

Negotiations of female racialized youth identities: Investigating the intersectionalities of
race, gender, and sexuality
through a transnational feminist lens

by

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Abstract

This study investigated the developing identities of first generation Canadian female adolescent women. Using qualitative methodology, it seeks to illuminate the intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality in its analysis. Transnational feminist frameworks are used as theoretical lenses from which to critically examine the ways in which identity development research has been portrayed in psychology, child and youth care, and related disciplines. This analysis was used as a means to complicate objective, hierarchical models of identity development as they apply (or do not apply) to the stories of first generation Canadian women. Five women between the ages of 19-26 of Chinese, Latin American, Vietnamese and Indian decent participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, covering family background and traditions, gender role negotiation, sexuality and identity development. Findings support transnational feminist notions of multiplicity, hybridity and fluidity in identity development. They provided context and storied analysis to issues of identity development that are often silenced in traditional psychology literature. The stories of first generation Canadian women are important contributions to identity development research. They highlight the need for situated knowledges and the need for anti-racist research frameworks in psychology, child and youth care, and social science disciplines.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On writing a thesis

I wanted to start my introduction to this piece by introducing myself to you, the reader. I thought it was important that you get a sense of me, both personally and academically, as I wrote my thesis. It is my hope that in the conclusion, I will be able to reflect upon the processes and influences that have worked together in order to help me complete this piece of work. In what follows, I aim to locate myself socially, politically, and culturally in the writing of this piece. I aim to illuminate how I came to choose the topic, why I chose it, as well as what was and is happening for me in the writing process. I hope you, the reader, find this information useful and relevant in understanding where I am coming from. Throughout this thesis, I will continue to provide the reader with observations like this, with the intention of making my research as transparent as possible. This will be done using field notes, linking personal experience to research paradigms used throughout the study. This approach to writing is embedded within a qualitative approach to research, one which I hope to embody throughout my writing.

My social location

My social location has a lot to do with why I chose to address identity, as I identify myself as a first generation Canadian woman. In the broadest sense, my topic explores the identity development of first generation Canadian woman, and more specifically, the identity development of first generation racialized minority women. Where I find myself resisting the binaries of myself (white), and other (not white) is in

locating myself next to the first generation Canadian female participants in my study. I am white, and they are not, they are what policies have labeled as “visible minority” women. I recognize this binary is too simplistic, and yet I cannot dismiss it, because I understand that being white in a predominantly white society certainly means something. I know that in being who I am, I have an assumed access card to things and places that I have taken for granted growing up in North America. For example, I have never had any problems traveling across borders, I have never experienced racism due to the color of my skin or my accent, I have never been taught by an ESL instructor, I have always been able to secure employment... these are but some of the many privileges that I enjoy in this society. When I listen to the stories of my participants, there are times when our social locations relate with one another on a different plane. Where we can both acknowledge what it was like to “rebel” against our parents (though the reasons may be different), what it was like to grow up religious, and what it feels like to be part of two different worlds at the same time. It is in these moments of dialogue that I am able to work within this binary, in our negotiations/relations of similarities and differences.

As I worked through this thesis, I did my best to honor my participants’ stories, and to locate myself as an outsider and, at times, an insider within those stories. I realize the colonial implications of a white women writing on the discourses of racialized minority females. And I chose to write them into my thesis, always acknowledging that my experiences as a white, Western feminist researcher will color my work.

Originally, I was very excited to write about the experiences of non-visible first generation Canadians like myself. Once I started to review the literature, however, I realized there was not a lot on this topic, which is usually a sign that more could (and

should) be written. I approached my supervisor who then suggested, in light of where we live (Victoria, B.C.), that I look at both non-visible and visible first generation Canadians. And so I wrote my first proposal incorporating both. This turned out to be a project bigger than I was willing to take on, and it was suggested to me that I choose one or the other. Persuaded to look at contextual relevance and immigration patterns in Victoria at this time, I realized that it would be easier to work with racialized minority first generation Canadians than to recruit non-visible first generation women. And so that is how I got to where I am now, the white researcher looking in on the experiences of her visible minority, racialized participants. With this in mind, I decided to work within this dilemma, rather than against it, and this is how my thesis came to fruition.

The social and cultural contexts of immigrant minority populations in Victoria

New data from the 2001 census indicates that "... the proportion of Canada's population who were born outside the country has reached its highest level in 70 years" (Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 5). Of the 1.8 million immigrants arriving in 1991-2001, 58% came from Asia, 20% from Europe, 11% from the Caribbean, Central and South America; 8% from Africa and 3% from the United States. Immigration has been consistently on the rise since the 1950s, and immigrants now make up 18.4% of the total population in Canada. Recent research on Canada's immigration settlements reveal a trend in the decentralizing of immigrant settlements from the three major urban centers in Canada (Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver), into smaller out skirting communities (Walton-Roberts, 2004). Extreme clustering and social tension have been listed amongst the reasons why major countries such as Europe, for example, are encouraging settlement which discourages immigrant concentrations. These transitions have been made with

varying results, depending on the availability and accessibility of resources that smaller communities can offer settling immigrants. A study done in British Columbia in the smaller communities of Squamish and Kelowna revealed that immigrants settling in Squamish had higher rates of employment and wages than those in the larger and more urban Kelowna community (Walton-Roberts, 2004). As a result, smaller communities are being advised to have support systems in place that serve immigrant populations such as intercultural community associations, interpreters, employment counsellors, settlement officers and language training centers, to name a few.

In a recent analysis on population trends in Victoria, B.C., Hansen (2001, 2003) reports that immigrants for whom their additional language is English are less likely to settle in Victoria than are other recent immigrants. She believes this is due to the “...provincial capital, government, and tourism [which] dominate Victoria’s economy” (Hansen, 2001, p. 2). In other words, the industries that are presently dominant in Victoria, B.C. lend themselves better to English speakers than to foreign trade workers who may not yet speak the language. So while research continues in the area of decentering incoming immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2003; Walton-Roberts, 2004), issues of language and settlement support make immigrants who chose Victoria as a place of settlement a contextually unique population to be researched (Lee, 2006, in press).

Statistics show that Victoria has a long history of British settlement, with more than 4 in 10 people (43%) reporting an English ethnic ancestry. Three in 10 immigrants living in Victoria in 2001 arrived in Canada prior to 1961, and more than five in 10 between 1961 and 1990 (Statistics Canada, 2003). Victoria’s visible minority population

is relatively small, although its Asian population is slowly growing. In total, only 9% of Victoria's downtown population identify themselves as visible minority; the largest visible minority group being Chinese, followed by South Asians, Africans, Filipinos, Japanese, South Asians and Latin Americans (Statistics Canada, 2003). Research in communities with relatively small concentrations of visible minorities, like Victoria, become an important and relevant contribution to the literature and studies on the issues faced by immigrants (see Lee, 2006, in press).

Research objectives

The objectives of this study are (1) to document the stories on identity negotiations that acknowledge the intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality of a group of racialized minority first generation Canadians, (2) to examine identity development through the lens of transnational feminism, (3) to contribute to understandings of social activism and change in Child and Youth Care and (4), to locate transnational feminist ideologies within the field of Child and Youth Care. The following research questions were posed as catalysts for the following study. How can identity research reflect conceptualizations of transnational feminism in its analysis and application? What methodology best represents identity development research using transnational feminist frameworks? How does qualitative feminist research advance transnational feminist objectives of social activism and change? How does this knowledge translate across disciplines, and specifically, how can we apply it to the field of Child and Youth Care? Throughout the study, tensions will emerge which challenge me to engage with my own biases, assumptions and limitations within the proposed

study. Questions of representation, power, privilege, and my social, cultural, and political location will also be explored.

Unlike work that tends to write and describe the population of first generation racialized minority Canadians as either "...culturally deprived, culturally different, [or], most recently, "at risk" "(Enns, Sinacore, Ancis, & Phillips, 2004, p. 419), (see, for examples, Cooper, Baker, Polichar, & Welsh, 1993; Dion & Dion, 2001; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Prelaw, Danoff-Burg, Swenson, & Pulgiano, 2004; Trickett & Birdman, 2005), I hope to conceptualize racialized minority women's stories of identities within transnational feminist frameworks which emphasize women's cultural knowledge. The reasons for doing this are to work within frameworks that do not continue to oppress and silence women's voices, by acknowledging the roles of power and privilege in their realities; frameworks that see social change and justice as viable possibilities once we acknowledge the socially constructed, white, normative, hegemonic world in which we live.

I use the term racialized minority to refer to "...the construction of racially unequal social hierarchies characterized by dominant and subordinate social relations between groups" (Marable, 2004, p. 1). In other words, it is a term that describes the socially constructed conditions in which various ethnic populations live, and how these populations are positioned (either favorably or unfavorably) in comparison to the dominant culture in North American society. This term most accurately describes the women in my study; therefore the term "visible minority" will only be used when referring to some of the literature reviewed in this study. Borrowing from Murji and Solomos (2004), I apply "racialized minority" to mean "... the ways in which the

construction of race is shaped historically and how the usage of that idea forms a basis for exclusionary practices” (p.1). Throughout my work, I will do my best to deconstruct the binary of visible minority/minority women as well as acknowledge the stories, meanings, and interpretations of my participants as contextually located. On the one hand, I want to acknowledge that our stories are different, and on the other hand I hesitate to explain these stories as dichotomies (i.e. white vs. non-white). In doing so, I hope to work against discourses which attempt to locate racialized minority women into pre-determined socially constructed categories (i.e. visible minority vs. minority), and in doing so work to oppress them.

Guided by transnational feminist writings (Alarcon, Kaplan, & Moallem, 1999; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, 2000; Hall, 1990, 1997; Lee, 2006, in press; Lee & Lutz, 2005; Mohanty, 2003; Nonini & Ong, 1997; Ong, 1997; Waller, 2005), writings on voice (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Fine, 1988; Gilligan 1982; Minh-ha, 1991, 1997; Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995), writings on identity (Cote & Levine, 2002; Craib, 1998; Erikson, 1963, 1964; Marcia, 1966) and writings on sexuality and gendered norms and behaviors (Bollerud, Christopherson, & Frank, 1990; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Dion & Dion, 2001; Espin & Goodenow, 1993; Espin, 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Handa, 2003; Haug, 1987; Nagel, 2000), I aim to examine the developing identities of first generation racialized minority Canadian women using transnational feminist frameworks.

In acknowledging the intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality throughout the stories of first generation racialized minority Canadian women in my study, I hope to expand the literature on identity development to be inclusive of the stories of women in transnational locations. I work to complicate women’s stories within these areas of

focus, rather than attempt to make them fit into one category or unit of analysis. In doing so, I use transnational feminist frameworks to challenge discourses of cultural essentialism and “Western” conceptualizations of identity development. This allows me to look beyond dominant discourses embedded in white, normative development frameworks (e.g. Erikson, 1963, 1964; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Marcia, 1966). As such, I examine the stories of first generation Canadian racialized minority women as they are located in their social and cultural contexts.

Transnational concepts in Child and Youth Care

The contributions of this work to the field of social sciences, and to Child and Youth Care in particular, are in expanding conceptualizations of identity development frameworks to include women’s cultural knowledges. Transnational frameworks on identity development can provide the Child and Youth Care worker with situated knowledges from which to view the lived experiences of their clients, themselves, and their interacting environments within oppressive, hegemonic, normative discourses. In widening the lens from which we conceptualize ideas of gender, culture, identity, sexuality, and other dichotomies not mentioned in this study (i.e., ageism, classism, and able bodied discourses), we move one step closer towards relating to difference. In light of the complexities brought forward in modern society, conceptualizations around who we are, where we belong, and how we will find meaning and purpose in life must also shift to accommodate our meaning making in this moment, in this time and space (Bhabba, 1990; Cote & Levine, 2002; Hall, 1990; Olesen, 2003; Schwandt, 2003). This thesis is not meant to be viewed as an end, but as a means to an end. It becomes yet

another tool that can be used in working towards a much needed theoretical framework of practice, inclusive of the lived experiences of individuals outside of whiteness, hegemonic, normative culture (i.e. diversities in gender, race, sexuality, class, age, and ability). And it is not all inclusive. I made choices along the way that, although not intentional at the time, do not represent the stories of the physically disabled, the elderly, or the marginalized poor (for example). I do not want to dismiss these; however I must acknowledge that my thesis is limited in this way.

The following chapters address concepts of identity, gender, sexuality, and race using transnational feminist frameworks and interpretations. Chapter 2 presents an in-depth review of the literature available on identity development, transnational feminist research, culture, sexuality, gender and youth. Chapter 3 outlines the research process and methodology used. It begins with an explanation of the process of recruiting participants, the interview process, the methodology used, the use of stories in identity and feminist research, and the links to the theoretical framework. Chapter 4 presents the stories of the participants as they relate to the intersectionalities of gender, race, and sexuality. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study through transnational feminist conceptualizations of context, gender, sexuality, negotiating spaces, and race. And finally, Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the study, beginning with a summary, followed by a statement of contributions made to the literature reviewed and to the field of Child and Youth Care. It concludes with a discussion on the limitations and future directions of research in identity development.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following chapter provides a context from which the present study came to fruition. It begins by locating identity development research within positivist research traditions. It then examines post-modern responses to positivist research paradigms. It does this by exploring feminist literature on identity development, and by specifically focusing on transnational feminist literature which provide the definitions of culture, sexuality, gender and youth used in this study.

Past and current trends in identity literature

Much of the literature on identity development comes from the “scientific” tradition, some of the most well known coming from theorists such as Erickson (1963) and Marcia (1966). Identity development literature that is generally positioned within positivist (objective, quantifiable) research paradigms will be reviewed and problematized throughout this study (e.g. Cooper, et al., 1993; Dion & Dion, 2001; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Kroger, 2004; Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Prelaw et al., 2004; Trickett & Birdman, 2005; for a critique of this approach see Bem 1993b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Olesen, 2003; Schwandt, 2003). In response to positivist research paradigms on identity development, post-modern writings have worked to reflect the cultural and situated knowledges of women in their analysis and application (Barcinski & Kalia, 2005; Bem, 1993a, 1993b; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Espin, 1997a, 1999; Fine, 1988; Harter, 1997; Mahalingam & Leu, 2005; Olesen, 2003; Schwandt, 2003). These new developments are in contrast with research based on positivist ideologies which

continues to perpetuate scientific inquiry as something to objectively analyze and observe. Identity development examined through the lens of objective, positivist methodology deemphasizes the influences of gender, sexuality, and race, as well as the contextual and social positions of the individuals under observation.

Kroger (2004), in response to radical approaches to identity made by post-modernists, asserts that while radical positions are not widespread in the study of adolescent identity, they present a view directly in contrast of the developmental positivist approach. In other words, positivist approaches to identity development warrant the attention of entire volumes in psychological literature and textbooks (Erikson, 1963; 1964; 1974; 1975; Kroger, 1989, 2004; Ryckman, 1985), whereas seemingly radical notions of identities receive no more than a paragraph within this particular text. Although these voices have not always had a strong presence in psychology per se, self-identified feminist psychologist Sandra Bem (1993a) asks key questions in the early 1990's of the status of psychology:

Where is psychology's analysis of how power and privilege operate to maintain the status quo with respect to gender, sexuality, race or class? Where is psychology's analysis of how power functions ideologically, institutionally, situationally, interpersonally, and psychologically; how power gets into the heads of both the marginalized and the powerful alike; how subversive individuals and movements sometimes emerge to challenge the perpetuation of this power dynamic and so on and so forth? (p. 232)

It is clear that in psychology today, positivist approaches to knowledge generation are still favored and "... seen as crowning achievements of Western civilization, and in

their practices it is assumed that “truth” can transcend opinion and personal bias” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 12); whereas radical conceptualizations in identity literature still remain on the outskirts in psychology research.

Using the search terms feminism, identity and psychology, I found 467 articles were available on the combination of these subjects. Upon further scrutiny of the list, just over half were published in psychology journals (e.g. *Feminism and Psychology*, *Culture and Psychology*; *Psychology and Women's Quarterly*) to name but a few and approximately 50 of those articles were focused on counselling women, and on counselling multicultural women in particular. When I removed the term feminism and left the terms identity and psychology, 20,340 articles were found. In scrutinizing the first three pages, I found that all articles (N=60) with the exception of eight were published in psychology journals (others were published in education journals, gender and culture journals, communication journals and sociology journals). Using the search terms feminism, psychology and transnational, 28 articles were available and only three were published in psychology journals. By psychology journals, I was looking for either the word psychology in the journal title, the word science, or other references made to psychological phenomenon such as behavior, counselling and genetics. The search was conducted using the University of Victoria's database *Academic Search Elite* including the database of *PsychARTICLES* and *PsycINFO*.

While this exercise was limited in its scope and nature (I could have chosen different search terms and my criteria for psychological journals could have been tighter), it was done to illustrate the point that psychology as a discipline still has a long way to go in terms of addressing feminist issues, and in theorizing transnational and post-modern

conceptualizations of identity in particular. However, its presence is being noticed and acknowledged in feminist writings in psychology today (cf Barcinski & Kalia, 2005; Bem, 1993a, 1993b; Enns, Sinacore, Ancis & Phillips, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Gomez-Sanchez & Martin-Sevillano, 2006; Harter, 1997; Hopkins, Kahani-Hopkins, & Reicher, 2006).

In contrast, much has been written in sociology, women's studies, anthropology and cultural studies (only to name a few) on transnational feminism and post-modern discourse (cf Cote & Levine, 2002; Craib, 1998; Hall, 1990; Lather, 2001; Mohanty, 2004; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Post-modernist discourse has found a place in the area of social sciences, from which literature on identity, ethnicity, transnational feminism, culture, qualitative research, political science and philosophy has exploded (Alarcon et al., 1999; Espin & Goodenow, 1993; Espin, 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Hall, 1990, 1997; Handa, 2003; Haug, 1987; Lee, 2006, in press; Lee & Lutz, 2005; Minh-ha, 1991; Mohanty, 2003; Nagel, 2000; Nonini & Ong, 1997; Ong, 1997; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Waller, 2005). Within these transnational feminist frameworks, knowledge is socially constructed and located in the particular context and period in which it was created. It is therefore the responsibility of the researcher to also locate themselves in the texts that they create (cf Bloom, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Lather, 2001; Mohanty, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Waller, 2005). This study contributes to the literature on feminist research, identity and culture while focusing on transnational conceptualizations of identity; and in doing so positions the researcher as a part of the research process. It is hoped that this qualitative writing style will allow for explorations of not just identities and intersectionalities, but also those identities and

intersectionalities of the researcher and how I work to represent the stories that have been shared with me. In looking at literature written within the positivist psychology tradition, identity development largely understood through the developmental frameworks of Erikson (1963, 1964) and Marcia (1966) will be addressed in the following section.

Identity development: Erikson, Marcia and beyond

Erikson's (1963) stage theory of the life cycle begins at birth and continues throughout the lifespan. As with most stage theories, chronology and age of stage entrance are key in understanding human development. The period directly related to adolescence is the stage of identity vs. role confusion, which begins around 13 and continues to about 19 years of age. It is at this stage in the lifespan where the adolescent begins to develop a sense of what Erikson calls ego identity. Ego identity is described as "...a conscious sense of direction and uniqueness, derived from a variety of psychosocial experiences that are integrated by the ego- including all our previous identifications learned as a participant in a variety of groups (family, church, and peer) and all of our self images" (Ryckman, 1993, p. 13). It consists of the things that people are, the things that people want to become, the expectations of what they are supposed to become, as well as the things they do not wish to become (Erikson, 1963). According to Erikson, role confusion and identity crisis and resolution are a part of the period between childhood and adulthood.

It is in the period between childhood and adulthood when the adolescent must deal with specific problems concerning who they are and what they will become; the most important of these problems being one of occupational choice (although now dated,

as persons enter many occupational choices in a lifetime) and personal ideology (Erikson, 1964). It is also in this period where the behavior of many young people appears to be totalistic in nature, a setting of absolute boundaries on one's values, beliefs, and interpersonal relationships (Erikson, 1964). It is a time where subcultures such as cults, gangs, and grunge cultures can offer relief against the stresses of discovering an inner identity (Kroger, 1989). At this stage, successful resolution of the crisis of adolescence leads to *fidelity*, the ability to think and act in such a manner that is true to themselves and their perceptions of who they are. Therefore violence, self-destructive behaviors, and difficulty getting along with peers are often the result of this manifested resentment (Erikson, 1963, 1964).

Marcia (1966) extended Erikson's work and provided operational definitions of each of the four statuses described in Erikson's theory of identity formation in adolescence. These four statuses are *identity achievement*, *identity diffusion*, *moratorium*, and *foreclosure*. Identity Achievers were those individuals who have experienced a crisis and were now committed to an identity that was formed independently of parental expectation or desire. That is to say that Identity Achievers essentially achieved their own independent sense of identity (constructed identity). This is in contrast to Foreclosures (conferred identity), who have built an identity around parental expectation or similar authority figures (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer & Orlofsky, 1993). Identity Diffusers were those individuals who may or may not have experienced a crisis period, and had no commitment at all in relationship to occupational goals. And, finally, individuals in the Moratorium status were those participants who were in the crisis period

and were involved in struggle to make commitments. To summarize, Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer & Orlofsky (1993) state:

...identity is experienced as a core or center that gives meaning and significance to one's world. This core may be conferred (given by one's childhood caretakers) or constructed (built by oneself out of conferred elements). Those with conferred identities experience their future as the fulfillment of expectations; those who have constructed identities experience their futures as the creation of self-relevant forms. (p. 8)

Several theorists in identity research have acknowledged the limitations and sexism in both Erikson's (1963) and Marcia's (1969) writings on identity formation. They have been notably accused of writing from a Eurocentric, male, Western point of view (Cote & Levine, 2002; Craib, 1998; Gilligan, 1982; Horst, 2001). In the case of Marcia, "...the heavy conceptual investment in the four-category typology creates difficulty in establishing a model of identity formation that fully applies to all cultures or that represents all forms and manifestations of the identity stage as described by Erikson" (Cote, 1986, p. 31). In other words, the concept of achieving ego identity does not equally apply itself across cultures or even across genders. While Marcia (1993), has addressed some of the critiques put forward by other theorists in the field, he still has not gone far enough to adequately address issues of representation in both female and cross cultural identity development (Cote & Levine, 2002), particularly in today's post-modern society.

Wurgraft (1995) surveys critiques of Erikson's identity theory put forward by both feminist post-modern and historical scholars. Beginning with Betty Friedan and Kate Millett (1995), we see how these feminists sought to "...establish an area of

'androgyny' on which to construct a non-sexist culture" (p. 75). That is to say, these women were resisting the binaries of male and female, viewing these imposed differences as sexist and unjust. From here, psychologists Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan (1982) acknowledged female developmental differences and wanted to integrate them into a broader understanding of moral development and family structure. Inadvertently, however, these scholars (according to Bem (1993b)) further polarize the differences between men and women because "...the concept of androgyny reproduces-and thereby reifies-the very gender polarization that it seeks to undercut" (p. 124). It does this by assuming that femininity and masculinity (as genders) are conceptual "givens", thus implying the naturalness of heterosexuality by focusing on the masculine-feminine distinction itself rather than on class or power distinction.

Contemporary feminist scholars (cf Bem 1993a, 1993b; Lather, 2001; Lee, 2006, in press; Lee & Lutz, 2005; Mohanty, 2003) see the representation of gender differences as an instrument of social and cultural control. According to Wurgraft (1995), they argue against essentialist treatments of gender identity as these work to naturalize gender differences. This post-modern thinking fits with Bem's (1993b) original argument and expands it to explore other constructed polarities such as "...culture vs. nature, reason vs. unreason, subject vs. object, active vs. passive" (Wurgraft, 1995, p. 75). Therefore in order to deconstruct these gendered dichotomies, feminist critics focus on the tendency for feminists to define these terms as essences. "From this point of view binary notions of gender and heterosexuality are linked, not as evolutionary imperatives, but as psychosocial processes that require and imply one another" (Wurgraft, 1995, p.76). If we attempt to apply these binary notions to identity development in general, inevitably we

will find deficits in sexuality (heterosexual vs. homosexual), gender (male vs. female), class (rich vs. poor) and race (white vs. colored) from which individuals will find themselves stuck, unable to free themselves from Westernized concepts of identity achievement which position them unfavorably in these dichotomies. Females in particular will continue to be defined in relation to men, and deficits in identity development can be blamed on their cognitive or biological makeup (Espin, 1997; Handa, 2003).

Feminist critiques of positivist knowledge claims in identity development working beyond these dichotomies in psychology see identity conceptualized as identities, a plural and fluid concept from which there is no attainment of an actualized self (Barcinski & Kalia, 2005; Bem, 1993a, 1993b; Enns, Sinacore, Ancis & Phillips, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Gomez-Sanchez & Martin-Sevillano, 2006; Harter, 1997; Hopkins, Kahani-Hopkins, & Reicher, 2006). Specifically recent trends in feminist psychology have taken on the subject of political psychology which "...as a discipline focus[es] on the interrelationships that occur between political and psychological phenomena" (Gomez-Sanchez & Martin-Sevillano, 2006, p. 65). Within this analysis, classic political categories are questioned, as political psychology is called upon to look at new analyses objects and new schemes of politization in identity research. Here identity is seen as a multiple, pluralistic concept, which is positioned within hierarchical, politically defined borders. Therefore, it is not a question of whether or not you are a man or a women, it is more appropriately questions of what kind of man or woman you are (racialized, heterosexual, able bodied, wealthy, educated and so on). In this sense, identities are seen as intersecting concepts, moving in and out of positions of privilege within politically defined borders and crossings. However, it has been noted that within

this emerging discipline "... it is not enough to explore the social construction of identities and the varied ways in which they exclude or oppress: we must also consider social change" (Hopkins, Kahani-Hopkins & Reicher, 2006, p. 54). While political psychology continues to struggle with new conceptualizations and definitions of positionality, space, power, privilege and identities (national, global and local), transnational feminism speaks to some of these tensions, and grapples with these concepts and definitions in its objectives to work towards social change. For transnational feminists this is accomplished by examining women's experiences across national borders, analyzing their interdependencies, and building linkages and coalitions on a global scale (Emms, Sinacore, Ancis & Phillips, 2004).

The following section reviews literature on identity and youth, challenging Western conceptualizations of immigrant identity and racialized youth identity using transnational feminist frameworks as its tools.

Identity, youth and young adulthood

It is possible to see how identity will be perceived as problematic when it is treated as something which must be attained through a hierarchy of developmental stages, and when it is juxtaposed with seemingly pathological behaviors of immigrant youth and young adults (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Trickett & Birdman, 2005). Behaviors such as truancy and poor scholastic achievement are generally perceived as a lack of acculturation and assimilation into the dominant culture (Erikson, 1963, 1964; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Marcia, 1966; Prelaw et al, 2004; Trickett & Birdman, 2005). It is quite easy in this case to cast immigrant adolescence under a dark cloud of despair as they

continually struggle to gain acceptance into a majority culture which, in many cases, is much different from their own. When we apply such standards to identity development, becoming Westernized is seen as most desirable, while hanging on to old cultural ways is seen as most problematic (Nesdale & Mak, 2000). Under these circumstances, immigrant and racialized minority adolescents often feel as though they must choose one identity over the other (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Trickett & Birdman, 2005).

In many of the studies examined, frequent reference is made to the fact that youth assimilate with relative ease into Western culture, their capacity to learn (and desire to learn) the language and attendance in all English schools greatly facilitates this process (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Trickett & Birdman, 2005). This is particularly true for Asian immigrants who are often at the top of their classes (Qin-Hilliard, 2003). When we attempt to assess identity development in this fashion, we look for what is missing in the developmental trajectory and label this as a deficit. For many immigrants and racialized minority adolescent and youth adults, there will always be a deficit, whether it be “not white enough” or “too white”, the shuffling from identity to identity in response to the appropriate social context will likely be seen as problematic (Espin, 1997; Handa, 2002). This kind of narrowly focused assessment can give the impression that identity development in racialized minority adolescents and young adults will inevitably create barriers to higher education, poorer physical and mental health, as well as difficulty in the attainment of employable skills and abilities (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Ip, 1998; Trickett & Birdman, 2005).

According to a study by Fuligni and Hardway (2004), "...in general, adolescents from Latino and African American backgrounds appear to be less prepared to become healthy, productive, and successful adults" (p. 99). Three critical outcomes were identified and used in this study in order to determine what a healthy, productive, and successful adult would look like. They are: educational achievement, acquisition of employable skills and abilities, and physical and mental health. It is noted that these critical outcomes must be attained throughout adolescence in order for the individual in question to become a healthy, fully functioning adult (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004). Assessing the needs of immigrant and racialized adolescents with these tools paints a bleak picture in which only 40% of Latinos complete high school, as compared to 90% of white students, 34% of Latinos reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day from two or more weeks compared to 27% of white students, and out of those who complete high school, only 54% of Latinos and 50% of African Americans enter the work force (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004, for Canadian studies see also Beiser, 2003). While I can appreciate that the intention of these studies are to highlight the injustices in opportunities available to racialized and immigrant youth within American contexts. However, by framing these injustices within dominant discourses of equality, power, and position, the social construction of these ideologies are ignored, and we continue to perpetuate research that reinforces work within these oppressive structures (cf Acker, 2004; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, 2000; Lee, 2006, in press; Mohanty, 2003; Ong & Nonini, 1997).

A Canadian study done by Rummens (2003) also reinforces the "...consideration of the possible intersections of these most salient social *identities* with minority status is particularly important in revealing "multiple jeopardies" (p. 13). While Rummens

acknowledges that multiple jeopardies exist, she continues to write within traditional identity discourses which do not take into account the "... increasingly anomic social conditions and diminishing consensus regarding traditional and contemporary norms, [in that] the formation and maintenance of an adult identity can be problematic for all citizens of late modern societies" (Cote & Levine, 2002 p. 21). It is here where identity conceptualizations in transnational literature provide the 'missing link' between traditional concepts of identity development and the existence of social structures, powers and privileges which perpetuate them to exist in a particular time and space. This time and space is socially constructed and exists to both privilege and oppress those it represents. The following sections will explore transnational feminist literature, first in introducing its history and presence in today's literature, and second in its application to identity development for the purpose of this study.

An overview of transnational feminist research

Since the first international meeting of women convened by the UN in 1975, women have been working towards definitions of women's interests, and questioning the unitary category of women altogether (Brenner, 2003). In this vein, transnational feminist research refers to the interdisciplinary study of the relationships between women in diverse parts of the world (Brenner, 2003). These relationships are uneven, often unequal, and complex. They emerge from women's diverse needs and agendas in many cultures and societies (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). It is in applying this lens that "...notions of orientalism, subalternity, hybridity, diaspora...provide feminists with conceptual tools to examine a vast array of representational politics" (Grewal & Kaplan, 2000, p .6). Such

concepts will be used in the framework of my analysis to examine the representational politics of my participants.

The bulk of transnational feminist research and analysis has been done in the following three main areas: globalization, human rights, and women's development. Within these areas, internal feminist debates have emerged in identity and difference (Minh-ha, 1991, 1997), solidarity building and globalization (Acker, 2004; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, 2000; Ong, 1997), culture, race and ethnicity (Bhabba, 1983; Hall, 1990, 1997) and scattered hegemonies (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, 2000; Mohanty, 2003). While it is not my intention to critically examine each piece as it contributes to transnational feminist research, it is my intention to make known where and why this framework came into fruition, and why I feel it is a viable means from which to analyze the stories of the first generation racialized minority Canadian women. The following sections illustrate the impact of transnational feminist frameworks on definitions of identity development, culture, sexuality, gender and youth in the literature reviewed.

Transnational perspectives on identity development

Cultural essentialism (Lee, 2006, in press; Lee & Lutz, 2005; Mahalingam & Leu, 2005; Mohanty, 2003) is viewed as the attribution of behavioral causality to different ethnic cultures, seen as fixed and natural. In other words, problems of so called social exclusion as racialized minority "cultural" problems, puts the onus on those who are racialized minorities, so that it becomes a problem within the racialized culture, about the culture (Lee, 2006, in press). In doing so, we perpetuate a discourse of pathology, where youth from non-Western cultures are inevitably torn between two cultures, and in a state

of constant conflict and tension as they try to do the right thing. The only way to be successful in this context is to assimilate and adapt quickly into the dominant culture. Cultural essentialism works so that racialized minority groups remain othered, while encouraging immigrants to conform to the dominant practices, values and respective traditions of the dominant society in order to truly belong.

An interesting study done by Mahalingam and Leu (2005), found that cultural essentialism for immigrant women was experienced by creating an identity in contrast with perceived Western ideologies around issues of sexuality and sexual freedom. Therefore, an identity in which saving oneself for marriage and fulfilling commitments to family values, was seen as better than a Western identity. And so it is possible, then, to have essentialism that works both ways, as an othering of both Western and racialized minority cultural ideologies. What remains different is the positioning and status these dichotomies play out in the arena of the daily lived experiences of immigrant minority women living in North American societies (Hall, 1990, 1997).

Transnational perspectives elaborate on the ideas of cultural essentialism acknowledging that successful immigrant discourses often embrace a "...normativity based on white, heterosexual, middle and upper class, Christian cultural norms" (Lee, 2006, in press, p. 7). First generation Canadian and refugee youth are seen to be "in jeopardy" of inappropriate, incomplete or inadequate assimilation; potentially leading to poor scholastic achievement, physical and mental health, and limited occupational opportunities (cf Beiser, 2003; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Rummens, 2003). In allowing identities to be essentialized, we permit dichotomies to exist which will favor one

essential identity over another, and where power and privilege dictate what these will be (Bem, 1993a, 1993b; Bhabba, 1983, 1990; Hall, 1990, 1997).

In keeping with transnational concepts of identity, the idea that immigrants will and can only be, one or the other, is certainly problematic. Homi Bhabba (1983) views hybridity as an intervention which disrupts the process of creating an essential and united other. As Mahalingham and Leu (2005) state: "Hybrid identities challenge essentialist assumptions in a discourse of difference. They highlight the historical need to create certain categories with the specific intention of legitimizing social dominance and control" (p. 841). In other words, if there is no essential self, there can not be an essential other.

Concepts of hybridity in cultural identities

A diaspora is defined as a reference to any people or ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional ethnic homelands; being dispersed throughout other parts of the world, and the ensuing developments in their dispersal and culture (Wikipedia, 2006). When used in transnational literature, it is a means by which the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity exists; by a conception of identity which lives with and through difference, by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference (Hall, 1997). This analysis, along with the perspective of intersectionalities allows us to look beyond the notion of pure identities, and helps us to understand the uniqueness of immigrant and racialized identities that are "...stratified by ethnicity, class, and gender and specific conditions of migration" (Mahalingham & Leu, p. 842).

The decentering of the self is then seen as a symptom of broader social change, and not as a personal pathology. In this view, even Western conceptions of identity are decentralized and no longer provide a fixed, coherent structure to anchor one's identity around. Post-modern framings of identity and citizenship now view people as possessing plural identities that shift in relation to the changing social contexts around them (Cote & Levine, 2002, Craib, 1998; Lee, 2006, in press; Minh-ha, 1997).

As we examine the identity development of first generation racialized minority women, reconceptualizing developing identities allows for an examination of themes and stories in the absence of a pathologized discourse. Examining identities in which hybridity is permitted allows for "...a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Bhabba, 1990, p. 210). To summarize, transnational feminist frameworks on identity work in opposition to essentialist notions of identity development and seek to explain the intersectionalities of gender, race, and sexuality. These are interpreted as hybrid notions that shift and respond to the changing social contexts around them by decentering ideologies of self and other. Through complicating notions of identity, and identity borders, they also work to advance social change in creating possibilities for transnational interactions that are linked to coalition building and working together in the global arena.

Transnational definitions of culture, sexuality, gender and youth

In transnational writings, the concepts of culture, identity, sexual identity and gender enmesh and intertwine, so that conceptual definitions may be difficult to follow. Hall (1990) defines cultural identity as "...identities [which] are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*" (emphasis in original, p. 226). Here he is arguing for the contextual elements of identities which are paramount in understanding racism, prejudice and segregation. We identify someone in comparison to someone else, a general ranking of top to bottom, lesser to more, worse to better (Hall, 1990). Identities explored in this fashion are able to move, and are politically located in time and space. It also means that within cultural boundaries, races are positioned differently amongst themselves. English Canadians are different from Irish Canadians, and their positions and identities in society are both ranked the same and different in this respect, depending on the cultural, social, and political contexts.

Young adults defined within dominant discourses of Western ideology are generally defined in relation to heterosexual, working class, white male models (Bem, 1993a, 1993b; Lee, 2006, in press). Female young adults are also defined according to a girl culture that is equally heterosexist and limiting in its nature (Lee, 2006, in press). Merging girls into one category, while researchers are attempting to understand conceptions of female and femininity, appears to perpetuate normative definitions of female identity. It is worth noting, however, that this ideology is not only perpetuated in some of the research on girls (cf Gilligan, 1982), but also in media, films, music and other aspects of socialization which impact and shape girl culture (Handa, 2003; Lee,

2006, in press). This makes it more difficult, then, for women to resist the dominant heterosexist representations that engulf them (Bem 1993a, 1993b; Lee, 2006, in press). In exploring transnational definitions of identity, I hope to acknowledge the essentialism of women, and in doing so, examine how the existence of these categories shape the stories of the women in my study.

Sexual identity in research on racialized minority women has been conceptualized by definitions of what is right and wrong, what is tradition and how this is translated in clothing, behavior and appearance. Espin (1999) writes:

The study of women's experiences reveals a variety of sexual and gender expectations across cultures. These cultural constructs inextricably inform the expression of female sexuality. Cultural traditions, colonial and other forms of social oppression, national identity, and the vicissitudes of the historical process inform the development and perception of female sexuality (p. 124).

Here sexuality is located in its context, and is explored in relation to its social positioning within cultures and society. This definition of sexuality embraces multiple conceptions of sexuality without pathologizing their discourse. The intention of the proposed study is to give voice to the desires and identities women hold in relation to their respective cultures, and the culture of the host society.

In a study done by Qin-Hillard (2003), she argues that young women who are pressured to stay true to their familial values are more likely to achieve a higher education, as a result of doing most of their activities and socializing inside the home. This can be seen as something positive as it can in turn limit access to social functions, violence, and toxic environments. On the other hand, these women may also in turn be

motivated to gain access to education quickly as a way of escaping the excessive supervision they are experiencing (Qin-Hillard, 2003). Female racialized minority youth are faced with a different acculturation experience than males. According to the studies reviewed, the honor of the family resides in the belief that their daughters are virgins, self-controlled, and uninterested in pursuing sex (Dion & Dion, 2001; Espin & Goodenow, 1993; Espin, 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Handa, 2003). These studies argue that immigrant females see education as a way out of having to play the role of the virtuous daughter, and hope to empower themselves in this way. This experience of becoming 'Canadianized' can be seen as problematic for women whose parents continue to resist values and ideas of the dominant culture. These women, therefore, are sometimes portrayed as struggling, conflicted, and unsuccessful Canadians (Dion & Dion, 2001; Handa, 2003). The following section will explore literature on female identity and gendered experiences and behaviors from both a Western and transnational feminist perspective.

The female identity: Sexuality and gendered experiences and behaviors

"Ethnicity and sexuality are strained, but not strange bedfellows" (Nagel, 2000, p. 113). The experience of being ethnic and female is tied to sexuality and gendered experiences. It seems as though sexuality in the immigrant female is defined through a series of do's and do not's: do respect your culture's values and messages around sexuality and gendered norms, and do not listen to the Western culture's permissive messages around sexuality and acceptable female behavior. While this experience is likely universal amongst females (whether ethnic or not), what is different are the roles

that ethnicity and culture play in the lives of racialized minority women. In other words, it can be argued that some non-Western cultural norms are simply not compatible with the norms and values of Western culture. What is missing here is an analysis of the very influences that power and privilege play in informing our Western female culture (Lee, 2006, in press).

It has been said that appropriate enactments of heterosexuality and morality are the most regulated and enforced norms experienced by migrant women (Espin, 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Fine, 1988; Handa, 2003; Lippa & Tan, 2001; Nagel, 2000; Okazaki, 2002). “Though all immigrant (adolescents) face the problem of acculturation, the pressures on males and females are different (...). While (usually) males are encouraged to acculturate rather quickly, females are more frequently expected by their families to maintain traditional roles and virtues” (Espin & Goodenow, 1993, p. 177). And so even though females are encouraged to access education, their experience of acculturation is limited in this way. As such families are carefully working not to expose their daughters to outside influences that may hinder educational pursuits (Qin-Hillard, 2003). This seems to perpetuate a torn between two cultures mentality. A racialized minority woman therefore must be both the culturally appropriate figure in the family, as well as the other slightly more permissive figure at school and with peers (Handa, 2003). Some studies suggest that sexual freedom is seen as an indicator for successful adaptation for girls (Espin, 1999; Lee, 2006, in press). Problems and pathologies quickly arise when families become aware of the dual roles being played out and are quick to disapprove; as seems to be the case in many traditional Asian and Latino families (Dion & Dion, 2001; Espin, 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Lippa & Tan, 2001; Okazaki, 2002). Women and adolescents in these

situations can be portrayed as struggling, confused, depressed, and forced to choose between family and the privileges of belonging to Western culture (Dion & Dion, 2001; Lippa & Tan, 2001; Okazaki, 2002).

Family values which emphasize obedience, obligation, and support often come into direct conflict with the more individualistic values of independence, choice, and individual rights. In other words, first generation racialized minority Canadian adolescents growing up in familial households are likely to experience discomfort and tension in the areas of career, dating, sex, and marital choices (Cooper et al, 1993; Espin, 1999). Other studies examine the rigidity in gender roles, paying particular attention to the struggle female youth experience in negotiating their culture and the culture of the host country (Cooper et al, 1993; Handa, 2003) This seems inevitable given that identity development as documented in Western culture is primarily based on white normative cultural and value systems (Lee, 2006, in press). When we examine female youth identity under this lens, we can only see where girls are lacking, struggling and have not yet attained their status in Western society.

Gendered norms and behaviors seem to be less stringently enforced when not tied to the sexuality of immigrant females. Girls are often encouraged by their parents to pursue a higher education, seen as helping the family “make it” in Western society (Qin-Hilliard, 2003). Although many immigrant and minority females may complain of the burden of caring for their younger siblings (Espin & Goodenow, 1993), they are at the same time relieved of the perceived burden of having to marry young in their country of origin. For some girls, entry into the new host country presents itself with new opportunities and adventure. The many studies aforementioned present a context in which

immigrant females experience identity. While Espin (1997a, 1997b, 1999) does extensive work on this very topic, she does not clearly identify a framework from which identity is being constructed or understood, leaving the reader to assume that we are exploring identity as it is conceptualized within the ideologies of privilege and power (Erikson, 1963, 1964; Marcia, 1966). Although she does begin to critique the utility of Erikson's model as it applies (does not apply) to women's identity, and acknowledges, though not thoroughly, the idea of developing identities in contexts, women's stories are told and understood as struggles in balancing cultural identities and ties, thus continually putting women in a position to make decisions between cultures. Without a critical look at where this is manifesting itself (i.e. in the very definitions of identity, culture and gender), it seems to me we will perpetuate the same stories over and over again without any kind of forward movement towards a healthier sense of self as female, young adult, first generation Canadians.

Using normative, dominant discourses such as sameness and continuity (Erikson, 1963) to understand the racialized female minority adolescent's experience of identity development can perpetuate a deficit discourse around success, health, and education. This is particularly the case when it does not take into account the underlying socially constructed ideologies under which it was created (Lee, 2006, in press; Spencer, Swanson & Cunningham, 1991). This portrays inevitable negative outcomes for women trying to live up to a standard that should not apply to them in the same way that we are made to believe it applies to women in Western cultures. The contribution I hope I make in expanding the literature on transnational feminism, psychology and social sciences, is one which highlights identities as fluid, multiple concepts, politically positioned within

our society. It is in applying the following analysis to my work that I enable myself to work towards social change within transnational feminist research. In learning to relate to difference, I learn to relate cross culturally and transnationally, a learning that is necessary in order to assist research and researchers to build coalitions and relationships across borders.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, I will explain the research process for this study. I will begin by outlining the overall methodology for the research, and a brief explanation of its link to the framework of analysis. I will then address why I chose the methodology that I did, what makes it the most appropriate, as well as how it works to reveal some of my biases and assumptions as a researcher. I also outline the ways in which I approached the analysis of the data collected in my study. Finally, I will argue that it is in the interweaving of the methodology and transnational feminist frameworks that work to assist me in achieving my research objectives.

Personal experiences and methodologies

I have used my experience as a first generation Canadian as a springboard for this research. Harding (1987) suggests that "...the best feminist analysis...insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research for scrutiny in the results of research." (p. 9) At times my own experiences will be highlighted in the research, allowing my personal examples and the examples of other first generation Canadians to be used as a connection point for others. The following quote from Webb (1993) reflects my hope within this research:

Feminist theory, by contrast, places gender centrally within the research, respects and values feelings and experiences, calls for a more equal partnership within

research, and claims the importance of making feminist writings accessible to all, not just other intellectuals. (p. 418)

What becomes possible in qualitative feminist analysis, then, is to listen to voices, and to acknowledge the silences as well as the spoken word. My voice will be a voice of time past, of reflexivity. The voices of the first generation racialized minority Canadian women are in the past and the present, closely linked to lived experience. Through narrative expression, these young women will be given the chance to explain how their stories have shaped their identities, specifically how gender, race, and sexuality have played a role in their storied experiences as first generation racialized minority Canadians.

The research process

The participants

I interviewed five first generation minority Canadian women between the ages of 19-26, from Vietnamese, Chinese (2), El Salvadorian, and Indian decent respectively. I located the five participants in a variety of ways, first by soliciting permission from appropriate community agencies (see Appendix C), and then by posting recruitment notices (see Appendix D). This was successful in locating only one participant for the study. I then contacted a professor and friend and asked for her help with recruitment. She was able to forward four names via email and email addresses that I could contact regarding the study. Of the four names forwarded to me, two contacted me and participated in the study. The last two participants are acquaintances of mine who I was

able to contact via the phone or in person, and ask if they were able or willing to participate in my study. Both women agreed to do so.

Confidentiality

Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants. The young women were able to pick their own pseudonyms, however one participant felt comfortable with me choosing a name that we agreed on together. Interviews were held in a location where the women felt most comfortable; four being completed on campus, and one in my home. All interviews were taped and later transcribed verbatim. A letter of consent was distributed among the participants by the researcher either via electronic communication, or, in some cases was signed and read at the interview location, prior to the commencement of the interview. This can be found in Appendix A. As such, this letter was used as a document to protect the interests of the participants and covered confidentiality, voluntary participation, contact information to reach the research supervisor, and information on community counselling services.

The interviews

One interview, lasting approximately 30-60 minutes, was done for each participant. There was a script that was followed (with flexibility) by the interviewer (myself) and can be found in Appendix B. A concerted effort was made to keep the interviews informal and to allow the participants freedom in its direction and flow, therefore the script was used only as a guideline and was not followed verbatim (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Oakley, 1981). In her study, Anne Oakley

(1981) found that successful interviewers adopt a collaborative approach, that include the personal involvement of the interviewer, who is willing to self disclose when asked. I responded to any questions the participants asked. They were all aware that I, too, was a first generation Canadian.

Jane was my first interview. She is 21 and of Vietnamese decent. Stephanie was next. She is 19 and of Chinese decent. She was followed by Page, who is 22 and El Salvadorian, Marianne who is 24 and Chinese, and lastly Sarah who is 26 and of Indian decent. Participants were emailed copies of both their transcripts and stories for review. In some cases parts of the transcript and individual story were omitted or altered as requested on an individual basis. This was done for two of the participants: in one case it was to protect an implicated third party, and in the other it was edited for grammar and repetition.

Research methodology

The use of stories in identity research

Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in stories because there are stories inside stories and stories between stories and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is in the getting lost. For if you're lost, you really start to look around and listen. (Metzger, 1986, p.104)

The use of stories in identity research provides data from which multivocality, contested meanings, and paradigmatic controversies become possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This kind of data allows for a complex, multidimensional understanding of how

people construct meanings of their lived experiences. That is to say, they create stories in order to make sense of, and give meaning to, particular life experiences or events (Oliver, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1988). It is in valuing meaning making through stories that I work to represent the cultural knowledges of the young women in my study. Through their exploration of life experiences, and the ways in which they construct and interpret these experiences, I come to appreciate the complexities and intersectionalities of their identities. In working through this approach to meaning making, I am best able to understand how transnational feminist concepts apply to identity development.

When looking at identity from transnational feminist frameworks, concepts such as fluidity, hybridity, and complexity become important. This kind of in-depth analysis lends itself to a methodology which can "...signify an alternative view of the self located historically in language, produced in everyday gendered, racialized, cultural/social experiences, expressed in writing and speaking, and employed as a political feminist strategy" (Bloom, 1998, p. 6). Transnational feminism calls for a methodology which not only explores meaning making in the stories of its participants (Minh-ha, 1991, 1997; Mohanty, 2003), but one which also acknowledges the reciprocal relationship of the researcher and those who are the focus of the research (Bloom, 1998). This qualitative feminist research methodology is what Bloom (1998) calls non-unitary subjectivity. This kind of research calls into action "...that [which] will help researchers be more thoughtful and critical about our intersubjective research relationships and the ways that we analyze the personal narratives of others" (p. 2). It is within this methodology that the negotiation of research relationships can take place, as is demonstrated in the following passage. Here Bloom (1998) describes her experience interviewing a feminist scholar and

the difficulties they both faced in the roles of the researcher and the respondent. She states:

Being a good listener did not necessarily make me a good researcher for Olivia. To her, my responses seemed like silences in contrast to her longer narratives and more in-depth storytelling. This made her uncomfortable and self conscious, as she later revealed. (p. 20)

This kind of reciprocal, relational research is best expressed through the storied construction of meaning making and experience (Bloom, 1998; Lather, 2001; Lieblich, 1998). In fostering reciprocal relationships with participants using the interview as a tool, rich, contextually relevant stories are revealed (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000). These stories provide valuable insight into phenomenon not easily captured by objective, scientific study. I would argue that identity development is best understood using feminist, qualitative frameworks as its methodology, and specifically through the use of non-unitary subjectivity. Through this means, participants' voices are explored, and the limitations and biases of the researcher become transparent. Research, then, becomes a personal, politically located means from which participants and researchers can express their own meaning making and storied experiences. As such, these stories work against discourses of oppression, they empower women to speak out against injustice and honor their experiences as meaningful contributions to women's activism (Bloom, 1998; Lather, 2001; Webb, 1993).

As a researcher, I worked towards embracing non-unitary subjectivity in my methodology of research. Where I was successful, I found my interviews to be dialogical, interactive, and reciprocal. I felt most connected during these interviews, as they allowed

participants to explore concepts with me, rather than for me, and connected our experiences as first generation Canadians. As such, it allowed for the participants to voice any concerns about the research itself, including issues of power and privilege, as was the case for one participant. During this particular interview, the participant was able to express her concerns about white researchers conducting research on racialized minority women. She questioned my intentions, and directed me to reflect on my own racialized identity as being 'white'. Imploring the principles of non-unitary subjectivity, I was able to explore the intersubjective relationship I had with her to better understand what it was that I was doing when I was interviewing her, and well as what was happening for me when I was writing up my analysis. I was also able to include these moments in my final write up and in my reflections of the research process. It forced me to bring into consciousness my biases, assumptions and limitations in this research study when working transnationally with racialized minority participants.

While I valued the contribution non-unitary subjectivity made to my research practice, it did not apply universally across all participants. That is to say, for three of my participants, non-unitary subjectivity was not achieved. I do not feel that in our limited time together, we were able to create a reciprocal relationship which transcended across power and privilege borders. These three participants were very eager to give me what I wanted as a researcher; they waited patiently for me to ask questions, and did not have anything of their own to add at the conclusion of our interviews. Upon further reflection, I do not feel that they were skilled in such a way as to know how to reflect critically on their own research process. Whereas with the two participants with whom I was successful in establishing a reciprocal relationship; one was a student in the Women's

studies department, and the other was a graduate student. Both possessed the knowledge and language to be able to engage with me on a much more critical and analytical level than the other less-experienced participants. In applying concepts of non-unitary subjectivity to research designs, it is important to take into consideration such limitations.

Data analysis

Transnationalism as a framework of analysis

Guided by Vertovec's (1999) classifications of transnationalism interpretations, transnationalism is defined as a 'type of consciousness', from which to base my framework of analysis. Transnationalism applied in this way refers to "... depictions of individuals' awareness of decentered attachments, of being simultaneously home away from home, here and there or for instance British and something else" (p. 5). This definition best reflects the ways in which I have taken up identity development paradigms in my research. It speaks to literature and analysis which celebrates new subjectivities in the global area. It is here where identity can exist in diasporas, as an imaginary coherence and as an awareness of multi-locality (Bhabba, 1983; Hall, 1990; Mohanty, 2003). It is in working with this definition that I navigate through transnational feminist frameworks to make sense of the data collected.

Procedure

Using transnational feminist frameworks as a lens from which I chose to categorically define the stories of these young women, I settled on six general categories of interpretation and organization in my analysis. I did this by rereading the stories

presented in chapter four, and reviewing the intentions of qualitative feminist research. These intentions, as I interpret them, are to understand the roles of power and privilege as they influence the various contexts in which women (and racialized minority women) live (Harding, 1987; Lather, 1993, Webb, 1993). And so bearing these in mind, I categorized the data in order to show how power and privilege impact the lives of my participants. I did this by looking for stories which included examples of stereotyping, discrimination, racism and/or the recognition by the participants that they were different from their “white” peers. As such, the categories I settled on that best represented these intentions are: context, gendered experiences, the rebel factor, experiencing sexuality, negotiating spaces ‘the here and there’, and experiencing racisms/the interplay of intersectionalities. These categories allowed me to best capture the objectives of qualitative feminist research, while also allowing a transnational feminist framework to be employed. What is transnational about these categories are the ways in which they highlight stories of power and privilege, the ways in which the participants make meaning of these stories and memories, and how the participants negotiate their identities as racialized minority, first generation Canadian women in light of these tensions in their lived experiences.

I wrote the participants’ narratives prior to imposing my own transnational categories of analysis, with the hopes that the reader may be able to see how I came to code, categorize and analyze the data according to my own ways of interpreting, seeing and organizing. As I read through the transcripts, I consulted the interview questions and began to organize the stories as they made sense to me, and as they followed the flow of the semi-structured interview. I was also aware of the intersectionalities of race, gender,

and sexuality that I was looking for, and so pulled from the transcripts stories which provided examples of these as they related to my transnational framework of analysis. While I would argue that this was useful, I believe I categorized the data (even in my writing of their stories) according to the intentions of transnational feminist research and, in turn, used some of these in my analysis. I did this exercise intentionally aspiring that in being subjective, I can increase objectivity (Bloom, 1998; Webb, 1993) in my research. What I came to realize in this process, however, is that no writing or interpreting of data is ever pure, even if it is written outside the framework of analysis. I realized I was viewing the data through my own lenses of biases, experiences, and privileges, and that my frame of reference is one of a Western feminist experience and interpretation. In valuing the objectives of non-unitary subjectivity set out in this study, I work to include these insights as important pieces of my analysis and research process.

A word on limitations

I do not feel that this study on the stories of five first generation Canadian women can lead to any far reaching generalizations. As I only interviewed and met each participant once, these stories were used mainly as catalysts for my own thinking about the utility of transnational feminism in research and practice. Any generalizations that can be made will be limited in nature as this study is set at a particular moment in time. Because each participant came from different cultural and social backgrounds, the intention of this study is to highlight the differences amongst the stories of these women, which, inadvertently, will highlight some of the similarities between them.

Chapter 4

The Stories

This chapter offers the reader a chance to engage with the stories of the young women interviewed. What follows is a summary of my impressions, and the parts of the interviews that stood out most for me as I related to their stories as first generation racialized minority Canadians. This was done through the lens of my own stories, and through the intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality. The names used in the following stories are the pseudonyms of the participants.

Jane's story

When I met Jane, I was struck by many things. She was waiting for me outside watching a little boy play around where she stood. She was smiling at him, and although we'd never met before, she turned and smiled at me as I approached. There was an awkward moment of "um, are you Jane?" to which she replied "um, are you Erika"? To me she seemed easy going, genuinely helpful and confident. Some of Jane's own comments and thoughts will also be presented in this chapter as she works with me in our telling of her story.

Jane is a 21 year old first generation Canadian with Vietnamese roots. Her family came over 25 years ago with her two older sisters just after the war. She was born in Port Alberni and then soon after moved to Victoria. Victoria is where Jane says she grew up. I asked Jane to compare her family to a "Canadian" family (which we defined together as white, middle class and normative, knowing that this was not representative of a true Canadian family's reality). Essentially, I was asking her about traditions, values, and

daily practices that might be the same or different than white, middle class, normative models of the Canadian family (i.e. individualistic, privileged, nuclear). Here are some of her thoughts.

“ Um, we’re a lot more strict, like my parents, we’re a lot more stricter yeah. But that was changed over time, like in the beginning they were really really traditional (clears throat), basically they weren’t really adapted to the culture yet so they had their rules. It was hard to make friends because basically you know it was just really different, like two different cultures that clashed right so...”

When asked to explain what traditional meant to her, Jane spoke about her family’s strong religious beliefs rooted in Catholicism, and the expectations her parents had of her in those regards.

“ Like we’re Catholic, so basically premarital sex is a big thing right? And gender, um, it’s our thing... It’s not like, I don’t know how to say this exactly, but, they’re not racist and they’re not like anti homosexual or anything like that but they are Catholic right and Catholics have their beliefs about that stuff right so... Basically like, my parents want me to marry a purely Vietnamese guy, yeah but obviously they see that Canada’s like very multicultural right, so it’s going to be different and harder to find.”

She then goes on to explain that her parents have changed a bit, telling me that one of her sisters is married to a Chinese man, and the other to a Caucasian. At the same time, however, her parents are still hoping that she, the youngest daughter, will be able to marry a Vietnamese man.

“ So she still, she still believes in that like she still always tries to find Vietnamese guys for me behind my back you know and just hope that I’ll grow to love them but it doesn’t work like that for me.”

Jane is confident in her views around marrying the right guy, for the right reasons, and through this confidence, describes herself as “the rebellious child” in the family. She goes on to say:

“Like I’m more of the rebellious child but I’ve been teaching them more than anyone. I think because I, If I don’t like something then I’ll speak up, usually in my family it’s, you just listen, you don’t talk back or anything like that”.

While she is comfortable in this role, she explains that she is always respectful, and doesn’t “talk back”. This seems to apply to all children in the family.

In her role as a daughter, Jane is aware of the differences of responsibility between herself and her brothers, particularly around attending church and the importance of complying with the Catholic faith. She talks about how her brothers can skip out on going to church but she “...[would] have to have a good reason umm, yeah, like all of us would if I was to go off and, you know, we’re not going to church.” She also says that “...my brothers they try but they’re boys and I don’t know, they get caught up with their friends and stuff like that so my parents are a lot easier with the boys than the girls”. She identifies as Catholic and goes to church on a regular basis. She also feels strongly about pre marital sex and about saving herself until marriage. When asked about her sex education, she responded with “ ...I never really think about that because I’m not thinking about sex before unless I’m getting married to someone, it’s like ruining the future right so I don’t want to think about it yet”.

When asked about her developing sense of identity, the awkward question was posed by me. “ You don’t have to label yourself at all, but would you say something like I’m Vietnamese-Canadian, or I’m Vietnamese, or I’m Canadian or I don’t know (laughs).”

Jane was quick to respond with the following. “I haven’t really, umm, I would say I’m Vietnamese-Canadian”. She identifies primarily with her Vietnamese ancestry through strong family ties when she states. “...Like even though I don’t have a lot of Vietnamese friends or anything like that I have my family right and that’s all that matters....” She recognizes that she has been what she calls “Canadianized”, and feels strongly about one day being able to travel back to Vietnam to learn how to speak the language. She talks about her brother who “...went back a couple of years ago and he came back and he was completely different but for the better you know. He was, he was...he inspired me to go travel”. She has awareness around what she considers “Vietnamese”, and what other people might see her as, as she wrestles with her inability to speak her native language. “You know what a banana is, like I’m white on the inside... and [it’s like] I don’t have any more Vietnamese [in me], but I do, like I still have a lot of stuff...” For Jane, what makes her Vietnamese is her family, and her desire to participate in her culture as much as she can. One day she is hoping to go back and “... get more Vietnamese in me, like go back to Vietnam and learn more about my culture and learn more about the language”.

Jane was my first interview, she was a very receptive and accommodating person throughout our conversation. She never questioned my intentions around what I was doing, and seemed very trusting in me and in the process. She was intrigued by my

questions and was happy to be able to help. This, for me, was a great first interview experience. As the interviews progress however, so do my participants' appetites for answers to questions of their own. This I believe was due to me taking for granted my role as a researcher, assuming that I knew more about what I was doing than my participants. As I was about to find out, these assumptions were going to be challenged (and rightfully so) throughout my interviewing process.

Stephanie's story

Stephanie is 19 years old and in her third year of Women's studies. When I first met Stephanie, I was struck by what she was wearing. Her clothes were what I would consider to be 'alternative', mostly black, loose fitting, there may have been a logo on her hooded sweatshirt but I can't remember. This was the interview that had the biggest impression on me, and really brought a lot of the tensions that I was struggling with as a researcher to the surface. This is Stephanie's story.

Born and raised in Victoria, Stephanie was of Chinese decent. She began her conversation with an awareness of social issues right from the beginning when she states: "... I have a sister, her name's Suzanna, (* fictitious name) and ah she's a year younger than I am, she's graduating from high school and I don't think she is as...I think she is still really blind with what's really going on socially." We begin to shift subjects when, using humor, she goes on to state: "I like long walks on the beach no... (little laugh)", in response to my "tell me a little bit about yourself" question. She apologizes, for which I explain there's no need, and she briefly tells me about her trip to Hong Kong with her mom and her sister when she was 11. I continue to ask questions about her extended

family and then we converse about some of the things she likes to do. Stephanie speaks about her involvement with activism on campus. She is actively involved with the student's society, women's center, and the student's of color collective. She admits that activism "...[it's] consuming my life, so a good chunk of it goes to that".

As we continue our conversation, I ask her about her family's reaction around her involvement on campus to which she replies

"My mother acted really negatively to it because she's like, what's that stuff going to do for your future, you know? It's such a waste of time...But I think part of the reason is because she didn't really understand what it was. And she didn't know what to do [with it], and I think it's just that she's just not very educated. Like, it comes down to that, and then on my dad's side of the family they didn't really say anything too much. But my grandma really encouraged me to do that, but like the stuff that I'm doing it's not like, like environmentalist stuff per se, it's social stuff."

Stephanie's family also expresses concerns around her safety, she explains.

"Let's say like if I'm saying white supremacy is bad or horrible they're just like well, aren't you afraid for your safety?" In response to this, I ask her about whether or not what she is involved in is uncommon for women of Chinese decent. She is quick to respond that "...people are really breaking out of that barrier now especially with people like Ida Chong...but still I think it has to come from a position of class-wise, if you're not very educated I don't think your pers, your perception of things will change". Stephanie is very conscious of not allowing herself or her experiences to be essentialized in any way, by this I mean her experiences can not be explained simply because of her culture,

or gender, or her race. She is consistent in making this known throughout the interview, and in particular in this statement where she say: "...[y]eah I definitely think there are like complexities into it like class wise, not just race or not just culture because you know that part they (her family) know like my life isn't cut and dry".

In our conversation around sex education and sexuality, Stephanie tells an amusing, yet mortifying for her story involving her father. "You know in grade 5, they give you sex ed right, and my father found the book and he started reading it. He was sitting on my bed reading it and I was just horrified, and yeah, so then he gave me the talk and it was done and over with." When asked about why sex was not discussed much in her family, Stephanie provided me with the context of her parents' situation during adolescence. This helped explain why sex education may not have been a priority in her family

"It wasn't because of just communism it was because when [my parents] were supposed to be in high school they had to go out in the fields and...the fields, the factories, and stuff like that to work, because to boost up the economic... the economy. Because Mao had a plan, and they had to go through with that, so that's how they experienced their adolescence. So, [when it came to sex], it was basically trial and error [for them], and they didn't really, I don't think they were ready to become parents."

She also spoke about the rice prices in China in the 70's, and how they were so low that everyone was trying to get out of the country as soon as possible. This was why her parents and others were moving to other places, and perhaps why they didn't speak about sex with Stephanie, as it wasn't something that was a part of their own experience

growing up. Stephanie's education around sex was described by her as very "trial and error", she spoke at great length about the difficulties of growing in Victoria, a place that for her was "pretty conservative and predominantly white". A place where she did not feel she was being heard or understood. Her experience of seeing a counsellor from the Southern United states was a dismal failure, she explains: "I'm like explaining my feelings and she's just like, I don't understand. So I'm just like, fuck this, I'm not going to go [to counseling]". In fact, much of Stephanie's experience in high school left her "in isolation half the time", and it wasn't until she met a group of peers doing a research project for a program in Victoria that she found an arena in which she was able to express her feelings and connect with other racialized minority girls.

Stephanie is conscientious around providing me with a context from which she identifies herself. When asked about her ideas around gender roles for example, she explains that while growing up. "Until I was fourteen, my my dad was still alive and he basically took care of us a lot. He was very much like the housewife but a guy, like he cooked and cleaned and sewed...I mean his family really encouraged, you know, us to do whatever we wanted, so like there was really no oppression when it came to gender roles. He would be like, do anything you want". Her mom however, was quite surprised when Stephanie at age 12 asked why she couldn't become a doctor. Her mother responded by saying "...well, you're, you're kind of female". Stephanie understands the differences in her parents in their different upbringings. Her mother was raised very traditionally and has little education, whereas her father was encouraged to go to school and become whatever he wanted to become. She recognizes her mother's ideas around gender come from a particular time, place, and context very different from the one she is now in.

When asked about growing up in Victoria specifically, Stephanie talks about her impressions of the city. “Especially with the tourist attractions being very colonial, I think that plays a role, but I think it’s so normalized you don’t really realize it’s going on. Half the time that you’re expecting the Queen and paying honor to the flag, I think it really hit me in university”. Her experiences around being a racialized minority adolescent at school are explained. “Like being in school activism and atmospheres like a lot of people are from small towns that come to university, and usually it’s their first real encounter with a person of color. So I just, it’s even harder because you just keep on explaining yourself, you constantly have to explain yourself”. This is frustrating for Stephanie as she expresses her relief in finding a group of peers that are accepting of her and make her feel welcome, while at the same time having to explain herself to those who want to know more about who she is and how she came to live here. She negotiates these tensions, along with those of her family. She is dating for the first time a white boy from the United States. She feels as though her mother is accepting of this, and is also frustrated by always having to translate everything back to her boyfriend, as her mother does not speak English very well. This understandably strains the relationship (or lack thereof) between her, her boyfriend and her mother.

As we conclude our interview, Stephanie finds the courage in herself to pose the question I would guess was in the back of her mind throughout the entire interview. She cautiously asks, “...what interested you in in doing research about racialized minority girls in Victoria?” My response, of course, acknowledges the struggles I had in narrowing down a topic and in having to choose between researching either visible or non visible minorities, the latter being chosen as a seemingly richer, more contextually relevant

thesis. Still not satisfied with this answer, she asks me my favorite question of all five interviews, “well, why didn’t you do it on whiteness?” My response, caught a bit off guard, was simply “...it didn’t come up as a possibility at that time”. I spent so much time and energy on preparing myself to be culturally sensitive, to ask questions in a way that were not offensive, I did not even think about what whiteness means in the context of other whiteness, only in a context of non-whiteness.

The conversation continues and I ask a question that has been in the back of my mind since the beginning of the interview. “So would it have been easier if I was a woman of color for you?” She says yes, but not just any woman of color, a Chinese woman would have been most appropriate. In her past research interview experience, this was provided for her, which she really appreciated. As we part ways, I am very thankful for her questions and concerns and we agree to keep in touch.

As my second interview, and probably my most challenging, I am really impressed with Stephanie’s ability to articulate her curiosities with me in a way that is also culturally sensitive. She is the most eager of the participants to see what I will do with the stories I have collected, and seems excited to be involved in the process. She is working closely with me in the re-telling of her story, I hope together we can re-tell it.

Page’s story

Page greets me outside at the University campus and is immediately friendly. I am struck by how she seems a bit shy at first, not nervous necessarily. Soft spoken and thoughtful, it’s as though she does not want to say the wrong thing. She is smiling and curious about the other girls I have spoken with. Here is Page’s story.

Page was born in El Salvador, and immigrated to Canada with her parents when she was under the age of seven. She immigrated directly to Victoria and has lived here ever since. She has an older brother, and though she has many relatives (27-30 cousins), none of her extended family lives in Victoria. Right from the beginning of our conversation, Page identifies Canada as her home. She says

“ Canada has always been home, I’ve been back to visit [El Salvador] once about 5 years ago, and it was great to see my family again. It was great but it wasn’t, I didn’t really feel like... I felt like I belong, but at the same time it just doesn’t feel like home. And it was almost too sad, there was a lot of poverty there still and corruption, and unsettling things to see...”

She then expresses to me that she “...will always be El Salvadorian first, then I do also feel I am Canadian so I do have both”. She wants to know what other girls have said about this question, and so I explain that they too, identify with their parents’ country first, and Canada second. From there she goes on to explain that she is also Italian, that her grandmother went to Italy and remarried in Italy and has lived there ever since. She states: “ I’m almost a little bit of Italian just because I’ve known it all my life”. She says she is able to speak 60-65 words, and that she can get by when her grandparents come to visit. She also tells me a story about her twin cousins who were born half Spanish, half Italian. The girl was born with light skin and looks very European, while she describes the other twin as “ he looks like black”. From here she goes on to tell me about her love for music and playing the violin, something she has been doing since she was nine. She expresses a love for languages, and that her family is very important to her.

When talking about her cultural context, she tells me that she has many different friends. "Asian friends and East Indian friends, and I find we all kind of tend to share like the same values, you know they're also living at home". She tells me her white friends have all moved out since they were 18, which is not her experience, or the experience of her other non white friends. She explains that she likes to hang out with people who, "share the same kinds of values and morals" and doesn't mind living at home for now, while she goes to school. She can see herself "...graduating from school, paying off my loans, and then, once I have enough like money to support myself then I can see myself living on my own before marriage. Umm, and I think my parents right now they would be fine with it..." As we continue talking, she exposes some of the tensions for her around trying to get her school work done, and her responsibilities at home.

"I guess maybe this is one of those role things coming in... I'd be doing my homework and my mom would be like, can you go downstairs and get me something from the like, the freezer? While my brother was like, you know, he finished work in the next room watching TV. And I would be like well, why don't you get [him] to do it? He's not doing anything, like I have an exam tomorrow or something right, and it just, it didn't really seem to come to her mind."

Even though Page feels pressure at times to do chores above and beyond what she feels is necessary, she is able to communicate this to her mother. "I think one day I told my mom, mom, like, you know it's different cause I live in Canada you know, if I lived in El Salvador then you know, maybe yeah I would agree. It's a different like context, and then she kind of agreed with me". As we continue talking, honesty and communication are core values Page sees in her family, as she explains. "...We have

always grown up to be honest, cause they've [her parents] have always been honest with us. You know, like during the time when, when we were struggling with the idea of like whether we were going back or staying you know..." She explains that her parents talked about it with her and her brother, that they weren't just going to go back (to El Salvador) and take them with them, that it had to be a decision that they made as a family. In the end, they choose to stay here in Victoria.

In talking about experiences around sex education and sexuality, Page acknowledges the influence of the Catholic faith in her upbringing, and highlights the conflicting views her parents have on premarital sex. "...But as we've grown older my dad's like you know, like wait till your married, and my mom's like umm, my mom almost disagrees with that". She goes on to explain that, "... if you're truly in love, not just like you know, you think you're in love right, then it's okay." As Page is dating for the first time, she recognizes that she is not ready yet, and that her dad really wants her to focus on school and not worry about a boyfriend. At times she feels like, "...I almost say too much you know, and sometimes it does make me feel a little uncomfortable but, there's nothing I can do". She feels this may be due to the fact that, at an early age, she was informed about puberty. She knew about the changes her body was going to go through before it was ever taught to her at school. Her parents talked to both her and her brother in the home, and she was surprised to learn that not all families did the same. "... Yeah I, it was kind of shocking to me, like how come your parents haven't told you anything about this kind of stuff". This has made it possible for Page to bring these issues up with her father and mother, even though it might make her feel uncomfortable.

When I ask Page to speak about what it was like living in Victoria, she discusses multiculturalism as something that seemed quite contradictory for her growing up.

“ I feel like that we’ve been taught you know oh, Canada’s a like a multicultural country right but it’s almost like they’re trying, or, I don’t even know who they are like, government maybe I don’t know (laughs), they’re trying to convince children that you know, we’re a multicultural society. We are but there’s a lot of racism, and there’s a lot of discrimination and uh, it’s like, it’s not being addressed. So I almost wonder we’re teaching our children to be like ignorant in that way.”

She goes on to tell me a story about when she was in grade nine and had been sick and away from school for a month, the day she came back she experienced racism. “The day I came back there was like a math test, like a big math test so my dad had written a note. You know, like, you know, she can’t [write the test] cause she’s been sick you know, and she needs time to catch up. And then the teacher just like took the letter, and she’s like, your dad didn’t write this, his English is too good (laughs). And I was like what??!!” She explained that her friends who were East Indian and Ethiopian had also experienced racism at the hand of this particular teacher. They decided together to go and talk to the principal about it, and, as a result, the teacher changed schools the next year. For Page, this didn’t necessarily mean it was over with her. “ I guess like I’ve forgive her but I still like, I can’t, you can’t take away like how upset you felt”. As I congratulated her on her strength and courage to stand up for what she believed in, our conversation together was coming to a close. Before we concluded, she wanted to know about the other participants in my study. She asked: “What are the other cultures that you’ve

interviewed, or you've interviewed the two, and did you find that they were like, kind of like my friends?" Without going into any detail, I answered her curiosities around some things that were similar, and other experiences that were different than those of her Asian friends. She was also curious about how I was going to compile the information, so I told her about my process of emailing her transcripts and copies of her story as it is represented in my thesis, and how we could work together to do that. She seemed happy with my answers.

I enjoyed my interview with Page, she spoke honestly about her experiences in her family and school contexts, and was easy to converse with. Her experience of racism got me thinking about how much I did not want to be that person, how much I do not want anyone to ever feel that way because of something I had said or done. This was my experience of my interview with Page.

The following two interviews have a different context to them, both women are older than the three previous, one is 24, the other 25, and neither of them grew up in Victoria, though they have both lived here for over two years. Here are the stories of Marianne and Sarah.

Marianne's story

Marianne is a 24 year old Chinese Canadian. She grew up in Surrey B.C. where her parents immigrated over 35 years ago. Originally from Hong Kong, the already married couple came to B.C. to find work. Her dad is a nurse who attended school in London, and her mother was a teacher back in Hong Kong. Marianne also has an older

sister who lives in Montreal. She is living in Victoria because she is going to school here, and has been here over two years. We begin by exploring what it was like for Marianne to grow up in Surrey, she says

“Well at the time that I was elementary school, I guess in Surrey there wasn’t so much of an immigrant population yet. And so in my elementary school I was usually the only, like , the only Chinese or whatever, it was a primarily Caucasian school. So, but that didn’t seem like a big deal to me when I was growing up, and when I reached high school that was when umm...a lot of Chinese immigration was going on and umm, from India as well so it was kind of nice that way, it was a lot more multicultural once I got into high school”.

Marianne describes Surrey as “... a good place to grow up, it was fun in spite of Surrey’s bad reputation.” She describes her role in the family as the youngest child who feels that her parents “...don’t place quite as much, well not so much now but when I was growing up, like all the responsibility was on my sister.” She feels her parents may see her as “kind of weird” in that she was kind of off in her own world doing things her parents didn’t always approve of. An example of this is her avid interest and pursuit of Tae Kwon Do, something her mother had difficulty accepting. She states: “...[She’s] just completely confused (laughs) you know why, why would you want to do that? So yeah, she sort of had these ideas about what girls should do, and I think that was more just the way she was brought up probably”. Prior to taking up Tae Kwon Do, Marianne took ballet lessons and played the piano, activities that were encouraged by her mother that were seen as more traditionally feminine.

Marianne acknowledges that she grew up with traditional Chinese values, however, that these values were not necessarily in tension with those of North American society. While she felt her parents were strict, she still broke the rules. She explains: "...[T]hey really mellowed out over the years I think just cause no matter what rule they set on us we would end up breaking them anyway (laughs)." She describes herself as more "North American" minded and says, "we're (she and her sister), I, we've both become very comfortable with a more Canadian way of thinking and doing things and stuff". So while she acknowledges her traditional ways of eating, cooking, and pursuing education, Marianne does not describe herself as Chinese Canadian. She says: "I think the first thing that comes to mind is just the I'm Canadian, and then if they start asking oh well, what about your ethnic background, then I'd say yeah I'm Chinese but it always comes to mind that I'm Canadian first."

While Marianne understands Chinese, she does not speak it fluently. Generally in the family, "... my parents speak Chinese to me and I speak English back." She acknowledges this is strange when relatives come over, but it still works for her. She has been to Hong Kong twice with her mother and sister and says: "I think as I got older I appreciated being Chinese more, and I saw, I started to see some of the benefits of umm Chinese culture and I guess you know, you get older and you get a little bit more wise and see things in a different way". As the conversation continues, Marianne asks me about my background. I tell her my mom is Czechoslovakian and my dad is Hungarian, and that I have never been back there to visit, though I want to. We talk about our experience of visiting China and how they were different. I went on a vacation to Beijing when I was an English teacher in South Korea while Marianne was in various parts of

China visiting her family. We both talked about “getting swamped” by Chinese entrepreneurs selling post cards, t-shirts, fans, anything they could carry around and how for her she could just blend in, while for me, I stood out like a sore thumb.

We shifted gears and talked about relationships and marriage. For Marianne, she states: “I think I was kind of lucky that way that they weren’t so much umm, I think my mom is actually quite liberal when it comes to these kinds of things...” As such she didn’t feel any pressure to get married, or to marry a person of Chinese decent. She goes on to say that, “...yeah I’m sure she wants us to have kids, and have families and all that but I think she wants us to have careers first, and then, you know, worry about all the (unintelligible) after”. She explains her mother’s context growing up was quite liberal. Her grandfather “... always told my mom and her sisters that umm, even though you’re girls that doesn’t mean that you know, you can’t do what boys do, which was, I think, quite different”. We continue to talk about her parents’ expectations of her and she expresses the importance of doing well at school in her family. “...While we were growing up, it was always about school, school came first. If we didn’t get all A’s then there was a big uproar”. For her parents, and her mom in particular, she explains:

“I think part of it is that she is a very smart woman. And she you know, she was actually, she was a teacher when she was over in, back in Hong Kong. And she sort of gave that up to come over here. And when she came here, she couldn’t really find work, or it was very difficult to find work at the same kind of level that she was at before and she ended up being a bookkeeper. And her ultimate goal was umm, to eventually become an accountant and you know, move up in the whole kind of accounting profession but it never did happen. I think that really

pushed... that was one of the things that drove her to really push us to go after what we want to do, be academically very sound (laughs)".

Marianne expresses her desire to pursue a career and also to travel, something her parents do not necessarily approve of. She states: " I think if I told them they would kind of understand but I know my mom would start arguing with me. Well, why do you need to do that?...I think umm they feel very strong family ties, that's definitely part of Chinese culture that you're really like, a very strong family unit..."

Her experiences around sex education were mostly from school, she explains that her parents "don't really talk about intimate things". She was happy with what she learned in school, though admits she found it to be shocking in grade seven. She explains: " I was kind of really uncomfortable cause at that point I was pretty naïve and sheltered and I really didn't know anything cause, you know, I was pretty innocent a that age, as most 12 year olds should be (laughs) ”.

We compare what it might be like to have grown up in China and Marianne explains. " Yeah the kinds of things I do would probably shock them and ah yeah, I don't know what it would have been like. Yeah I really don't know if my personality would have clashed a lot or else you know if you're, if you've been, if you grew up with all those values and stuff from you know when you were a baby you just, that would just sort of form your personality". She identifies primarily with Canadian culture and asks me if I do the same. I reply " ...I would define myself as Canadian umm, but I, there's this little like voice like sort of in the back of my head that's like defending my you know, my European kind of ancestry." We talk about what it's like to "test the waters" as first generation Canadians, pushing our parents' boundaries to see what is acceptable and

what is not. For Marianne, she feels as though at times her parents have to defend her to her relatives, as though her choices in life are so far removed from the lives of women growing up in China that she is misunderstood in that context.

As we explore our Canadian context, we realize how good we have it here, and Marianne hopes she does not take her family for granted as we have both rebelled in our own ways against our parents' expectations. While this idea of rebelling is not unique only to North America, it seems like it is accepted here, a part of growing up, and in some sense glamorized. Our conversation comes to a close talking about the objectification of our bodies and accents in different contexts. We talk about what it's like to grow up in a culture where being naked is taboo, and premarital sex is not, and the contradictions of those ideas coexisting. What it is like to be told that our accents in Australia are hot, and that our supposed promiscuous lifestyle is a big hit in Mexico. While we recognize we are both speaking from particular experiences that we've had, it was fun to talk about them. It was great to hear them expressed out loud, even if we never did really figure out what these experiences meant to us.

What I appreciated most about my interview with Marianne were her curiosities around me and where I came from. I felt this added another dimension to our interview, making it feel more like a conversation. She was genuinely curious and interested in my experiences, as I was in hers. This made my experience of the interview almost unconscious at times, like I forgot what I was doing. Out of all the interviews, while I may worry that maybe I missed a question, this one was for me the most reciprocal and dialogical of them all. This dialogical interaction felt more like a conversation and really

made me feel included, like the boundaries of researcher and participant had been blurred into something more collaborative and natural.

Sarah's story

Sarah is the last of the interviews, her story adds a particular perspective to the stories of first generation racialized minority Canadian women. We had met previous to doing the interviews, and so it felt comfortable to interview an acquaintance. She was excited about doing the interviews and taking part in my thesis, this is apparent in the depth and breadth of her conversation with me. Sarah was my longest interview, here is her story.

Sarah grew up in Huston, a small town in Northern B.C. with a population of around 4500 people now, though it was even smaller when Sarah was growing up. Her mom is from Fiji, and her father is from India. Her mom came to Canada first with her family and lived in Duncan, B.C. for a year before she got married. Her dad came from India only, she believes, to get married. She describes her mom's experience of growing up as follows:

“My grandfather had a huge, he owned a huge sugar field or some kind of field and so they had, they had ah I wouldn't say a rich life but they didn't, they lived okay like they were doing well considering umm, you know, the village they were living in, the people around them and umm, they had to work hard, my mom had to work very hard when her parents were at work, she took care of her five siblings...but they [her family] came here I think probably just to obviously, to pursue you know, higher education for all of the kids umm, to just, to obtain that

lifestyle you know that was, you know that would be, that wouldn't be having to work 16 hours in a day..."

Huston is where her parents settled prior to their kids being born as it was where her dad found work, coincidentally, it also had a large East Indian population. Sarah describes her experiences growing up in this context as follows: "Umm, you know everybody and they know you, you know, you know what they're doing and when they're doing it and those kinds of things which can be annoying but it was such... it's just such a small place. Like a lot of the friends that I made that were really close were East Indians umm, and ah, that's who I, who I mainly grew up with..." She goes on to say that her experience of growing up in an East Indian community was easy for her because she could fit in, she could "cling" to her East Indian friends and they could "cling" to her as well.

Her parents also reinforced to her East Indian values and traditions, encouraging her to only hang out with East Indian friends. Sarah explains:

"[Y]ou know I can't have friends that are not East Indian type of thing umm, and I really still don't really understand what that was all about umm and umm I think I got that a bit more from my mom, my dad really never was involved in those types of things....I had a friend or two that came you know bike riding to my house you know and then they could just stop by and hang out and my mom told them I wasn't home, and I was, and so it's just those sorts of things that didn't really make sense..."

When asked about her family traditions in comparison with other Canadian traditions, she defines herself as follows:

“I love the Canadian side of me but I love that side of me that, that umm sort of has decided to really be deeply enriched into my own cultural ways and beliefs and thoughts and ways of thinking... I, it's really, it's really been a powerful force for me, umm, in a very positive way of course...there's a lot of things I participate in religiously. I go to the Hindu Temple every Sunday, umm, and I think my spirituality has really kept me grounded...”

She speaks about the Temple as being a very inclusive place, where she has brought friends with her to share in her experience of it. She is very involved with family and community, and tells me about what it is like to be a part of an East Indian wedding, with many festivities happening before the actual wedding takes place. For her, she can not imagine not participating in these traditions, she explains. “...This year was a big year for me so and the more I went to them [the weddings] the more I realized wow you know this is... I couldn't imagine myself not being a part of these things, like I just couldn't see myself without it.” She grew up really respecting authority and describes herself as a “...very, very, very, shy child”. She says her parents were strict, and she grew up feeling scared, particularly scared of punishment (not physical). She explains that she “...well I'm never supposed to question authority I'm just supposed to you know, just go with it...just keep everybody happy ”.

When we start to explore gender roles, for Sarah this was something that was stressed in her family, the differences between females and males. She explains: “I mean it's so huge you know the...I mean it's just, it's just unreal like just having to do certain things and not being able to do certain things because I'm female and oh there's yeah, there's a lot of stuff there as well”. She cites wearing makeup, having long hair, wearing

appropriate clothing and having your hair up as things that were a part of her role as a female. She says: "...When I first kept my hair down in front of my parents that was huge, I was shaking you know and so there was a lot of things that umm that I never had the change to experience at an earlier age that I've experienced now that were quite stressful..." Growing up for example, "...even growing up like [my dad] would be like: Why is your hair down, why don't you put it up? You know...I'd just put my hair up right away. Now if he said that I'd be like, "oh grow up dad".

Sarah grew up with certain expectations as a female in her family that have shifted as she has grown older. She went away to Okanagan College at age 18, her first experience living away from home. While she was away, things in Huston were also taking a dramatic shift, she says:

"I went to school from 18-22 and in those years, like and Huston just totally changed kids umm, started umm, hanging out with other people more like you know yeah, down, not down cause you know Huston doesn't really have a downtown but you know just at restaurants without their parents, umm, cutting their hair, walking around Huston, umm, and these are huge things..."

So while Sarah was out on her own going to school, her parents were also going through a transition in their own cultural niche. Now that she lives in Victoria, and her parents come to visit, having her hair down and wearing makeup are no longer frowned upon as, "everyone else is also doing it too". There are still things that are non negotiable in the eyes of her parents and her older brother, going out at night being one of them. She says ".....but just in terms of like stuff like the other things like going out, and going to, that's still huge like ah even now if my parents are visiting me".

Part of the reason for this, is about upholding a reputation in the eyes of the East Indian community. Sarah explains that she wants to marry an East Indian man, and in order for her to do that she has to be seen in "...the right light and that will help ease the way of of you know people wanting to inquire about you when they're looking to marry off their son off to you or whatever right, and or your daughter, or whatever you know...If you have a good reputation umm then people will, you know, and if you do or if you don't, people will find out type of thing". For her at times, this has been difficult. She describes herself now as more outspoken, and states: "That's what my parents always worry about. because I'm I'm outspoken way more. I think it's like a, I think I'm outspoken more now because all those years I was so quiet". Being outspoken for Sarah, means she may be difficult to marry off, as she does not want to just "sit on her hands" and let others tell her what to do, or say things she may find offensive without speaking her mind. For her and her family there is a worry that this does not fit with the mold for the "ideal" East Indian wife. For Sarah it is more important to stand up for herself and her beliefs, then to simply comply in every circumstance.

As we wrap up our conversation, Sarah describes her East Indian community as very gossipy, and this seems to be her biggest complaint. "[Y]ou know so like, everybody in Victoria knows each other you know it it can just be one huge thing so at the same time as much as I wanna just not even pay attention to what these people are saying I have to at the same time". As much as this is frustrating for her, being herself and standing up for her beliefs seem to be the forefront of what she projects to her community, family, co workers and friends. Sarah's identity is very much rooted in the traditions, spirituality and values passed on to her from her father's culture. However, she

also struggles with her own ideas of who she wants to be regardless of what her culture says is most appropriate or most desirable for an East Indian women.

Sarah's interview was an interesting perspective as a first generation racialized minority Canadian growing up in a community of other East Indians. Her upbringing was unique in that way, as none of the other girls interviewed spoke about their community in the same way. She was eager to share her story and seems to trust my process in the re-telling of her story. Her story is rich in detail and I appreciated this when I was transcribing the interview. Her story reminds me that while the stories of the first generation racialized minority Canadians in my study were similar, how she negotiates between both cultures is unique to her experience.

Chapter 5

The Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of the data through the lenses of the transnational feminism. It does this by imploring a content analysis approach, and examines the intersectionalities of sexuality, gender and race as these relate to transnational feminism. It explores conceptualizations of diasporas, hybridity, negotiating spaces, multiplicity and cultural essentialism in its analysis. It reflects on concepts of non-unitary subjectivity and argues for research designs which allow for transparency and subjectivity in their approaches. Guided by these concepts of identity development in transnational feminism, six categories were selected, and are explored in detail below.

Context

This category addresses the beginning of the interviews where each participant was asked to speak about her family, her cultural and social locations, and definitions of who they were in relation to the environments they lived in. Each woman had a unique way of describing this to me, either in their descriptions of family experiences, definitions of home, cultural/familial history as well as their passions. Stephanie states: "...activism is consuming my life, so a good chunk of it goes to that." She locates herself as an activist with an awareness of social issues. This is a part of her social location and context. Stephanie also speaks about her sister's social and cultural location when she states: "...I don't think she is as...I think she is still really blind with what's really going on socially." And so she exists in a space at home where not everyone shares her passion for activism and awareness of social issues. There is a sense of multiplicity here as

Stephanie negotiates between her lived reality at home (amongst non activists) and her experiences on campus.

Page, however, locates herself spatially, her cultural location examines her ideas of belonging and not belonging when she states:

“Canada has always been my home, I’ve been back to visit once about five years ago and it was great to see my family again, it was great but it wasn’t...I felt like I belong but at the same time it just didn’t feel like home and it was almost too sad, there was a lot of poverty there still and corruption, and unsettling things to see...”

The following passage explores transnational concepts of a type of consciousness, a feeling of being from both here and there, an awareness of decentered attachment (Vertovec, 1999). Page states that she will also “... always be El Salvadorian first, then I do feel that I am Canadian so I do have both”. She articulates her context as having more than one location, and navigates her experiences within these locations.

Sarah, however, a young women who had the unique experience of growing up in a predominantly East Indian community within Canada, locates herself within this diaspora as well as within her family’s historical context when she states:

“My grandfather had a huge, he owned a huge sugar field or some kind of field and so they had, ah I wouldn’t say a rich life but they didn’t, they lived okay like they were doing well considering umm, you know, the village they were living in...But they [her family] came here I think probably just to obviously, to pursue you know, higher education for the kids umm, just to , to obtain that lifestyle you

know that was, you know that would be, that wouldn't be having to work 16 hours a day..."

She identifies her context as one which came from her parents, and the decisions they made that influenced their move to Huston, B.C., where Sarah was born and raised. Her context is one of being both "Indian, and Indian in Canada" within her own diaspora. She follows her father's traditions and teachings, and speaks to her confusion in experiencing a context any different than this. She explains: "[Y]ou know I can't have friends that are not East Indian type of thing umm, I really still don't really understand what that was all about..." Her experiences growing up were described by her as "sheltered" from the other cultural contexts present in Huston, white, dominant cultural norms were not a part of Sarah's experience of Canada until later in life. Sarah, as well as the other participants in this study, offer particular perspectives from which we can look at ideas of consciousness, belonging, location and experience outside of the influence of white, middle class, normative discourses (Lee, 2006, in press; Mohanty, 2003).

Gendered experiences

Marianne offers reflections on her gendered experiences of belonging to both a Chinese and Canadian culture, however recognizes the effects her mother's upbringing had on ideas of what is feminine and desirable. After quitting ballet in grade eleven and taking up Tae Kwon Do as a more desirable alternative, she states: "[My mom's] just completely confused (laughs) you know, why, why would you want to do that? So yeah she sort of had these ideas of about what girls should do, and I think that was more just the way she was brought up probably". Stephanie also offers similar interpretations of her

mother's expectations around female propriety when she asks her mom why she could not be a doctor, to which her mom replies. "...[W]ell, you're, you're kind of female". She is quick to state that her mother came from a very traditional Chinese background with little education, whereas her father was encouraged to go to school and become whatever he wanted to become.

These examples both call into attention the intersectionalities of gender, class, power, and privilege as both Stephanie and Marianne acknowledge their parent's ideas came from a particular time and place. Transnational interpretations of gendered experience acknowledge the complexities of interwoven 'isms' in experience, and celebrate them as new possibilities in defining identities and selves outside of normative, dominant discourses (Hall, 1990; Lee, 2006, in press; Mohanty, 2003). In working with these complexities, we are able to more clearly analyze the stories of these women, rather than see these stories as being only female or male. Bem (1993b) speaks to what she sees as three cultural lenses from which we can look at gender. These are, androcentrism, gender polarization, and biological essentialism respectively. Through these lenses, the basic premise is not whether or not they exist in and of themselves, but the ways in which society has constructed meaning and value to the various lenses; where women are identified as other, as having particular modes of dress and social roles, and as biologically inferior to men. Bem (1993b) cautions us to see through these lenses in order for true social change to order. As such, these stories acknowledge the social construction of gendered ideologies as they begin to make a difference in the lived experiences of women.

Jane's experiences of being female in her family context come to surface around her family's ideas around marriage. These ideas are heavily intersected with religion and the Catholic faith, something Jane feels strongly about and identifies with herself. She states :

“Like we're Catholic so basically premarital sex is a big thing right? And gender, umm, it's our thing... It's not like, I don't know how to say this exactly, but, they're not racist and they're not like anti-homosexual or anything like that... But they are Catholic right? And Catholics have their beliefs about that stuff right? So basically like, my parents want me to marry a purely Vietnamese guy...”

While she is willing to entertain the idea, she also states that, “...so she [mom] still tries to find Vietnamese guys behind my back you know and hope that I'll grow to love them, but it doesn't work like that for me”. In other words, Jane expresses wanting to marry the right guy for the right reasons, be it Vietnamese or other. She is able to pick and choose what she wishes to take from her cultural location, and what she does not. That is to say she identifies herself as Catholic, however, does not choose to marry a Vietnamese guy just because he is Vietnamese. She negotiates the space between the here and there in making choices that identify for her what she wants and what she does not.

Page also negotiates this space of here and there in regards to her gendered experiences when she states: “ I think one day I told my mom, mom, like you know it's different cause I live here in Canada you know, if I lived in El Salvador then you know, maybe yeah I would agree, it's a different like context... And then she kind of agreed with me.” This statement was made in Page's response to her parent's expectations of

her around chores. She felt that they asked too much of her in the context of Canada, however acknowledges how things might be different in the context of El Salvador.

The rebel factor

Three out of the five women interviewed spoke about rebelling in some shape or form, whether it be in the ways in which they chose to challenge their parents' rules, or their parents' ideas of what's appropriate. These women sometimes saw themselves as making their parents more Canadian, or as acclimatizing them to the context of where they are living now. Jane states: " Like I'm more of the rebellious child, but I've been teaching them more than anyone I think because I, if I don't like something then I'll speak up. Usually in my family it's, you just listen, you don't talk back or anything like that."

Jane sees her rebellious role as a way to teach her parents things about herself as a person, as well as ways of dealing with confrontation. Here is where we see the statistics, standardized measures and other positivist studies painting this kind of rebellious behavior as problematic, confusing, conflictual, a torn between two cultures mentality. In a critique by Spencer et al (2004), they examine literature which explains the experience of visible minority youth as follows:

Traditionally, the cultural experience of minorities in the United States requires that they become not only marginal persons but also bicultural ones capable of demonstrating competence both in the larger society and within their own ethnic community...Rather, learning two ways of coping with the tasks, expectations,

and requirements of society based on one's ethnic minority status becomes essential for manifest competence and psychological health. (p. 368-369)

In this view, the experience of being rebellious is not seen as a learning opportunity as experienced by Jane, but rather a measure from which the health and mental well being of racialized minority adolescents can be examined and explained (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Prelow et al., 2004; Trickett & Birdman, 2005). As such, it is also another way in which power and privilege operate in the lives of racialized minority youth. That is to say, racialized minority youth are being compared to measures on identity development that do not reflect their lived realities. If we look beyond the literature in dominant normative discourse, we see other possibilities for the experiences of rebellion. As a conscious negotiation of what to hang onto and what to let go of, as these young women navigate within their cultural and social locations (Bhabba, 1990; Handa, 2003).

Marianne explains her experience as follows. "They really mellowed out over the years I think, just cause no matter what rule they set on us we would end up breaking them anyway (laughs)." She also acknowledges that this may be a result of her personality development, and not just a knee jerk reaction to her parent's wishes and cultural influence. She had many other Asian friends who did not rebel for a variety of reasons, whereas she somehow had it in her to "push the limits".

Marianne understood her rebellion as a way to get what she wanted, and not as a way of disrespecting her parent's cultural norms and values. She did not make that connection as so often dominant discourse on racialized, visible minority literature does (Cooper et al., 1993; Dion & Dion, 2001; Espin, 1997a, 1997b; 1999). The potential

psychological impact of her actions where neither detrimental or extreme, she was acting out of her own self interest at the time, and now admits feeling a little guilty in retrospect. This phenomenon of rebelling during adolescent development can be seen as having a particularly North American ideology attached to it; therefore when cultures which are not North American minded experience this kind of behavior, it can be seen as problematic and conflictual in identity development (see for example, Beiser, 2003; Kroger, 2004). The fact that Marianne rebelled and thought it was normal presents us with one example where these arguments which suggest otherwise can be challenged (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Prelow et al., 2004; Trickett & Birdman, 2005). Transnational feminist frameworks around identity recognize that it is possible to exist “in multiplicity and hybridity” without suffering serious psychological damage as a result.

Personal reflections on rebellion and culture

My experiences growing up as a teenager, while very different from these young women in many respects, also had its share of rebellion. I was the first born child and as such to it upon myself to break my parents in so to speak, to acclimatize them to the Canadian context we lived in. However, unlike Marianne, I consciously chose to rebel against my parents because they were not Canadian and for me, that meant something was wrong with them. I wanted so badly to fit into the dominant culture that anything that did not allow me to do so (including my sandwiches, assorted baking and traditional foods) that did not appear Canadian were thrown out every lunch hour. Things like sleepovers and going out late became issues for my parents that I was determined to fight

and win, sometimes I was successful, and sometimes I was not. I did things like sneak out of the house, or get picked up a block away from my house because I did not want my friends to see or meet my weird parents, aliens from the planet, unCanadian. I was, in essence, ashamed of them. Now, I'm ashamed to admit that. My rebellion was a conscious uprising from what I thought was the unjust and limited world of the European female adolescent; dutiful, helpful, domestic and respectful of authority. What I realize in retrospect however, is that I never really escaped them; even in my most volatile states I was able to make good judgments. The words of my parents echoing through my ears at the most inopportune of times. While my rebellious ways certainly put a strain on my relationship with my family, I was still able to negotiate a space where I could exist both here and there without dropping out of school, getting pregnant, failing, or developing a substance abuse problem. I came from a middle class family, and from a family that cared for me and loved me even when they didn't know what to do with me. For this I am very grateful, and am still (somewhat) psychologically sound.

Transnational feminism allows me to explain my perspective without pathologizing my experiences. It provides me with the conceptual tools to complicate my experiences, and see them as multi-faceted and situated in a particular time and place. This allows me to recognize that I may have thought and felt differently in a different context. As such I can experience identity as a fluid concept, one that does not limit my development through stage acquisition and self actualization. I am able to be all of who I am, and understand how it shapes me into who I will become. I can celebrate all aspects of myself without feelings of shame, guilt, or confusion in my reflection on the past (Bhabba, 1990; Minh-ha, 1991, 1997).

Experiencing sexuality

In asking questions about and around sexuality, my agenda was to get young women to talk about “it” in a comfortable environment, in hopes of suspending my judgments in the process. All five women were willing to talk around this subject, some more comfortably than others. While they were able to talk about relationships, sex education, and personal beliefs around the subject of sexuality, often times I found it was easier for the participants not to address this explicitly. What stands out for me was how religious beliefs were mentioned upon broaching this subject, establishing a safe boundary from which we both understood what was acceptable to ask, and what was not. It seemed a natural inclination for me not to push on this subject, even though I really wanted to hear more about it. The exception to this was Stephanie’s story. Her story seemed to be one which stood out for me, as her experiences around learning about sex and sexuality were described as very “trial and error”, which left her feeling isolated. She was quite comfortable and willing to engage with this topic, and often provided information about her parent’s generation in order to understand her feelings around her own. Linking her parent’s context to her lack of communication with her parents on this subject, she states: “...you know umm, like, the whole talk about masturbation, like, it’s not even talked about. It’s, like, my mother’s like don’t touch it, don’t even go there until you get a husband, that’s where you go you know...” Here I see how in explaining her mother’s perception on the subject, Stephanie comes to understand the silences in her

home around the subject of sex, sexuality and relationships. As we continue to explore the family silences around this subject, she says:

“They grew up in like communist China so like a lot of stuff they just did not talk about...and partly because their (her parents) adolescence period, they didn't experience it, they had to grow up a lot faster...”

As transnational conceptualizations of identity seek to explain the whole picture, context plays a big role in how ideas and knowledge are then interpreted and disseminated (Lather, 2001; Mohanty, 2003; Ong & Nonini, 1997). And we see how Stephanie's parents impact the ways in which she experienced sexuality and sex education, they influence what she will learn from them, and what she needs to figure out on her own.

Page had a very different experience of sexuality and sex education, her parents kept her informed on their sometimes contradictory views on the subject. “...[B]ut as we've grown older my dad's like you know like wait till you're married and my mom's like umm, my mom almost disagrees with that.” They are able to engage in a dialogue that Page explains as follows: “...I almost say too much you know, and sometimes it does make me feel a little bit uncomfortable but, there's nothing I can do.” For her it is in dialoguing with her parents that she grapples with her own issues around relationships, sexual maturity and puberty. She was quite surprised to learn that not all other families (predominantly white families) spoke so openly about the subject as she did. “[Y]eah I, it was kind of shocking to me, like how come your parents haven't told you anything about this kind of stuff?” Often, in dominant discourse literature on sexual knowledge, female racialized minority young adults are painted with a brush of ignorance and inflexible

traditional influences, evidently putting them at higher risks of sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies (cf DeSantis, Thomas, & Sinnett, 1999; Meston, Trapnell, & Gorzalka, 1998). Thus, if we continue to examine the lived realities of racialized minority youth through “Western” eyes, we continue to disempower their voices and experiences in all areas of identity development.

Both Jane’s and Marianne’s experiences around sexual education were mostly from school because their parents’ “don’t really talk about intimate things”. Both women were happy with what they learned in school, though Marianne admits she found sex education to be shocking in grade seven. She was “...kind of really uncomfortable cause at that point I was pretty naïve and sheltered and I really didn’t know anything cause, you know, I was pretty innocent at that age as most twelve year olds should be (laughs)”. Jane, admits she doesn’t like to, “...think about it (sex) much because I’m not thinking about sex before unless I’m getting married to someone. It’s like ruining the future right so I don’t want to think about it yet.” Jane’s experience of sexuality is quite different than the other four participants, she readily emphasizes her Catholic upbringing and strongly identifies with her religious beliefs. Both women understand and negotiate their family and school contexts as being different with regards to sexual education, and negotiate between these spaces. They take what they need and want to know, and disregard what they were not yet ready to hear.

Negotiating spaces: The here and there

Looking towards normative, dominant discourse in this arena, several authors claim that the most troublesome area for the identity development of first generation

racialized minority Canadians is the struggle to create an identity by having to choose one culture (usually the dominant one) at the expense of the other. This is done in order to achieve acculturation, or, assimilation into the dominant culture in order to adjust and live successfully in North American society (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Meston et al., 1998; Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Prelow et al., 2004). However, what I found in the experiences of these women is that for some of them aspects of acculturation were acceptable, and for others they were not, and neither one suffered any great losses as a result. It was a choice that they made, and not one that was necessarily fixed. As Marianne explains: "I think as I got older I appreciated being Chinese more, and I saw, I started to see some of the benefits of umm Chinese culture and I guess you know, you got older and you get a bit more wise and see things in a different way." She recognizes that as she grows older, she begins to appreciate and see her culture differently, and starts to "...feel more Chinese".

Jane identifies herself as being "Vietnamese-Canadian", and says that even though she's been "Canadianized", she feels strongly about going back to Vietnam. She wants to do this "...to get more Vietnamese in me, like go back to Vietnam and learn more about my culture and learn more about the language." She also speaks to her experience of being, "...a banana...like I'm white on the inside, and I don't have any more Vietnamese in me..." She contests this by asserting that she still has her family, and for her that is what matters in her personal choices around her cultural identity. She does not allow dominant discourses to tell her who she is and who she is not, she chooses to identify with particular pieces of her cultural heritage as Vietnamese. Jane is negotiating between the here and there in her own way, allowing her identity to take on multiple

identities in various contexts, and to explore that identity. An identity that can be fluid, can become “more Vietnamese”, and can still successfully exist in North American society.

Stephanie’s experience of identity was not so much in whether or not she was Chinese, Canadian, or Chinese-Canadian, but rather what it was like being a racialized minority adolescent in school here in Victoria.

“Well...especially with the tourist attractions being very colonial, umm I think that plays a big role but I think it’s so normalized you don’t really realize that it’s going on...I think it really hit me in university when we were talking about identity politics and especially umm being like being in school activism and atmospheres. Like a lot of people are from small towns that come to university, and usually it’s their, their first real encounter with a person of color. So I just, it’s even harder because you just keep on explaining yourself, you constantly have to explain yourself”

For Stephanie this experience is frustrating as she finds a group of peers that are accepting of her and make her feel welcome, while at the same time having to explain herself to them as well. She is not able to hide or blend in, as she describes in this passage. It is here she realizes that she is different from her peers, and that this difference is the basis for an imbalance of power and privilege. In her conscientious choice to work for activism groups on campus, Stephanie feels she is “fighting” for her rights and privileges as a racialized minority woman. For her, she has found the language to articulate the experiences of being a racialized minority woman in university. Through her women’s studies courses, these have provided her with ways of articulating this

reality. She navigates through this space as being an English speaker, a woman of color, and a bearer of multiple identities in particular contexts.

Sarah's experiences of negotiating spaces came to her later in life, when she was 18 and had moved away from home for the first time. She expresses her experience of growing up in Huston as follows :

“Umm you know everybody and they know you, you know. You know what they're doing, and when they're doing it, and those kinds of things which can be annoying. But it was such, it's just such a small place...like a lot of the friends that I made that were really close of mine were East Indians. Umm, and ah, that's who I, who I mainly grew up with...”

And so Sarah lived within East Indian traditions and practices in a North American context up until she was 18. While she was going through a bit of culture shock in her new environment, things in Huston also took a dramatic shift at that time.

“I went to school from 18-22 and in those years, like Huston just totally changed. Kids, umm, started umm, hanging out with other people more like you know yeah down, not down cause you know Huston doesn't really have a downtown but you know just at restaurants without their parents, umm, cutting their hair, walking around Huston, umm, and these are huge things...”

For Sarah, this made things easier for her as she was able to relate her experience of culture shock to her parents, while her parents were expressing their own views about what was happening in Huston at the same time. Both Sarah and her family experienced the influence that North American culture was having on their environments. Sarah

attended a predominantly white university, while the East Indian population in Huston was adopting some of the cultural norms of the dominant culture. While Sarah identifies predominantly with her East Indian cultural context and upbringing, she can also appreciate some of the freedoms that North American culture provided for her. Cutting her hair, wearing her hair down, and wearing makeup, these are things that were reserved for after marriage in her traditional teachings and practices. Sarah too, is negotiating the spaces between the here and there in her various contexts and multiple identity possibilities.

Experiencing racisms/the interplay of intersectionalities

Stephanie was particularly cautious in not allowing her experiences (or the telling and re-telling of her experiences) to be easily categorized or fit neatly under any one compartment of gender or culture. This becomes clear when she states “ [y]eah I definitely think there are like complexities into it like class wise, not just race or not just culture because you know that part they (her family) know like my life isn’t cut and dry.” She is also able to question my intentions, and draw attention to my own cultural location when she asks “... well, why didn’t you do it (your research) on whiteness?” In doing so I felt she was challenging me to acknowledge and speak from my own cultural location while not superimposing this onto her voice and her experiences. Mohanty’s (2003) essay *Under Western Eyes* also questions the validity of writing research under the category of women without acknowledging the differences in class, race, social position, and sexuality when she states:

Women are constituted as women through the complex interaction of between class, culture, religion, and other ideological institutions and frameworks. They are not “women”-a coherent group-solely on the basis of a particular economic system or policy. Such reductive cross-cultural comparisons result in the colonization of the specifics of daily existence and the complexities of political interests that women of different social classes and cultures represent and mobilize. (p. 30)

Writing all women into one narrowly defined category is also “...ineffectual in designing strategies to combat oppressions. All they do is reinforce the binary divisions between men and women” (p.31). I was very grateful for my encounter with Stephanie in my research, because it has given me permission to make my research transparent. This is one strategy I am employing in acknowledging the biases I hold as a white, Western feminist conducting research with racialized minority women. Mohanty’s (2003) critique also reminds me that I must look beyond narrow categorization and look instead into complexity, the interweaving of various social conditions which affect the ways in which we choose to see “women”. In research then, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which we are creating, disseminating, and selling knowledge. Without such acknowledgements, the perpetuation of oppression, inequality and bias are fixed, and significant voices are lost in this process.

Page, as an example, was able to provide me with a story of racism during our interview time together. She tells me a story about when she was in grade nine and had been sick and away from school for a month, the day she came back she experienced racism.

“The day I came back there was like a math test, like a big math test so my dad had written a note. You know, like you know, she can’t [write the test] cause she’s been sick you know and she needs time to catch up. And then the teacher just like took the letter and she’s like “you’re dad didn’t write this, his English is too good” (laughs). And I was like WHAT??!!!”

Here Page is being discriminated against, stemming from some of the dominant discourses’ beliefs around immigrants, language, and trust to name a few. Her teacher sees her note as “too Western” because it was well written and articulate, something her father could not be capable of writing himself as an immigrant in this country. In Page’s experience she thought the teacher did not trust that she was being honest, and really was sick, and would really like to take the math test at a later date. For Page, she looks at her as the daughter of an immigrant rather than as a whole person, and makes judgments based on these assumptions. This story is a clear illustration of the roles that power and privilege play in Page’s lived experience as a racialized minority youth. Here we see an example where stereotyping, discrimination and racism work together to oppress Page and silence her voice as an individual.

This story for me is an illustration of what can (and does) happen in feminist literature when women as a category replaces the lived experiences of women of color, homosexual women, women living in poverty and women who live within the intersectionalities of all of these experiences (Lee, 2006, in press; Mohanty, 2003). It is in hearing about Page’s lived experience that I come to understand the harmful effects of assumptions in both the writing about, and in the lived experiences, of racialized minority women.

Transnational feminist analysis demonstrates how the stories of Jane, Stephanie, Page, Marianne and Sarah can be examined using concepts which acknowledge the hybridity, fluidity and social construction of identity development (Lather, 2001; Lee, 2006, in press; Mohanty, 2003; Ong & Nonini, 1997). It explores the possibilities of development, while also acknowledging the influences and contexts from which we must choose to represent who we are. Through non-unitary subjectivity, the researcher becomes written into this process, and is asked to acknowledge his or her social and cultural position. In doing so, this informs the reader of the assumptions under which the researcher is operating; that it is possible to do research with racialized minority women even as a white researcher. This kind of analysis offers a perspective which broadens boundaries in qualitative research methods to include such things as self reflection, non-unitary subjectivity, and the social and cultural location of both the researcher and the participants (Bloom, 1998). These concepts enrich research practice, humanize researchers and participants, and provide the reader with the appropriate context from which to understand the development of arguments and the points put forward by the researcher in this study.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The following section reflects on the research objectives and questions set out in chapter one. It does so by first summarizing key areas of analysis as they relate to these objectives, as well as highlighting the main findings. It then highlights this study's contribution to the literature, and to the field of Child and Youth Care. Finally, it examines the limitations (both of the study and of the researcher) and future directions for qualitative feminist research in identity development.

Summary

My research objectives were: (1) to document the stories on identity negotiations that acknowledge the intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality of a group of racialized minority first generation Canadians, (2) to examine identity development through the lens of transnational feminism, (3) to contribute to understandings of social activism and change in Child and Youth Care (4), to locate transnational feminist ideologies within the field of Child and Youth Care.

Through transnational feminist frameworks, I was able to complicate, interweave and acknowledge the intersectionalities of race, gender, and sexuality in my participants' stories. This was done by first reviewing the transcripts of participants and writing them into stories; keeping in mind race, gender, and sexuality as my catalysts for analysis. Once the stories were organized in this way, I was able to further expand my analysis of intersectionalities to include such concepts as rebelling, negotiating spaces, and the importance of context. Through this language, I was able to explore concepts such as

diasporas, hybridity, multiplicity, and cultural essentialism. This, in turn, worked to expose the ways in which power and privilege played a role in the development of the identities of my participants.

In applying concepts of non-unitary subjectivity to my analysis, such as intersubjective relationships between researcher and participant, reflexivity, the use of field notes, and an analysis of my social/cultural location. I was able to expose my biases, assumptions and agendas as a researcher. This made for effective qualitative research in that it attended to questions of reflexivity, transparency, and cultural location in research, objectives consistent with the goals of qualitative methodologies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Kvale, 1996). I was also able to demonstrate how both transnational feminism and non-unitary subjectivity work towards advancing social change in their application and objectives. This was accomplished by honoring women's cultural knowledges, by highlighting the injustices of social and cultural positioning of racialized minorities in Canadian society, and by examining the intersubjective relationships between participant and researcher. This was useful in providing insights into my social and cultural location as a white researcher, and the ways in which this, at times, complicated my relationships with these participants.

And lastly, I was able to use transnational feminist ideologies within the field of Child and Youth Care. This was done by expanding identity development paradigms using feminist frameworks to critically analyze how power and privilege work in defining the self locally, politically and transnationally. The following sections will address the contributions the study has made to the literature on identity, and to the field of Child and Youth Care.

Contributions

Using stories as my data, I was able to work with transnational frameworks to complicate, multivocalize, and contextualize interpretations of identity development in racialized minority women. This is similar to research done in feminist psychology (Barcinski & Kalia, 2005; Bem, 1993a, 1993b; Enns, Sinacore, Ancis & Philips, 2004; Gomez-Sanchez & Martin-Sevillano, 2006; Hopkins, Kahni-Hopkins & Reicher, 2006) which examines the political positionality of racialized minority immigrants in relation to power and privilege. It problematizes institutions and government policy by putting the onus on these structures to work towards anti-oppressive practices. It calls for research and practice which are able to critically reflect on the ideologies and traditions from which we are governed. Such research and practices include such things as reflexivity, multivocality, and "the personal as political". As such, we must state our social and cultural locations in research and in practice, and understand how these impact our relationships globally, locally and politically. This research aligns itself in this feminist psychological tradition, and goes further to include a transnational analysis of the representational politics of its participants. In doing so, it works towards actively contributing to social change through the honoring of women's cultural knowledges, and through the transparency of the research process in working with transnational participants. It is different than mainstream discourses in psychology that speak to identity stages and acquisition that are universal and generalizable across all populations.

Identity development literature has, for the most part, remained centered in positivist, objective research methodologies (Cote & Levine, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Kroger, 1989, 2004; Minh-ha, 1991, 1997). Radical methodologies and approaches to identity development continue to remain on the outskirts of mainstream research. This piece of writing contributes to the growing body of literature which challenges this research tradition. It aligns itself with so-called radical approaches, and problematizes positivist approaches identity development. It does this by applying transnational feminist frameworks in its analysis, and non-unitary subjectivity in its methodology. These ideologies work together to honor women's cultural knowledges, to highlight the injustices of social and cultural positioning of racialized minorities in North American society, to make 'the personal political' in their examination of the intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality, and to encourage research paradigms which embrace notions of reciprocity, reflexivity, transparency and locality in their application. It contributes to both transnational feminist literature and psychological feminist literature on identity development in racialized minority first generation Canadian women in its methodology, analysis, and focus. It locates itself within transnational feminist lenses and analysis; concentrating on the notions of hybridity, fluidity, and multiplicity in its application and intention.

Contributions to Child and Youth Care research and practice

Identity development is of particular interest to Child and Youth Care practitioners. As a discipline which strives to understand the lives of children and youth in relation to the environment, genetic makeup, and everyday lived experiences, identity plays an important role in this development. Child and Youth Care practitioners can benefit from research on this topic, as it may help them to work more effectively with youth in their everyday practice and to actively work towards social justice. This particular study offers important insights into the development of identity for racialized minority first generation Canadian women. It acknowledges context and situates its knowledge in the stories of the participants; rather than imposing narrow categories, stages or levels of development through which each individual must pass though in a similar fashion. It supports practitioners in seeing developing individuals for who they are as a result of the society in which they live, rather than who Western society tells them they need to become. In other words, it provides a perspective that calls into question the validity of identity development literature which speaks to a generalized population.

In doing so, practitioners can chose to assess individuals using approaches which take into account the varying social, political, and economic conditions that affect an individuals' life, working, for example, from a transnational perspective (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2002). For me, where I come to locate transnational lenses in Child and Youth Care is in the extention of ecological theory, it is here that I see the most potential for development and application. Ecological theory involves the study of a growing person in the interacting settings in which he/she lives. This is a process affected by the

relationship between these settings and the larger contexts within which they are embedded (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2002). My thesis extends the ecological approach to include in our understanding of children and youth the roles that power and privilege play in interacting with children and youth, particularly in transnational locations. In other words, it expands the importance of various environments (from family, school, government, media to name some examples) to include in its application the effects that power and privilege have in these settings. Child and Youth Care workers play a role in these ideas by engaging in social activism and change through front line work. For example, front line workers can grapple with questions such as: What role does privilege play in government policy and procedure with respect to children and youth? How does patriarchy affect young women's roles in society? What role does the media play in the development of young women's sense of identity? Of belongingness? Of what is considered appropriate and inappropriate? It is in thinking critically about our social, cultural, and political positions in Canadian society that we as Child and Youth Care workers are able to work towards social justice and change. While transnational feminist theory does not want us to jump in to answers to these questions, it serves to complicate our understandings about the way things certain powers work in society that may be taken for granted or ignored and take action. It calls us to attend to the underlying ideologies and assumptions that are embedded within the systems that help shape us into who we choose to become, and asks us to challenge those assumptions.

Limitations of the study and future research

In reading through this study, I work to come to terms with the tensions of my needs and the needs of qualitative feminist research. Through field notes, personal experience, and the practice of non-unitary subjectivity in my methodology, I have been confronted with my own biases, assumptions and ignorance as a researcher within this study. And while I may have been questioned and humbled along the way, I recognize this is but a first step in many to writing with research participants rather than about them. I still question the appropriateness of writing with racialized minority women as I think I always should, even though I have acknowledged who I am in the process and what the research represents to me. I still feel as though a voice continues to be silenced here, and I am not skilled enough at this point in my research to know what to do to help bring that forward. I feel that if I were to repeat such a study again, I would want to allow the participants to choose their own method of expression, and even who they would like to have as a researcher if that was a possibility. Though I must acknowledge that this research process was unique in its ability to examine transnational relationship building, and as such enriches the data in a way that would not likely be possible should my social and cultural location have been similar to those of my participants.

In my praxis I question whether I would work the way I do if it did not meet my needs to provide for myself first, above and beyond the needs of children and youth I am serving. Who am I helping when I decide to teach English in Korea, or work overseas in a Third World country? Whose needs are being met, and how is it, in meeting those needs, are we taking away from the needs of others? While these questions come to me at the end of my process, I am grateful that they do. It forces me to acknowledge that in

working outside of one hegemonic box, I find myself trapped in another bigger box, and a bigger one still... I am never really free of my own social and cultural location; no matter the methodology, no matter the theoretical lens.

Though I come to these understandings in my writing, I do not feel that research is futile, or that all my efforts were in vain. I think there is great benefit in writing the struggles of the researcher into the analysis; I feel this humanizes research and provides the reader with the appropriate contexts from which to understand how I made my decisions, assumptions and interpretations. Research of this kind provides transparency, a concept that is valued in qualitative research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Harding, 1987; Lather, 1993; Web, 1993). This transparency, though at times may have been discouraging for me, permits me to be myself in my writing and interpretations, which for me creates a more genuine understanding of the research process.

The negotiation of identities

Throughout this study, I had many ambitions. To challenge dominant discourses on racialized minority adolescents and women, to use a methodology which works to honor women's cultural knowledges, and to work with frameworks and concepts which advocate for social change. For my participants, I saw the opportunity for them to have a voice in the literature, to work with me as part of a collaborative research effort, to challenge my ideas and assumptions around researching racialized minority women, and to learn about themselves in relation to their stories in North American society. I envisioned a piece that would contribute to the field of Child and Youth Care by appealing to developing identity frameworks in psychology, human development, and

diversity discourses. What I failed to take into account, however, are the ways in which the research presented was produced; in English, in academic writing, and within my own biases and lenses as a Western feminist researcher.

After reading the essay *One voice kills both our voices: "First world" feminism and transcultural feminist engagement* (Waller, 2005), I began to question whether or not it really was possible to write outside of the very ideologies that provide us with the standards, knowledge claims, advice, and ways of being that are unconsciously designed to pull us back into our lived realities as white, Western women. And then I realized that I was not as far removed from this discourse as I thought. After all, *I* wrote the stories myself based on the transcripts and had the women *I* had interviewed tell *me* what they wanted changed from *my* writing. Maybe if they had written their own stories from the transcripts, then they would truly have had a voice in what I am recreating. As such, I acknowledge that these stories are in themselves embedded in power/knowledge relations. This reflection drew my attention back to the fact that we do the best with what we have, with the tools we are given, and then realize that these tools are no longer adequate, no longer able to provide us with the "outside the box" methodologies that some of us are looking for (Waller, 2005). It is in this moment that I acknowledge my position, my place of knowledge and knowledge making. It is embedded still within the very discourses I worked so hard to challenge. I still have hope that we are part of a movement that is working to expose dominant discourses, only maybe we are not sure how to build them up again differently.

Final thoughts

This piece is another contribution to the developing literature on transnational feminist frameworks of identities, races, citizenships, genders, and sexualities. It both accepts and challenges the writings of Western feminists from normative, white, dominant discourses. It is an effort of many efforts to come, to look at the stories of the youth and families we choose to work with from their own particularly situated social locations. It is a call for action which acknowledges the breadth, depth and scope that dominant discourses have on the ways in which we can express knowledge and share it with others. While it attempts to work towards advancing social change in its application and methodology, it does not go far enough. In simply acknowledging positionality and politics in the lives of these four racialized minority women, I still do not change all structures. In as such, it will never be finished. Therefore, research that continues to challenge, complicate and negotiate meanings for women locally and globally is needed to continue this trend. New language needs to be developed which can express these complications, and addresses issues of representation, citizenship, and identity politics and the tensions at work within these concepts. Alternative ways of being in society need to be explored and tested, working within socio-economic hierarchies which continue to oppress and privilege some at the expense of others, continues to keep us segregated through difference as human beings.

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Appendix A

School of Child and Youth Care

Participant Consent Form

Negotiations of racialized female youth identities: Investigating the intersectionalities of race, gender, and sexuality through a transnational feminist lens

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled *Negotiations of racialized female youth identities: Investigating the intersectionalities of race, gender, and sexuality through a transnational feminist lens* that is being conducted by Erika Antl.

Erika Antl is a graduate student in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by email: emantl@uvic.ca, or phone 995-1981.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Child and Youth Care. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, Assistant Professor at the School of Child and Youth Care. You may contact my supervisor at 721-6478 or via email at vpacink@uvic.ca.

The purpose of this research project is to examine the stories of female second generation immigrant visible minority adolescents. The objective is to expand the identity literature, exploring concepts of identity development which are specific to female, immigrant minority adolescents. My intent is to explore these ideas in a way that is inclusive and permissive. Using definitions of cultural identity, sexuality, race, class and gender I hope to get a sense of what identity means to the participants in my study.

Research of this type is important because it builds on concepts of identity development. It encourages participants to reflect on the institutions and social contexts, which influence and shape their understandings of who they are. It gives a voice, both personally and politically, from which female immigrant adolescents can better understand how various social contexts outside and within the family are shaping the ways in which they understand gender roles and sexuality. The hope is that female immigrant adolescents will walk away from the research with a concept of identity as a multi-faceted, fluid concept.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a second generation immigrant visible minority female between the ages of 19-26. Your participation is important in giving voice to the experiences of second generation youth from a perspective which recognizes the need to express identities as they relate to the social contexts from which they are learned. It allows you to take a look at what messages you are receiving in these contexts, which ones are loudest and why, and what you do to exist within these.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a semi structured interview, which is generally 1- 1 and a half hours long. You will also be invited to contribute to the formulation of the final write-up. This will include collaborating with the researcher to disseminate your stories as they will be represented and analyzed in written form. Reviewing drafts particular to your story and interview process will be encouraged to assist the researcher in doing her best to represent you and your voice in a way that is as accurate and comfortable for you as possible.

The researcher requests your permission to audio-tape the interview sessions. To indicate your consent, please sign this form in the appropriate space provided, which is at the end of this form.

Participation in this study includes 1 and half hours of interviewing, as well as another 2 hours participating in the analysis of your data. Potential risks include possible emotional discomfort in discussing issues of sexuality and gender roles. There is also a potential to share stories of racism and discrimination as these relate to identity development and issues of sexuality and gender roles. Care will be taken by me to ensure that you are aware of accessible services to assist them if needed, a document with the names of community agencies is attached to this consent form.

To prevent or to deal with these risks the following steps will be taken:

- I will follow legal provincial protocols for reporting any child protection concerns
- I am trained as a front line youth practitioner and have training as a lay counselor to help participants through circumstances which cause emotional discomfort
- Participants will be made aware of how and where to access community services should these be needed
- I will do regular check ins with participants before, during and after the interviews to ensure any adverse effects are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include giving voice to stories that may not be heard or valued. It includes a contribution to the literature available on the topics of sexuality and gender roles as these relate to identity development in female minority adolescents. It is hoped that this study will assist scholars, researchers and students in assessing knowledge and examining it in such a way as to acknowledge the effects of interacting forces on a developing person.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will only be included if you give me written permission to do so. Otherwise, your data will be withdrawn from the study and properly disposed of.

I am willing to review the transcripts of the interview
 Yes No

Appendix B

The Interview

Before we begin the interview, I would just like to reiterate one more time that participation in this study is always voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. If I ask a question that you don't feel comfortable answering, please let me know, and don't feel like you have to answer anything that makes you uncomfortable. I will try to make this as casual as possible, but if it isn't working for you don't hesitate to let me know. Are you comfortable if we jump into the interview? Great, let's get started.

Tell me your name, date of birth, where you were born and a little bit about your family. Do you have any brothers and sisters? Were they also born in Canada? Where are your parents from? Have you ever been there to visit? Where does your extended family live?

Tell me a bit about you. What are the kinds of things you like to do? What school do you go to? What are you hoping to do next?

How would you locate yourself, that is to say, what culture or cultures do you feel you belong to? What would you say is (are) your cultural identities? How would you locate yourself sexually? Does this answer change in different situations? Do you define yourself differently at school with your friends then in relation to your parents and family?

Tell me about your family. Specifically I would like to know the different roles that individuals take on in your family and what you see your role as. How do you see your role as a female play out in your family context? At school? With your friends?

How would you describe your family in contrast to a Canadian family? Tell me about some of the values your family holds that may be the same or different than the values of a Canadian family. What effect do these values have on your definitions of sexuality and gendered behavior and norms (gender roles)?

(If they need clarification, I could give an example. "My mother held strong values around cooking and taking care of her family as the role of the female. I was often uninterested in her cooking or baking, and as a result, never learned how to cook Eastern European food.")

What is your experience growing up in Canada? How do you experience your sexuality and gender role in your family's culture and in that of the dominant culture? What resources do you have to help you with this? How do you negotiate these cultures when it comes to expressing your sexuality? Your identity?

As a visible minority in Victoria, what do you notice most with respect to your defining sexuality and gendered norms and behaviors (gender roles)? Have you lived elsewhere in

Canada before coming here? How was the experience of defining your sexuality and gendered norms and behaviors (gender roles) different then here?

How do you negotiate these cultures when it comes to expressing gender roles?

What kind of impact has this had on your identity development?

Now that the interview is done, is there anything you would like to speak further to?

Anything you would like me to clarify? Any questions?

Appendix C
Request for permission to solicit participants for research study

Island Sexual Health Society
1170 Fort St
Victoria BC
V8R 1J5

May 16th, 2005

Dear Bobbi,

My name is Erika Antl; I am a graduate student in the department of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Child and Youth Care. I am writing you to request permission to recruit participants through written advertisements within your agency.

A sample of the advertisement is attached, requesting participation from 2nd generation immigrant female adolescents in a study entitled: *Negotiations of racialized female youth identities: Investigating the intersectionalities of race, gender, and sexuality through a transnational feminist lens*

The purpose of this research project is to examine the stories of female 2nd generation immigrant youth using a transnational feminist lens. The objective is to expand the identity literature, which lacks research using multiple, pluralistic conceptualizations of identity development specific to female, immigrant adolescents. My intent is to explore these ideas in a way that is inclusive and permissive. Using transnational definitions of cultural identity, sexuality and gender roles I hope to get a sense of what identity means to the participants in my study.

Participants should be between the ages of 19-21 years of age and meet the criteria outlined on the attached document. Your assistance in recruiting suitable participants for this study would be most appreciated.

If you have further questions, you may contact me by email: emantl@uvic.ca, or phone 995-1981 as well as my supervisor, Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw. You may contact her at 721-6478.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Appendix D PARTICIPANTS WANTED!!

Looking for 2nd generation (first generation Canadian) immigrant visible minority women between the ages of **19-21 years** who would be interested in sharing their stories. The focus of the research is to look at **the thoughts, processes and experiences by which second generation female immigrant youth conceptualize intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality**. In order to be eligible, participants must be:

- Between 19-21 years old
- Female
- 2nd generation immigrant/first generation Canadian (born in Canada, parents born elsewhere)
- Living with their immigrant families until 18/or still are

Those interested will be interviewed for the project. Two semi structured interviews will be conducted lasting approximately 1 and a half hours each. Participants should expect to be part of the research process, where the researcher will provide opportunities for participants to discuss their stories and how they will be used as part of the write up.

Those interested can contact Erika Antl via email at emantl@uvic.ca, or by phone **995-1981** to discuss this opportunity further.

Thank you for your support!