are able to compare themselves to other racialized peers at school and online. As Francis stated,

> Other Asian countries seemed to have more pride in their ethnic identity, and they had so much to show and celebrate. Some celebrate Lunar New Year or Diwali, and some Asian cultures have famous exports like anime and pop music. "What ties me with Filipino culture is the church, but even there, it isn't like we're celebrating a Filipino holiday. It's just a church celebration." When Filipino celebrations are religious celebrations, his Filipino identity gets lost. He didn't know how to celebrate being Filipino.

Like the other youth in the study, Francis expresses a desire for Filipino identity and pride but does not know what it looks like, especially in comparison to other racialized youth who have more concrete examples of what to take pride in. Although the youth are encouraged to take pride in their ethnic identity, Francis demonstrates how Filipino culture is less articulated and even lost to religious colonization. This highlights the ongoing challenge of reclaiming Filipino identity after it has been fragmented by colonization and religious influences, leaving

youth uncertain about how to fully engage with and celebrate their heritage. Although Filipino identity and culture is less articulated, the youth describe a desire for Filipino pride and continue to search for ways to express it.

Although research comparing ethnic identities across cultures is limited, it is possible that adolescents' sense of ethnic identity is influenced by their host country's attitudes toward multiculturalism and ethnic diversity. The youth in this study suggest that Canadian attitudes towards racialized minorities may have shifted over time in comparison to when their parents were adolescents. For instance, when Boy immigrated to Canada during his teens, he described an emphasis on assimilation, losing his accent and leaning into Canadian norms and values. During the late 80s and early 90s in Canada, there may have been an emphasis on assimilation (see Lalonde & Cameron, 1993) that made it more difficult to resist colonial mentality through ethnic pride and enculturation. In other words, part of how colonial mentality is resisted over generations may reflect the larger societal changes of increased acceptance as well as easier accessibility to ethnic pride through social media. Compared to the parents in the study, youth have grown up during an era when Filipinos across the globe are able to express their Filipino pride and identity as well as be able to access these expressions of pride and enculturate to Filipino identity all online. For youth, enculturation may be understood as resistance that their parents were not able to access online or express during their own adolescence.

Among parents, acculturation to Canadian culture appeared to help them reject certain notions of colonial mentality. For instance, Bea recognized that people in Canada prefer tan skin; Boy realized that people did not treat him differently nor assumed he was of lower status because of his skin colour; and Jade and Cesar recognized that their sense of humour that made fun of how other Filipinos looked was not appropriate according to their Canadian-raised kids. Parents' narratives tended to attribute this shift to acculturation to Canadian

culture as they located the source of colonial mentality in the Philippines which is then brought over to Canada by Filipino immigrants. Similarly, they partly attributed the lack of colonial mentality in their kids as due to being raised in Canada. For parents, acculturation appears to have helped them let go of certain aspects of colonial mentality. Research on acculturation and colonial mentality has been scarce, but theoretically acculturation to Western norms might increase colonial mentality because it asks immigrants with less power to change themselves in ways that could promote internalized inferiority. Additionally, it has been argued that acculturation to the West has been occurring in the Philippines for decades through oppressive means (Rebadulla et al., 2024), and thus acculturation to the West in Canada may reiterate longstanding Western superiority and colonial mentality. As discussed in the previous section, adjustment to Canada may indeed promote colonial mentality in many ways, however, parents also appear to experience benefits that challenge their overt expressions of colonial mentality (i.e., physical characteristics and within-group discrimination). While Canada is far from perfect regarding colourism and racism, relative to parents' experiences in the Philippines and with other Filipinos, there has been enough progress by racialized and migrant communities over time, over generations, that are felt by Filipino immigrants. Therefore, Filipino parents' acculturation to Canada reflects the efforts of collective liberation among marginalized groups.

The narratives demonstrate that the enculturation and acculturation processes towards the formation of a Filipino Canadian identity may contribute to resisting colonial mentality. Youth emphasize enculturation and parents emphasize acculturation as ways they learn to accept and find pride in their Filipino identity and culture. While youth learned about Filipino culture from several sources, their parents were also a source of enculturation, and for parents, their youth were also sources of acculturation. Thus, family members may be receiving messages from one another that contribute to resisting colonial mentality.

Additionally, acculturation and enculturation processes that contribute to resisting colonial mentality are situated within the collective historical and global efforts of marginalized groups who have paved the way for colonial mentality to be challenged by Canadian culture, fostering pride in their ethnic-racial identity, and offering several role models of Filipino pride, especially through online representation. Resistance of colonial mentality, therefore, is necessarily intergenerational, for its possibility has been forged by previous efforts towards collective liberation.

(4) We're More than Our Stereotypes

Participants described resisting colonial mentality by challenging and reclaiming stereotypes through various means. For example, both Bea and Cesar described being perceived as unintelligent or *bobo* because of their English skills at work. Bea later expressed challenging this stereotype, that just because her English was imperfect did not mean she was *bobo* and "there was only so much she could do." Bea resisted colonial mentality by challenging the stereotype and acceptance that she could not change how people perceived her. For Cesar, he persisted in his career as an architect, refusing to take the jobs that he perceived Canadians did not want. Similarly, Liezel's decision to attend film school appeared to occur in silence, without consultation with her parents. These careers do not fit the stereotype of Filipinos who tend to go into healthcare, trades, and food service, actively resisting systems and policies in place over time that have positioned Filipinos to take on specific types of jobs (Choy, 2003; Parreñas, 2015). Filipinos across the world have already begun to defy stereotypes by excelling in sports and beauty pageants, becoming role models for youth like Jericho who look to them to reject Filipino stereotypes. By challenging and reclaiming stereotypes, finding exceptional role models, and practicing acceptance of things that they cannot change, stereotypes lose their power over Filipino Canadians.

While the family narratives described different ways the impact of stereotypes were evaded, their individual efforts have lasting societal impacts for future generations. When Liezel chose to go to film school, her attendance is an active form of resistance both for herself and others that may come after her. Similarly, Cesar described that his decision to continue his architectural career: “I want to give an example to my kids as well, that their dad didn’t give up.” Both parents and youth alike described challenging stereotypes in some way, and each time they deviate from this national myth, they create space for Filipinos to exist beyond what history and oppressive systems intended for them to be.

(5) It’s Not About Survival Anymore

As highlighted in the previous section on the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality, many parents’ actions that aligned with colonial mentality may be re-understood as methods to improve their socioeconomic status within the context of postcolonial Philippines. However, once parents established some level of financial stability for their family, their priorities shifted from safety, security, and survival to family, relationships, and personal ambitions. For example, Lani joked that she hardly had enough room for her designer shoes and bags, like the ones she saw her classmates had in the Philippines, but she would rather spend time with her family and chose to make less money. For Bea, she commented that she no longer engaged in skin whitening in part because she was already settled with a husband, a house, and kids. In contrast to her parents, Daniela perceived that the colour of one’s skin or how much money a person made did not really matter in Canada. There was also generally less competition between Filipino youth in Canada, such that they were openly willing to befriend newly immigrated Filipinos and were unlikely to describe instances where they enacted crab mentality. Further, while parents described indebtedness to Canada for improving their lives, youth saw their Canadian lifestyle as normal and did not share the same feelings towards Canada. In other words, youth

generally described less colonial mentality in their narratives, at least not as directly as their parents did, which may partly reflect how colonial mentality is no longer as adaptive for them in their new position in Canada following upward mobility.

These narratives emphasize how colonial mentality, in part, has functioned to ensure the survival of individuals and their family over others, effectively destroying community relationships. When these families are provided with opportunities and resources, colonial mentality becomes unnecessary in terms of how it functions as an adaptation. Therefore, resisting colonial mentality becomes easier when parents and broader societal systems provide the safety and security for their children to make choices not motivated by survival. When this occurs, resistance increases across generations.

Implications for Colonial Mentality as Psychological Construct

Analysis of the major themes or messages within the narratives that transmit or resist colonial mentality intergenerationally provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of colonial mentality as a psychological construct. I extrapolate, generalize, and abstract these themes from the three family narratives and other scholarly works to consider the nature of colonial mentality, which may further our understanding of how to prevent, intervene, and dismantle systemic forms of oppression.

The Dialectics of Colonial Mentality

There is a tension between several of the messages identified that transmit and resist colonial mentality. For example, Filipinos may value *kapwa* yet still enact crab mentality. This may reflect the experience of colonial mentality, such that there is a continuous internal conflict that distorts and confuses one's relationship with their identities, cultures, and communities. Some of the participants voiced this conflict. For example, Daniela stated, "I don't know what to do" when contemplating her relationship with Filipino culture. Many of the youth also described wanting to affiliate more with their Filipino identity, but their

Filipino peers who more recently immigrated from the Philippines would tell them they were not Filipino enough in some form. Additionally, Boy demonstrated through his actions a desire to have pleasant interactions with other Filipinos, yet also presented with a hardened face where he looks "pissed off all the time." Jade laughs at the jokes made at the expense of other Filipinos, yet also stresses the value of getting along with others because they are brethren. Part of the experience of colonial mentality includes the multiple internal and external factors that pull Filipinos in several directions about how they might relate to their Filipino identity.

One interpretation of these internal tensions is that Filipinos experience colonial mentality through dialectics. Oversimplified, *dialectics* in psychology emphasizes that two seemingly opposing ideas or beliefs can be true at the same time. For instance, the dialectical principles of dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) include that a version of truth exists through multiple different perspectives, and these perspectives change, which requires that the truth must also change (Feigenbaum, 2008). Through a dialectical perspective, Filipino Canadians may use dialectics to navigate their place within historical and contemporary systems of oppression.

Colonial Mentality as a Context for Privilege and Oppression. Colonial mentality has traditionally been studied as a form of internalized oppression, but what is less explicit in the literature is how this oppression simultaneously produces privilege. Colonialism inherently creates hierarchies that define who has power and who is subordinated, and colonial mentality reflects this. The narratives in this study demonstrate how characteristics such as lighter skin, a sharper nose, being taller, speaking accent-free English, or having financial resources come with privileges that allow certain individuals to navigate the world with greater ease and less violence than those without these characteristics. As scholars have argued, proximity to whiteness, which shares features with colonial mentality, may lead to

increased social status, financial opportunities, and evading further violence (Garay et al., 2023). Thus, engaging in colonial mentality may be understood as a form of survival.

Given that colonial mentality is tied to survival, its continued transmission becomes more understandable. For many Filipinos, adopting colonial mentality was a means to escape intergenerational poverty and other forms of colonial violence. The Filipino Canadian families in the narratives frequently articulated their experiences of surviving poverty in postcolonial Philippines while also expressing a strong desire to maintain their Filipino identity and culture. Escaping colonial violence, such as poverty or within-group discrimination, often requires aligning with colonial mentality, which contradicts the desire to continue their Filipino identity and culture. Therefore, a dialectic of colonial mentality is that Filipinos must navigate the tension between survival and cultural identity in colonial spaces, often accepting opposing truths as necessary for their individual and collective survival. Importantly, I do not suggest that Filipinos *should* enact colonial mentality for individual survival over collective oppression, but rather examining their actions with compassion for when they do use colonial mentality within the context of historical and systemic oppression.

The dialectic is evident in Boy's wish for his children: "At least his kids were raised in Canada. They studied here, spoke fluent English, and were friends with other Filipinos who were raised in Canada. He didn't want to a raise *coconuts*." Here Boy describes how his children may avoid colonial violence such as poverty and within-group discrimination by engaging with Canadians and Canadian culture, yet still desires to instill Filipino values, not coconuts, who are white on the inside and brown on the outside. Furthermore, women like Lani and Bea conformed to colonial beauty standards to improve their job prospects or marriage opportunities, which demonstrated that aligning with these ideals provided tangible benefits in a system shaped by colonialism. In other words, while adopting colonial standards afforded them survival and social mobility, it simultaneously reinforced the colonial system

that devalues their Filipino identity. Bea expressed gratitude for the opportunities that migration to Canada provided, such as access to education and home ownership, yet this gratitude may be intertwined with feelings of indebtedness to a country that still valued her more when she conformed to colonial ideals such as speaking perfect English. Even after migrating to Canada, the narratives demonstrate how the precarity and pressures of survival persist across generations. Lani, Danilo, and Cesar urged their children to work hard and pursue education, emphasizing that they will only be enough once they achieve more, while Kristine, as a first-year engineering student, felt the weight of this expectation. These examples further highlight the dialectic of colonial mentality as both a tool for survival and also a source of ongoing pressure and oppression. On one hand, colonial mentality enabled previous generations to navigate economic hardship and secure a better life. On the other hand, it perpetuates feelings of not being enough and not having enough, which may deepen internalized inferiority among Filipino Canadians. By conforming to colonial ideals for survival, they inadvertently reinforce the same systems that maintain their oppression, demonstrating the complex and intergenerational nature of colonial mentality as a dialectic of survival and oppression.

Privilege Within Oppression: Intersectionality and Colonial Mentality. Not only does colonial mentality establish which groups have more power, it also creates complex intersections of privilege and oppression within the Filipino community. Filipinos can simultaneously have characteristics of privilege and oppression from the lens of colonial mentality. For example, Lani was called *pandak* and *pango* but identified that she was not *maitim*. Similarly, Boy is from the West but still experienced colourism in the Philippines. This co-occurrence is similar to intersectionality in which multiple social identities intersect to produce unique forms of inequity (Harari & Lee, 2021). However, I emphasize that privilege in the context of colonial mentality exists because of historical oppression. Instead

of viewing intersectionality as a combination of an individual's privilege and oppression, it may be more accurate to view intersectionality as privilege existing *within* a framework of collective oppression. Even when individual Filipinos benefit from colonial mentality, their privilege comes at the expense of their broader group identity. Following earlier examples, when Lani's family teased her about her flat nose, she acknowledged her nose was not the ideal but comforted herself by noting that she was not *maitim* in contrast to her siblings. Similarly, when Boy returned to the Philippines, he experienced colorism and lateral violence from a hotel worker, yet he asserted his privilege by saying, "Do you know where I'm from?" In this way, privilege appears to be exchanged for collective oppression. A Filipino individual may enjoy certain privileges, but those privileges are rooted in systems that perpetuate the oppression of their social identity, an identity they themselves belong to.

Transmission and Resistance as Parallel Processes. What follows from understanding colonial mentality as privilege and oppression, and individual privilege within collective oppression, is that the transmission of colonial mentality can co-occur with resisting it. Several of the participants described having attitudes that reflected colonial mentality simultaneously with Filipino pride, desires for enculturation, and critical consciousness. For example, Jade and Cesar instill traditional Filipino values in their children through behaviours such as *mano po* and using *opo* and emphasizing good relations with other Filipino brethren, yet their sense of humour at the expense of other Filipinos is shared among their children. Their son Francis makes jokes with his friends about being Filipino yet also challenges his parents' sense of humour; at the same time, Francis expressed a desire for enculturation and more concrete examples of Filipino pride through celebration. Similarly, Lani deciding not to work overtime to spend more time with her family demonstrates resistance yet still transmits to Daniela the importance of education and upward mobility. Further, Boy and his son Jericho both reflected on the influence of history of Filipino culture,

showing ideas of critical consciousness, yet Boy continued to have challenges not using his Western privilege against other Filipinos. These examples show another dialectic of colonial mentality, such that a person can have both colonial and anti-colonial attitudes, as well as the simultaneous transmission and resistance of colonial mentality intergenerationally.

Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioural. Part of how colonial mentality may simultaneously be transmitted and resisted is that the cognitive, affective, and behavioural manifestations of colonial mentality may be in tension with one another. Jade, for instance, shared that she perceived others as "sore losers" in a way that she seemed annoyed by, yet "regardless of how she felt, it wasn't right to leave her relationships with brethren unrepaired." Her cognitions and emotions about those who were easily *pikon* were in tension with how she may have behaved, which promoted positive Filipino relationships. Conversely, Boy has beliefs that reject colourism, racism, and a developing critical consciousness that conflict with his behaviour towards other Filipinos. He also reported being angry with himself and feeling guilty whenever he practiced his power over other Filipinos. He also described engaging in *tsismis* yet feeling bad after. He appears to have cognitions that oppose colonial mentality, which are in tension with his behaviours. This dialectic may then produce emotions of guilt and anger. These examples illustrate how cognitions, emotions, and behaviors may oppose one another by transmitting or resisting colonial mentality. It also shows how individuals do not navigate colonial mentality in a vacuum, but rather how colonial mentality exists around them and before them. Filipino individuals must navigate their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to colonial mentality while in constant negotiation with the collective group's oppression. Reiterating that colonial mentality is tied to personal survival, these dialectics demonstrate how Filipinos navigate personal survival and collective liberation simultaneously.

Emerging Ideas in Colonial Mentality Development

To date, there continues to be little research on the development of colonial mentality. The narratives begin to highlight emerging ideas about how colonial mentality may develop among Filipino Canadian youth and parents. Importantly, the parents were all born in the Philippines and immigrated at a later age, and each family had at least one adolescent born in Canada at the time the data was collected. This highlights the importance of context in the development of colonial mentality, as it is highly dependent on surrounding conditions as already evident within the three family narratives and 12 participants.

Although the development of colonial mentality is highly dependent on one's context, there is some consistency during childhood. Many participants, regardless of where they were born, reported memories of being told what they looked like during childhood. Lani reported being told she was *pango* compared to her siblings; Boy was told he was dark by his cousins; Bea was called *negrita* compared to her siblings, but she was lighter skinned when she went to the farmlands; and Jericho and Johnny were told that their skin colour resembled that of one of their parents. During childhood, family members usually commented on how they looked in comparison to other members of the family. How children internalized these comments depended on additional information. For example, while both Jericho and Johnny received comments about their skin, Johnny understood it neutrally, whereas Jericho received comments that he was getting "so dark" during the summer. During the parents' childhood, they received much clearer messages that being *maitim, pango,* or *pandak* were negative. Lani, for instance, was directly made fun of at school for how she looked, and Boy felt that his cousin was ashamed of him for being from the province, which people presumed because he was darker skinned. Physical appearance appears to be something people notice about themselves and others, starting in childhood, which lead to comparisons about how they are similar and different, and their interpretation of these differences depend on additional

influences. This is supported by previous research which found that children can categorize racial groups during infancy, but the meaning of these differences are influenced by people and the larger society (see Winkler, 2009). These early observations suggest that colonial mentality may begin to develop during childhood.

During adolescence, many of the youth participants described the influence of social media on their colonial mentality development. For example, Daniela described the popularity of the East Asian "aesthetic" online and noticing the increase in Filipino creators on TikTok who took pride in their culture. Similarly, Kristine learned about the concept of "clean Asians" in which Filipinos were not apart of online. Kristine also learned about how other Filipinos perceived each other on TikTok, and Jericho similarly described how social media was a "double edged sword" in how Filipinos would promote or deter Filipino relationships. These examples demonstrate Filipino Canadian adolescents may develop characteristics of within-group discrimination, cultural inferiority, and preference for certain physical characteristics from social media which was not around during their parents' age. In fact, most parents did not describe much about their adolescent experiences other than Boy who moved to Canada around that time, leaving a gap in understanding how adolescence in the context of the Philippines may influence colonial mentality development.

The narratives also showed new content of colonial mentality that were common among adolescents. Johnny, Jericho, and Francis all described experiences that suggested that height may lead to feelings of Filipino inferiority. While Francis was questioned about his Filipino identity for being taller, Johnny was teased for being shorter. All the boys associated being short with being Filipino, which they interpreted negatively, and Johnny and Jericho expressed a desire to be taller. Although height was a new element not previously studied in the context of colonial mentality, it appeared that the association for height and inferiority existed decades before the adolescent boys expressed these ideas growing up in Canada. Lani

was called *pandak* by her school peers as a way to bully her for being short, demonstrating how height may be an important aspect to newly consider when studying colonial mentality, especially among teens. Furthermore, several youth described the influence of East Asian cultures that were seen as more superior than being Filipino, and several Filipino youth and their peers consume East Asian media, are influenced by their beauty standards, and emulate their "aesthetics" through makeup and fashion. While developmentally appropriate to focus on one's appearance and explore their ethnic identity during adolescence, when Filipino appearance, identity, and culture is contested, shamed, and unrepresented, they may look towards other cultures for inspiration. One of the ways colonial legacies persist beyond Spanish and American colonialism into the present day is that adolescents may be more susceptible to East Asian "soft power." The new content of colonial mentality considers additional contemporary influences that reflect the changes in international influence beyond just the nations in the West.

The content and sources of colonial mentality appear to shift in saliency over time and over different contexts. Beyond the few developmental consistencies, participants lived varied lives in the Philippines, Canada, and other countries that influenced transmission and resistance of colonial mentality development. Furthermore, they had different identities and intersections of colonial privilege and oppression. It is possible that more consistencies may be found for the development of colonial mentality among Filipino individuals raised in similar contexts, share similar identities, and share similar intersections of privilege and oppression within colonial mentality.

Implications for Colonial Mentality Intervention

The study examined the intergenerational transmission and resistance of colonial mentality, which provided insights into how it may be prevented and intervened among individuals and family systems. Colonial mentality operates as intersections of individual

privilege and oppression within the context of collective oppression. It is also heavily influenced by the broader society, which has changed over time, creating layers of bidirectional proximal and distal influences of resistance and transmission over generations. Therefore, intervening colonial mentality must occur at multiple layers, focusing on change within the Filipino community and the greater contexts that they navigate.

Challenging colonial mentality is no small feat and may require different approaches. Borrowing from American Indian scholarship, historical trauma has been conceptualized as a clinical condition, life stressor, and a critical discourse (Hartmann et al., 2019), and thus approaches to "intervention" vary according to the conceptualization. As a clinical condition, a solution to colonial mentality may be specific psychological interventions. As a life stressor, colonial mentality becomes as social determinant of health, and thus supports may include programs that promote health equity and cultural revitalization. As a critical discourse, colonial mentality may be an "idiom to distress" (Hartmann et al., 2019, p. 14) that emphasizes the broad historical and systemic factors that have led to the challenges of present-day Filipinos. The narratives and themes of the present dissertation, which demonstrated how individual and family experiences of colonial mentality are embedded within interpersonal, sociopolitical, and historical contexts, suggest that multiple solutions may indeed be necessary. Being trained in clinical psychology, I suggest possibilities for individual and family-level psychological interventions focused on healing, psychoeducation, and empowerment while acknowledging that advocacy from within and outside the Filipino community is necessary for systemic change.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapies

Previous scholars have already discussed the potential for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for intervening colonial mentality. David (2013) had outlined that CBT may be used to target cognitions through automatic thoughts (e.g., light skin is better, Filipinos are

inferior) and behaviours (e.g., discriminating against less acculturated Filipinos, skin whitening). David trialed a 20-session CBT-based program for targeting colonial mentality entitled the Filipino American Decolonization Experience (FADE). The first ten sessions increased critical consciousness by having participants reflect on their relationship to their Filipino identity and culture in historical contexts, and how this may impact how they think, behave, and feel. The latter ten sessions had participants design and facilitate workshops that related personal and familial histories with Filipino and Filipino American histories. These workshops included CBT strategies such as thought challenging distorted core beliefs (e.g., Filipinos are inferior) and making a list of positive Filipino characteristics, which intervene at the cognitive level of colonial mentality. Behavioural strategies such as speaking to other Filipinos, attending Filipino social events, and reading about Filipino history and culture were also provided as homework. Preliminary data found that FADE was effective by promoting historical/contemporary connections to participant's personal experience and the group's they belonged to; increasing positive relationships with other Filipinos; increasing knowledge and empathy with other marginalized groups; and understanding how colonial mentality, colonial history, and contemporary systems impact their mental health. Group-based didactic workshops that utilize CBT strategies appear to increase the critical consciousness of Filipino participants that promote empowerment, advocacy, and collective liberation from oppression.

The narratives also demonstrated that one way to view colonial mentality as an experience is by delineating one's cognitions, emotions, and behaviours. This lends itself to CBT and other third-wave CBT modalities such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT). Although the efficacy of CBT modalities is mainly studied in Western contexts, a systemic review on CBT's outcomes in "low and middle-income countries" found that "implementation was feasible when the intervention used language, methods and providers that were culturally appropriate and acceptable to the

target population" (Verhey et al., 2020, p. 9). Thus, any interventions for colonial mentality using CBT modalities must be adapted to the Filipino Canadian cultural contexts.

The present dissertation extends the literature on intervening colonial mentality by presenting possible core beliefs that are transmitted intergenerationally, as well as how these beliefs may have been internalized. Many of the participants described how colonial mentality may be internalized as messages such as "don't look Filipino," "I'm/we're not enough," "we are not the same," "it's better in Canada," and "that's just the way we are." As these are intergenerational messages, these messages or core beliefs lend itself to be intervened either at the individual level or within a family system.

Similar strategies within CBT may be utilized to challenge these messages, which may then change how Filipino individuals feel or behave towards themselves, other Filipinos, and Filipino culture and identity. Cognitive restructuring may be possible through challenging automatic thoughts or examining patterns in thinking that lead to increased colonial mentality. For example, if a Filipino admits that other Filipinos are inferior to other East Asians and white people, then it may be useful to list characteristics about each group that they find makes them superior, then challenge each one through different examples. Behavioural interventions from a CBT perspective may include systematic desensitization, exposure, behavioural experiments, and activity scheduling. For example, if a Filipino endorses that a narrow nose is better and engages in behaviour that narrows their nose, they may experiment with decreasing the nose-narrowing behaviour (e.g., use of *sipit*) over time and observe changes in their thoughts and emotions. Alternatively, if an individual endorses within-group discrimination or cultural inferiority, they might be tasked with attending a Filipino cultural event and observe their thoughts and feelings during and after. Through bidirectional influences between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, using these interventions may decrease colonial mentality.

These more traditional CBT strategies have its time and place for intervening therapeutically for colonial mentality but may not fully address the many ways colonial mentality manifests. There appears to be an emphasis on the cognitions and behaviours, with less focus on emotions and externalizing the internalized inferiority to the societal and historical influences that have led to colonial mentality. The narratives suggest significant emotional experiences to colonial mentality, such as shame, anger, resentment, jealousy (*inggit*), inadequacy, anxiety, among other emotions that are difficult to sit with. While traditional CBT may address these feelings indirectly through shifting behaviours and thoughts, I also believe there should be space to address, experience, and understand these difficult emotions directly. Without room to process these emotions, it may be internalized instead.

In my own clinical experience, significant transformation occurs when clients are provided space to simply feel these difficult emotions rather than avoid them. As the emotions from colonial mentality are difficult, it makes sense that Filipinos do things to avoid the feeling in the moment and to avoid ever feeling that emotion in the future. For instance, when Danilo felt inadequate and jealous watching his cousins open a box full of *pasalubong*, he left the space and committed himself to ensuring that he would do what it takes to get those things too so that he and his future children would not have to feel how he felt in that moment again. If Danilo continued to live his life so rigidly that he avoided feelings of inadequacy and jealousy at all costs, I wonder what it would be like for Danilo to sit with that memory and reexperience those emotions once more. I wonder what he would say about what inferiority feels like, and if there would be space to consider that it made sense for him to feel that way at that time. Rather than run from those feelings, I wonder if he might accept them. He might recognize the ways he has lived his life escaping from these feelings of inferiority, and whether he would like to continue living his life in this way. Finally, I wonder if he might

be able to show himself compassion for feeling that way in the context of his life. In other words, I do not necessarily think the goal of colonial mentality is always to decrease feelings of inferiority when it makes sense given the context of their lives in postcolonial Philippines and Canada. Instead, the initial goal may be acceptance of the feelings of inferiority and shifting one's relationship to these feelings since they are valid under postcolonial capitalism. Acceptance and acknowledgement of the feeling of inferiority as valid creates opportunities to expose the societal and historical contexts that have led to colonial mentality, increasing critical consciousness. Importantly, the feeling of inferiority does not imply being inferior. Rather, the feeling is a reflection and indication of historical and contemporary systems of oppression.

With a focus on both acceptance and change, I propose that the philosophical roots of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) may inform intervening with colonial mentality when working directly with individuals in therapeutic contexts. ACT and DBT are both third-wave CBT modalities that share at least two key ideas that improve upon traditional CBT when addressing colonial mentality. First, acceptance is a key aspect of both modalities. Whereas ACT suggests acceptance of unwanted thoughts and feelings rather than avoidance, DBT promotes radical acceptance in which individuals attempt to accept their situation and experiences rather than change them. The narratives suggest that acceptance has been key to the intergenerational resistance of colonial mentality, such as accepting that "that's how they/we were raised" or accepting that their English may not be perfect. Filipinos may often use the phrase "*bahala na*," which can mean to accept the experience for what it is (Gripaldo, 2005), demonstrating parallels between Filipino culture and the philosophical roots of ACT and DBT. Acceptance may help individuals sit with more difficult emotions (e.g., inferiority) rather than avoid them. Often, avoidance include behaviours that actually promote colonial mentality, such as needing to

feel superior, blaming Filipino inferiority, or within-group discrimination. Acceptance allows self-compassion for themselves and other Filipinos that may make it easier to sit with and experience the difficult emotions of colonial mentality.

Importantly, acceptance does not mean that Filipino Canadians should accept their marginalization or change does not happen. In fact, another key idea shared between the philosophical roots of ACT and DBT is that they both promote change. In other words, there is a dialectic of acceptance and change as simultaneously possible. One of the ways change occurs is through the implementation of values. In ACT, committed action refers to engaging in behaviours consistent with one's values. Similarly, in DBT, values are also used to dictate how one behaves, which may be contrary to how they are thinking and feeling. In other words, for both ACT and DBT, there is an emphasis on behaviours consistent with one's values. This is particularly important for intervening with colonial mentality due to its unconscious automaticity (David & Okazaki, 2010), such that Filipinos may not always be aware of their internalized cognitions. Among Filipino Canadians with colonial mentality, some may value Filipino ideals such as *kapwa, pakikisama* (togetherness), and *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude). Family C in the study showed how the children were raised with a sense of *kababayan* or an acknowledgement that other Filipinos, especially religious brethren, are similar to them. These values had the family preserve relationships with other Filipinos, even if they felt *pikon* or disrespected. These models demonstrate that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing colonial mentality; how one chooses to act, think, or feel depends on their unique context. Ultimately, Filipino Canadians must continuously navigate the tension between individual survival and collective liberation, finding their path forward through a balance of acceptance and values-driven change.

Regardless of which cognitive behavioural model is used, as many Filipinx scholars suggest, decolonization methods, including those used in therapeutic intervention, must be

rooted in an understanding of historical and contemporary systems of oppression. Neither history alone nor psychological strategies alone are enough to intervene with colonial mentality (David, 2013; Halagao, 2010; Strobel, 1997). Colonial mentality was constructed through historical oppression, and thus a combination of individual and family-level interventions, a critical understanding of history and society, and systemic changes are necessary to combat colonial mentality in the present and in future generations.

Family Interventions for Preventing and Resisting Intergenerational Colonial Mentality

The narratives from this study suggest that the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality can be prevented and resisted through the family system. Based on the family narratives, families may resist the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality through two major ways: enculturation to Filipino culture and interrupting the function of colonial mentality within the family system.

Increasing Enculturation. Most of the youth demonstrated a desire for increased enculturation to Filipino culture, yet many parents, aside from emphasizing religion, did not consider Filipino culture to be a central part of raising their children. Although enculturation can be self-initiated (Ferguson et al., 2016), parents have more influence on their child's socialization, making enculturation a possible family-based intervention.

From a theoretical and historical perspective, increasing enculturation through increasing ethnic pride and cultural knowledge would be an important goal for resisting the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality as the construct itself arose from the destruction of precolonial Filipino cultures. One part of enculturation that would be important to cover is learning about the history of the Philippines from a critical perspective. David (2013) and other scholars have integrated Filipino history as part of the decolonization process (Desai, 2016; Strobel, 1997). Boy and Jericho already showed beginnings of intergenerational critical consciousness through relating how colonial mentality originated

from colonialism, externalizing colonial mentality rather than internalizing it. When colonial mentality is placed in historical contexts, future generations may understand the dynamics between Filipinos and be in a better position to challenge it rather than simply react to it.

Parents may also look for opportunities for their youth to increase social connections with Filipinos through multiple ways. While religious settings appeared to be consistent across the families, there are also other ways to foster Filipino relationships. For instance, Filipino cultural events or simply attending social events with many other Filipinos that are filled with Filipino food, media, and karaoke can connect youth to culture and pride (see Cristobal, 2023; Pascasio, 2021). While Jericho emphasized how Filipinos gather around celebrating the international successes of Filipinos in areas such as sports and beauty pageants, Francis desired for more concrete ways to celebrate and be proud of Filipino culture.

In contrast to how parents were raised, Filipino Canadian youth have access to online media and social media that they use as a source of enculturation. Parents might provide appropriate Filipino TV shows, movies, or music as a point of connection not only to Filipino culture but between parents and their children. In other words, parents and children may share in their experiences of consuming Filipino culture through media that foster positive parent-child relationships and cultural knowledge and pride. In the narratives, Bea showed how a certain song which was intended to promote Filipino pride was used to tease her. If it can be used to promote colonial mentality, I wonder if it may be used to promote cultural pride. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to monitor the media consumption and social media use of their youth for messages that promote colonial mentality. Many of the youth described that their media had messages of promoting skin whitening and within-group discrimination. If these messages were to arise, parents may engage in open dialogue about how youth are interpreting these messages. Of course, this requires that parents have a level of awareness

and understanding of colonial mentality, which may be why colonial mentality messaging through media and social media is especially influential for youth.

Many youth described that they desired to be able to speak their heritage language, and many described that not being able to speak their language led to recent immigrants perceiving them as less Filipino. While not being able to speak a Filipino heritage language does not make a person any less Filipino, being able to speak a heritage language may increase their connection to Filipino culture and increase their opportunities for further enculturation. For instance, they may be able to speak directly to their Filipino grandparents and aunts who live in the Philippines and may not be fluent enough in English. They may also then engage in more Filipino media such as TV shows and music. Heritage language learning is especially important given that Filipino parents may not teach it to their children for they may see English as superior. Being able to preserve the heritage language directly resists historical systems of oppression that used English as the primary language of instruction (Justice, 2009).

Interrupting the Function of Colonial Mentality in the Family System. A family systems perspective on colonial mentality would seek to understand how an individuals' colonial mentality (and resistance) would influence other family members' colonial mentality. From this perspective, the intergenerational transmission and resistance of colonial mentality may not only occur from parent to child, but child to parent as well. This may also mean that colonial mentality is maintained in the family as it may serve a function in some way, and this function may be different for each individual family member.

Family C showed how colonial mentality was expressed as their sense of humour. It functioned as a point of connection at the expense of other Filipinos. Parents both identified making fun of other Filipinos at an early age, which they transmitted to their children. However, when their children began to challenge their sense of humour, both parents were

able to reflect on how it may not be appropriate. In this way, the children interrupted the function of colonial mentality within their family. For Family A, colonial mentality was often expressed through not being enough and needing to work hard to achieve more than others who put them down. Interestingly, Daniela sought advice from her parents about what she should study in college, Liezel kept quiet, which appeared to help her move away from the family influence of colonial mentality that prioritized upward mobility. While her choice may interrupt the function of colonial mentality, Daniela's choice may maintain it if she makes a career choice rooted in the feeling of financial precarity and inferiority. For Family B, colonial mentality within the family seemed to have a different purpose for each family member. While Bea seemed to use colonial mentality to her advantage and focused on upward mobility, Boy seemed to use it to avoid the same feeling of inferiority from when he was younger. Johnny appeared almost ignorant to colonial mentality, which in itself may be a form of freedom. Lastly, Jericho seemed to be on his way to reclaiming his Filipino identity. Perhaps due to the lack of commonality among members of Family B, colonial mentality was not transmitted as strongly in their children.

Importantly, any interventions exist within the context of postcolonial Philippines and Canada. Similar to how individual family members do not exist in a vacuum and are influenced by other members of the family, the family itself exists in the context of historical oppression, contemporary systemic oppression, and the collective progress of marginalized communities. Although I suggest interventions at the individual and family level, this is not to blame Filipinos for their own internalized oppression. Rather, it is to empower them to continue resisting and surviving, as they have for centuries, while also emphasizing the need for systemic change and the dismantling of oppressive structures that perpetuate colonial mentality.

Addressing Colonial Mentality with Communities and Society

In order to empower Filipino communities to advocate for broader systemic change, it may be necessary to begin with psychoeducation about colonial mentality and the various ways it manifests. Since many youth were unaware of colonial mentality and many parents initially struggled to connect their experiences to colonial mentality, psychoeducational materials should be rooted in the narratives of fellow Filipino Canadians such as the ones presented in this study. These materials should be developed in various mediums such as workshops, presentations, articles, videos, and books to increase accessibility and promote critical consciousness. Developing posts for social media could be especially valuable for educating youth who may not yet recognize what colonial mentality is and how it might manifest. Additionally, outreach to Filipino community centers and religious groups can leverage preexisting Filipino spaces to mobilize advocacy.

With a better understanding of colonial mentality, Filipino Canadians may begin to externalize the internalized aspects of their oppression, seeing themselves as part of a larger historical and systemic context. This understanding can empower individuals to hold others accountable for when they experience discrimination, as well as foster more compassion for other Filipinos. Increased awareness may also promote Filipinos to critically examine the media they consume and create, making subtle forms of colonial mentality more visible. Over time, these individual changes in beliefs and actions can lead to meaningful shifts in the broader Filipino Canadian experience.

Some Filipino Canadians, armed with psychoeducation and critical consciousness, may choose to become active in advocacy groups, political movements, or cultural organizations that promote Filipino language, culture, and identity. These groups can galvanize Filipino communities to work toward systemic change, benefiting current and future generations. Importantly, although I have mainly discussed how Filipino individuals

and communities can advocate for systemic change, it is not their responsibility alone to dismantle the broader structures that perpetuate colonial mentality. Allyship and accountability from larger institutions are also part of systemic change.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study examined the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality among Filipino Canadian families using Indigenous storytelling or *pakikipagkuwentuhan* data collection methods from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino.* Although the study design prioritized using culturally relevant methods, it is still uncertain whether participants were completely honest in their storytelling process. Similarly, since colonial mentality is subconscious and automatic, participants may not have been completely aware of how their colonial mentality manifests. For example, several parents were initially confused about the presence of colonial mentality in the Philippines, but after a few probing questions and my own examples, they quickly caught on that what they were experiencing was an expression of colonial mentality. Related, I chose full transparency and explained colonial mentality to them if they had not heard it before. As a result, not only did my own understandings of colonial mentality influence their responses, but how each of them interpreted colonial mentality may be different from one another. In other words, I am not certain that the operational definition of colonial mentality was the same among individuals. However, in the realm of qualitative research, the moving definition of colonial mentality may reflect the nature of colonial mentality itself, such that a different understanding between individuals reflects how they lived different lives. Nonetheless, this variability in understanding may be a limitation in that some participants may not have a clear understanding of my research question and telling me their story of how they learned about colonial mentality in their lifetime.

There are a few reasons future research may choose to co-construct family narratives of intergenerational colonial mentality with a different set of families. First, if the

interpretation of colonial mentality changes in each interview, having more families participate would capture a wider scope of interpretations. It may even be useful to ask family members about their understanding of colonial mentality after the main portion of the data was collected to see how different their interpretation of colonial mentality is from one another and how this may influence their narratives. Second, the methodology leans into the biases of both the researcher and the participants. Having a different set of researchers and families would produce entirely different family narratives and themes. The three family narratives in the present dissertation are not meant to be generalized across Filipino Canadian families, and having more families may lead to new knowledge about the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. Third, the study focused on the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality and the individual stories and family narratives were written and analyzed accordingly. Although my analysis touches upon several topics, it would be interesting to write and analyze the family narratives from the lens of gender differences, the roles of mothers versus fathers, couple and sibling dynamics, colonial mentality development, critical consciousness development, and pre- and post-migration differences. From a clinical perspective, I would also be interested in analyzing the narratives for thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that were in line with or opposing colonial mentality, which may provide insights into how to intervene. Overall, the replication of this study would not necessarily be to look for similarities between this study's family narratives with other family narratives, but rather would expect differences that further enrich the understanding of colonial mentality as a psychological construct and how it is resisted and transmitted over time.

There was evidence that the process of *pakikipagkuwentuhan* was decolonizing for participants, yet I was not able to fully understand how the study and the narratives may have

influenced their understanding and relationship with colonial mentality. For instance, at the end of the *kuwentuhan* process, Jericho reflected:

> This is nice though! Getting to analyse, I guess, and really reflect on where this comes from. Yeah. It's very weird. I feel like, the next generation, I guess that would be my son, I feel like I've talked to a lot of other Filipinos my age. Yeah, we were talking about, like, if we do have children, we want to be able to teach them our culture. I feel like that's probably the main takeaway.

Jericho hints at how being able to tell his story and have a space to think about Filipino history, culture, and identity reinforced his developing ideas of wanting to teach his own children Filipino culture. Storytelling among racialized groups carries potential for decolonizing (Samuel & Ortiz, 2021), but the impact of the present dissertations' methodology on participants was not measured or recorded. While each family member approved their narrative, they provided little feedback about the narratives themselves, and their reactions to the narratives are unknown to me. Regrettably, this may be due to the time that past between data collection and providing the family with their finished narrative, such that they were less engaged at the time of reading the family narrative. Furthermore, during the *kuwentuhan* process, some told me about certain aspects of their story that they did not want written about, which I honored. However, when asking about their feedback about the narrative as a whole, individuals may have seen me as the expert and did not want to contest much of what was written. It may have also been too vulnerable to share with me what it was like to read these narratives. Future research may want to examine the impacts of storytelling among Filipino Canadians' mental health, family functioning, colonial mentality, and critical consciousness. When doing so future researchers may consider the possible obstacles I have outlined. It may be important to provide the family narrative soon after to maintain participant engagement, have their consent to be present when they read the narratives,

consider whether the reaction to the narratives should be done individually or with the whole family, and have some follow up questions to learn about the narratives' impact.

Related to storytelling as a possible intervention, I believe the literature on colonial mentality is nearly poised for the development and implementation of interventions. As David (2013) has preliminary evidence on facilitative workshops using CBT strategies, I proposed the possibility of third-wave CBT models such as ACT and DBT and the use of family interventions. Other scholars have begun to explore how psychological flexibility, an outcome of ACT, may be useful in addressing colonial mentality in clinical settings (Estrellado et al., 2022). The findings of this dissertation have shown possible internalized messages that have been transmitted over generations, as well as how Filipino Canadian families have resisted these messages over time. These may be useful background information when working with Filipinos either individually or in family contexts. I also discussed how family interventions include increasing enculturation efforts from parents, as well as conceptualizing how colonial mentality functions and how it is maintained in the family system. However, these are all theoretical and have not been evaluated, which may be the basis of future research.

Before clinical interventions may be designed and implemented for evaluation, future research and scholarship may first explore the significance of bringing colonial mentality in clinical contexts. As I have argued, colonial mentality may be used for individual or familial survival despite collective oppression. This is an important dialectic that requires further development so that Filipinos are not blamed for their internalized individual or collective oppression even though they may continue to think, feel, and behave consistently with colonial mentality at times. By moving colonial mentality into psychopathology, many questions arise: Is there a threshold for clinical levels of colonial mentality? How is it assessed, especially among teens? Can non-Filipino clinicians provide the intervention? Does

pathologizing colonial mentality even require a clinical psychology lens? Does pathologizing colonial mentality in the same way as other mental health disorders institutionalize it? By addressing colonial mentality in clinical contexts, I want to be careful and critical about the implications that may bring.

Conclusion

The present dissertation aimed to understand the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality through three family narratives. Through this process, the families also provided the narratives of intergenerational resistance. This demonstrates that colonial mentality transmission and resistance are simultaneous processes that have occurred over generations. Theoretically, colonial mentality may have been a way to survive colonial oppression. The present study provides evidence that colonial mentality appears to continue function as a strategy for survival in postcolonial Philippines in which many Filipinos continue to face poverty after colonial destruction. Some of these challenges continue to be perceived even in Canada, which may foster the intergenerational transmission of colonial mentality. However, many youth and some parents, after living in stability, appear to be able to resist and challenge colonial mentality for themselves and in their family system. When colonial mentality is viewed as a survival strategy, it exposes how some Filipinos may be equipped with more survival tools than others. For example, if a Filipino is born lighter skinned, a narrow nose, and taller, then raised in the West and speaks fluent English, they have more tools available to them to survive in postcolonial capitalism. This nuances how colonial mentality operates, as there appears to be intersections of colonial mentality characteristics. Some Filipinos are more privileged than others within the system of oppression that is colonial mentality. The dialectic many Filipinos navigate is that using their individual privilege also maintains collective oppression, demonstrating the complex tension between individual survival and collective liberation. This does not suggest that Filipinos are to blame for their individual and collective oppression, but rather sheds light on how they have navigated historical and systemic oppression for centuries. The study emphasizes the need for both individual and collective efforts to resist colonial mentality, while

simultaneously urging contemporary systems of oppression that maintain colonial mentality to be reformed and dismantled.

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